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Table of Contents

Contributors..... **iii**

Introduction..... **1**
Serafin M. Coronel-Molina

Articles

Causes of Underachievement in Beginning College Students: It's Complicated 4
Melissa McNabb

The Empire Struck Back: Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Classroom..... 22
Mathew Bumbalough

"Read This Book Out Loud": A Critical Analysis of Young Adult Works by Artists from the Poetry Slam Community..... 37
Adam D. Henze

The Intercultural Reconstruction of Guarani School Linguistic Human Rights: Social Purviews and Literacy.....54
Carlos Maroto Guerola

Bilingual Education in Guatemala 71
Adriana Soto-Corominas

Multimodal Literacy through Children's Drawings in a Romani Community.....90
Hsiao-Chin Kuo

New Literacies, New Narratives: Impact on a Portuguese Kindergarten 105
Sónia Pacheco

Literacy and Language of Instruction in Nigeria: A Case Study of Integrated Science Teaching in Selected Primary Schools..... 123
A. A. Asiyanbola and Mohammed Ademilokun

Book Reviews

Moving Critical Literacies Forward: A New Look at Praxis across Contexts, edited by Jessica Zacher Pandya and JuliAnna Ávila 138
Jennifer K. Shah

Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0: Teaching with Online Texts, Tools, and Resources, K-8, by
Denise Johnson 143
Crystal D. Howell

Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms, edited by A. Suresh
Canagarajah 147
Hajar Al Sultan

Contributors

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Melissa Brundick McNabb is an Associate Instructor and doctoral candidate in the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University. She holds three master's degrees: MA in Arts Administration from Indiana University, MA in Secondary Education from The University of Southern Indiana with a minor in Education Leadership, and MA in Theology from St. Meinrad Seminary. Melissa's current academic and research interests center on underachieving freshmen in college and the intersection of critical literacy, multicultural literature, and the methodology of best practices for classrooms. McNabb enjoys the experience of helping students achieve their academic goals, and is passionate about facilitating the education of great teachers. McNabb is a 2013 recipient of the National Peabody Leader in Education Award and the 2009 Leadership Evansville Award for Educator of the Year.

Adam D. Henze is an English instructor at Indiana University and a doctoral student in the Literacy, Culture, and Language Education department. He has a Masters in the Art of Teaching degree from the University of Indianapolis and earned a Bachelor's degree in Communication and English Writing from Western Kentucky University. Additionally, Adam is the education coordinator and teaching artist for V.O.I.C.E.S., an education-based youth program in Indianapolis. Adam's research interests include critical literacy, spoken word and hip-hop pedagogy, graphic novels, video games, alternative education and prison pedagogy.

Crystal D. Howell is a doctoral student majoring in Curriculum Studies and minoring in Literacy, Cultures, and Language Education at Indiana University. Before beginning her doctoral work, Howell was a middle- and high-school Spanish teacher in southern West Virginia and later a virtual Spanish teacher for the West Virginia Virtual School. She is interested in trans-classroom teachers—that is, teachers who move serially or simultaneously between traditional, face-to-face teaching to online teaching—and their changing pedagogical beliefs and dispositions toward curriculum as they traverse this boundary. She is also a teacher consultant for the National Writing Project, and is interested in writing across the curriculum, teacher narratives, and teachers as writers.

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Carlos Maroto Guerola is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC, Florianópolis, Brazil), in the Applied Linguistics concentration. Born and raised in Valdepeñas, La Mancha (Spain), he moved to Brazil and received his MA in Linguistics from UFSC in 2012 after having received his Graduate Specialization in Brazilian Studies from the University of Salamanca (Spain) in 2010 and his BA in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Granada (Spain) in 2007. He researches in the fields of Indigenous schooling, multilingual education, literacy studies, and discourse studies. He has collaborated as a professor both in the BA Program for Xokleng, Kaingang, and Guarani Indigenous teachers and in the USAC study abroad program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. His current research project investigates how practices of language learning and discourses about language are overdetermined, seeking to explore intercultural approaches to language teaching and learning at Indigenous schools with Indigenous teachers.

Sónia Pacheco is a preschool teacher. She holds a PhD in Educational Sciences/Literacy in Education. She worked for sixteen years as a preschool teacher and studied many aspects of emergent literacy, which in turn helped in her investigations about this subject and improved her practices with young children. Her research interests lie in the preschool context and the reading and writing skills of young children in an information and knowledge-based society. The investigation carried out during her PhD concludes that the ability to learn how to read and write at this young age has much to do with predictability,

interpretation, and the learnings and experiences of children. She defined a new concept of pretextuality applied to prereader children based on concepts such as textuality and predictability. She is an investigator at the Research Unit of Education and Development.

Jennifer K. Shah is a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Loyola University Chicago. She previously taught middle school social studies and now works as an adjunct instructor. Her dissertation involves critical literacy implementation with novice teachers in K–8 urban Catholic schools. Jennifer’s academic interests include middle-level learning, social studies education, and teacher preparation.

Adriana Soto-Corominas is a PhD candidate in Hispanic Studies (Linguistics track) at The University of Western Ontario, Canada. Her main research interests are bilingualism and multilingualism, language processing, and morphology. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in English Philology, and completed a Specialization in Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Introduction

Serafin M. Coronel-Molina

The *Working Papers in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (WPLCLE)* is an annual peer-reviewed online publication that provides a forum for faculty and students to publish research papers within a conceptual framework that values the integration of theory and practice in the field of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education. The mission of this journal is twofold: (1) to promote the exchange of ideas and dissemination of research, and (2) to facilitate academic exchange between students, faculty, and scholars from around the world.

Publications in *WPLCLE* are full-length articles dealing with the following areas of research: first- and second-language acquisition, macro- and micro-sociolinguistics in education, linguistic anthropology in education, language policy and planning from local and global perspectives, language revitalization, pragmatics in language teaching and learning, literacy, biliteracy, multiliteracy and hybrid literacies, bilingual education, multilingual and multicultural education, classroom research on language and literacy, discourse analysis, technology in language teaching and learning, language and gender, language teaching professional development, quantitative and qualitative research on language and literacy education, language related to curriculum design, assessment and evaluation, English as a foreign or second language, multimodal literacies, new literacies or electronic/media/digital literacies. Among other areas of publication interest of the *WPLCLE* are the New Literacy Studies, home and workplace literacy, Indigenous literacies of the Americas, sociocultural approaches to language and literacy education, second-language instruction and second-language teacher education, literacy as social practice, critical literacy, early literacy, practitioner inquiry/teacher research, children's literacy, African-American literacies, Latino/Hispanic literacies, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural literacy practices, heritage language and culture maintenance and loss, and local and global (transnational) literacies.

This volume marks the fourth collection of eight essays and three book reviews chosen from an array of submissions for our 2015 publication. The first article, titled "Causes of Underachievement in Beginning College Students: It's Complicated," was written by *Melissa McNabb*. This article describes a small-scale ethnographic study of academic underachievement in freshmen and sophomores in college. The author used a combination of participant observation, examination of class documents, and personal interviews with students and instructors to gather data that offers "intimate perspectives about why college beginners academically underachieve." She finds, unsurprisingly, complicated situations and explanations for this phenomenon.

The second article of this section, *Mathew Bumbalough's* "The Empire Struck Back: Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Classroom," describes a pilot study to explore "language identity in the field of World Englishes as international students in a

multilingual writing classroom encounter a Western-centric teaching environment.” He examines the strategies and struggles of international students to make meaning and become participating members in a community of practice in an English-language classroom while still expressing their cultural and linguistic identities. Through classroom observations, semistructured interviews with two “representative” international students, analysis of paper topics, and learning about the participants’ backgrounds, he elucidates the interplay of their need to learn and use English and the need to also maintain their respective identities.

The third article, “‘Read This Book Out Loud’: A Critical Analysis of Young Adult Works by Artists from the Poetry Slam Community” by *Adam D. Henze*, examines slam poetry and its applicability and suitability for classroom use. Many middle- and secondary-school teachers find spoken word poetry to be particularly engaging and applicable to the experience of teenagers, but much of the available work is not always age-appropriate in terms of language used. The author offers a literature review, hoping to point educators interested in spoken word poetry in helpful directions, and highlighting some collections that have been published specifically for the young adult audience. He also examines “the inherent barrier between oppositional, profane narratives embraced by youth, and the expectations of educational institutions who use censorship to sterilize places of learning.”

The fourth article, “The Intercultural Reconstruction of Guarani School Linguistic Human Rights: Social Purviews and Literacy” by *Carlos Maroto Guerola*, “questions the monoglossic and universalizing nature with which [the school linguistic human right to literacy] is inserted in the social purview of the dominant groups of global capitalism.” The author employs a multidisciplinary theoretical framework to analyze the discourses of Guarani teachers in a small town in Brazil. These teachers argue for interculturally reconstructing the right to literacy as the school’s right to safeguard Guarani cultural tradition.

The fifth article, “Bilingual Education in Guatemala” by *Adriana Soto-Corominas*, looks at language shift in Guatemala, where 24 Indigenous languages are still spoken, alongside the dominant language, Spanish. The author assesses the development of the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) model, and its role in “integrat[ing] the cultures and languages of the country.” Data were collected through informal, semistructured interviews with teachers from different schools, members of the government, and members of the Academy of Mayan Languages. The author concludes that the IBE model is not being implemented as intended and, therefore, language shift towards Spanish continues unhindered.

The sixth article, “Multimodal Literacy through Children’s Drawings in a Romani Community” by *Hsiao-Chin Kuo*, is an exploration of “the funds of knowledge and literacy practices of [children in] a Romani community in northwestern Romania.” The author focuses in particular on the multimodal productions of five children, analyzing drawings and sketches as multimodal texts, in light of the discrimination against Romanis as supposedly illiterate. She identified two features in particular of their multimodal literacy practices—intertextuality and design—and argued that these belie the stereotype of illiteracy. Ultimately, she proposes pedagogical applications for her findings.

The seventh article, “New Literacies, New Narratives: Impact on a Portuguese Kindergarten” by *Sónia Pacheco*, is concerned with early literacy practices in a Portuguese kindergarten, and in particular computer use as literacy. The author begins with a look at educational policies and decisions made by the government and their impact in the classroom. From there, she moves on to her data, which she collected through interviews with the teachers and nonparticipant observation of the children’s activities and interactions while using the computer. She concludes that it is necessary to be open and flexible in identifying and teaching literacy, and that policy-makers may not be as open to or aware of this as the teachers working directly with the children.

The final article, by *A. A. Asiyabola and Mohammed Ademilokun*, is entitled “Literacy and Language of Instruction in Nigeria: A Case Study of Integrated Science Teaching in Selected Primary Schools.” This paper “explores the functions of both the Indigenous language ... (e.g., Yoruba) and the official language (English)” in effectively educating youngsters. The authors offer a case study of the impact of codeswitching (or not) at six private and public primary schools in Southwestern Nigeria, concluding that codeswitching between English (L2) and Yoruba (MT) is often more effective than either languages alone.

This fourth volume of *WPLCLE* ends with three book reviews. The first is by *Jennifer K. Shah* on the book *Moving Critical Literacies Forward: A New Look at Praxis across Contexts*, edited by Jessica Zacher Pandya and JuliAnna Ávila. The second one is by *Crystal D. Howell* on the book *Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0: Teaching with Online Texts, Tools, and Resources, K-8*, by Denise Johnson. And the last is by Hajar Al Sultan on the book *Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms*, edited by A. Suresh Canagarajah.

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Our special thanks go to Melissa McNabb and Alexandra M. Panos, who provided invaluable assistance as Co-Managing Editors. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at Indiana University and friends, colleagues, institutions and social media venues from around the world for their help in publicizing the *WPLCLE* Call for Papers locally and globally.

Last but not least, we are very grateful to all the contributors to this volume for choosing *WPLCE* to publish their work. Our gratitude also goes to the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education in the School of Education for hosting the *WPLCE* website and for supporting this publication venue. Without the generous assistance of all these fine people and institutions, *WPLCLE* would not be a reality.

Causes of Underachievement in Beginning College Students: It's Complicated

Melissa McNabb

Abstract

Underachievement in many beginning college students in American universities is a problem. In this small-scale ethnographic study at a large Midwestern University, members of a class specifically designed for freshmen and sophomores who underachieved during their first or second year in college (defined as those who accumulated a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or less) were observed and interviewed to determine individual causes of academic underperformance. The personal explanations of these students, the rich commentary of their peer instructor and the teacher of the class, along with the researcher's participant observation and examination of class documents allowed intimate perspectives about why college beginners academically underachieve. This qualitative, ethnographic research shines a light into the dilemma of academic underperformance and uncovers a complicated exegesis of why beginning college students struggle and achieve less than their academic potential.

Keywords: underperformance; underachievement; beginning college; academic probation; college freshmen; SAT tests

Introduction

A student who academically underachieves is intriguing to me and has been for most of my life. This person who can earn A's but does not, who is capable of a gold star, but does not receive one, baffles me. Through ethnographic analysis, this project formally investigates the stories of freshmen and sophomores in college at a large Midwestern University, studying why academically capable people underachieved, as indicated by their cumulative GPS at the end of their first or second, first-year semesters.

The modes of discovery in this project centered on ethnographic observations and interviews with members of a mandatory academic probation class (pseudonym C100). The ultimate goal of this study was to listen to and record personal accounts of academically struggling students and learn from their stories. While considering the essential question of currently enrolled, individual students' institutionalized record of underachievement, preconceived researcher biases swirled in my mind: 1) Is a lack of motivation a cause of academic underachievement? 2) Is a lack of familial model of success in college a cause of underperformance? 3) Is a lack of psychological maturity a cause of underachievement? 4) Is a lack of vision for one's future a cause of underperformance? From these initial queries, a key secondary research question for this project evolved: Are the reasons for a lack of academic success similar in interview participants or particular to each student?

While considering what innate personal biases I might bring to this project, I recounted LeCompte and Schensul's (1999) remark, "as an ethnographer, my observations and subsequent descriptions and transcriptions are filtered through (my) personal, professional, cultural, and theoretical lenses" (p. 31). Truly I wondered if I were too much of an "education is *everything* snob" to listen accurately to reasons why one had underachieved in college.

Theoretical Framework

I have always been curious about the why's of underperforming students; I have often experienced that underperforming students and I are drawn to one another like powerful magnets. My research involving students on academic probation who struggle are prototypes of students across our nation, with similar personal circumstances and issues. Scholar Lev Vygotsky (1978) posited the concept of the scaffolding which provides the key theoretical framework of this research: "there are two parts of a learner's developmental level: the 'actual developmental level' and the 'potential developmental level.' The zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The specific class of my research focus, taken by students on probation, offers multiple types of support during a difficult academic time period. A "leg up," as it were, to gain or regain confidence, to learn study skills, or time management skills, or whatever knowledge they lack to "scaffold" their way back to a successful academic career.

Another important piece of the theoretical framework of this ethnographic research regarding the dilemma of underachieving beginning college students is Pierre Bourdieu's (1992) theory of cultural capital and field. To Bourdieu's way of thinking, students' cultural capital encompasses the *educational wherewithal* she or he brings with them to the college classroom: the ability to possess time management skills, testing capabilities at the college level, and the ability to handle the multi-tasking demands of freedom and responsibility. The background or previous family circumstances contribute to a student's cultural capital and contribute to a beginning college student's ability to succeed in the early stages of college or not. Bourdieu found the idea of the *field* key to valid ethnographic research (cited in Grenfell, et al., 2012).

Various researchers have studied facets of education to discover elements that present stumbling blocks for beginning college students. Hull-Blanks et al. (2005), Ryland, Riordan, and Brack (1994), and Tinto (1987) make points that "four types of career goals (job related, school related, value related, and unknown) with factors of school retention, academic performance, self-esteem, educational self-efficacy, and school and career commitment" (Hull-Banks et al., 2005, p. 2) are the bases which determine academic success. Many educational researchers and psychologists concur that when beginning college students have job-related goals, they are more successful in school. A mindset of "I don't know what I am doing here," rooted in undetermined goals about majors or the purpose of being in college, often factors into a negative school experience.

A major issue related to academic success facing beginning college students is caused by the psychosocial elements of social support and maladaptive coping strategies, including binge-drinking and smoking as stress-related coping mechanisms for loneliness and being overwhelmed with the college-level academic workload and time management concerns. DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka (2004) address these issues and how they affect the first-year cumulative GPA results of freshman students. In a study specifically about loneliness and its effect on beginning college students, J. J. Ponzetti (2012) indicates its possible negative effect on academic success.

There are various landmines that await beginning college students as potential hindrances to their academic success. In reality, many first-year college students experience serious adaptive difficulties which negatively affect their grades. The onslaught of these difficulties in the lives of first-year college students manifest in several negative ways, one being their first semester or first year GPA results. Hickman, Bartholomae, and McKinney (2000) examined the relationship between parenting styles, academic achievement, and adjustment of college freshmen, which resulted in authoritative academic achievement being positively related to student academic adjustment. As well, they showed that positive self-esteem was significantly predictive of social, personal, emotional, goal commitment-institutional, academic, and overall adjustment of traditional college freshmen (p. 2). In a variation on this theme, Hickman, teamed with two other researchers on the same topic (Hickman, Toews, & Andrews, 2001), further discovered that an authoritative parenting style was positively related to males' initial college grade point average, but not significantly associated with that of females.

Where the great divide regarding underperformance in college falls for many educational researchers is whether underachievement comes from a student ill-prepared for the demands of the rigor of college curriculums (Haycock & Huang, 2001) or students who do not perform to expected standards because of external issues like self-esteem, perfectionism/procrastination, and an ability or willingness to take risks (Fehrenbach, 1993). A salient point undergirding the work of this study is Coleman and Freedman's 1996 article, which concurs with researcher Megan Balduf as she compiled evidence that "a considerable number of students who either voluntarily or involuntarily leave a 4-year college before graduating have, at some point, been on academic probation" (Balduf, 2009, p. 277). Their point is well taken that students on academic probation, for whatever reasons, are on precarious ground. Through detailed ethnographic analysis of beginning collegiate level academic struggles, this research fills a gap in educational underachievement research by accessing the factors *college students themselves* attribute to their lack of success. Garfinkel (1967) makes an essential point when he acknowledges, "In observing new scenes, we often use what we ultimately come to know to describe events and meanings that we had initially not understood indeed, observation involves continuous processes of such *retrospective reinterpretation* as the observer shapes into more definitive form what at some earlier point had been hazy, ambiguous, or downright confusing" (as cited in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 106).

Committed to (participants') meanings and experiences, ethnographers are more attracted by what are "experience-near" as opposed to "experience-distant" concepts; thus, they generally give priority to these meanings over a priori, received

theories and researchers' assumptions about the salience and import of these background characteristics. Valuing the local and the specific, field researchers look in a focused way at daily life rather than in a broad and sweeping manner at general patterns. (Geertz, 1983, cited in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 158)

From this ethnographic study's collection of data, with methodological rigor and transparent data, this new, "experience-near" information provides a fresh eye on a serious issue in higher education: that of underachieving beginning college students.

Methodology

The methodology of this research was carried out from a qualitative, ethnographic perspective, specifically through the lens of classroom ethnography. With an up-close view of underperforming students at the desk level, this data collection through observation and interviews allows a clear presentation of the facts from the proverbial horses' mouths.

This research was collected through the lenses of visual and aural acuity via triangulation of observation in the classroom: watching my participants, the peer instructor, and the teacher conduct themselves on a day-to-day classroom event basis. Deepened through recorded, structured and unrecorded, unstructured conversations with the teacher and peer instructor, disciplined field notes, and a running record of questions that came up during class observations, this method of triangulation served as an objective way to verify hunches and questions that arose. Member checking via emailed transcriptions of interviews identified errors in memory and typos. Indeed, sometimes a participant clarified what they "meant" to say at a certain point in the interview, which gave validity to the value and intent of the participant's explanation. In the case of the teacher/whole class observation field notes included here, the teacher of the class member checked the recorded notes for accuracy. "Knowing how to separate detail from trivia . . . and using rigorous methods to validate observations" is important (Patton, 1990, pp. 260–261). As Professor Lucinda Carspecken at Midwestern University made clear in a class lecture on April 1, 2014, "the rationale for triangulation (is that) the more perspectives we have on any social phenomenon, the more complete a picture we will have." The analysis of the entire project required consideration of all of the data collected as well as triangulation and member checking of student interviews and teacher interviews to achieve credible findings. This is because, as LeCompte and Schensul (1999) remind us, "themes, patterns, and ideas of interest in a study do not just emerge magically from fieldnotes" (p. 46).

In writing about each participant and choosing the specific excerpts to include as authentically representative of their academic probation experience, I coded specifically according to particularities of behavior. "Specificity in purpose and good coding for recording instances of behavior are important to producing research that is trustworthy" (Merriam, 2009, p. 120). Elements of the framework I establish in my research to promote trustworthiness are writing copious field notes with attention to timeliness and detail. I focused closely on how the atmosphere in the room felt, what the students were doing, what the context of the lesson was, what dominant power structures were present in the particular observation situation, and what prior biases might have existed in me toward the participant and the environment. At times I noticed that my decade as a teacher gave me a certain "insider" researcher viewpoint. As well, being a mother of college students

also meted out a type of kinship to those of my participants' age. Understanding this setting with an emic viewpoint was not wholly difficult from the educator and matriarchal points of view, but having said that, my aim was to remain objective and be able to explain the setting and dynamics to outsiders (Merriam, 2009, p. 126). An important notation here is that all participant and location names in this study, including cities, states, schools, and departments included in this study are named by pseudonyms for the purposes of anonymity, as directed by Midwestern University's Review Board and the Director of the Academic Center.

Data Collection and Analysis

This observation occurred from 1:00–2:15 in an Academic Center on the campus of Midwestern University in the United States. The specific observation locale was a classroom with fifteen students present, as well as one teacher, one peer instructor, and one observer. The demographics of the students in this class were two females and thirteen males; specifically one Asian (in appearance) female, one white female, five Asian (in appearance) males, one African-American male, and seven white males. The students were freshmen and sophomores, ages nineteen and twenty. The teacher was a white, English-speaking, American male, age 27, and the lone peer instructor was an African-American junior at this Midwestern University, age 21.

Participant Codes for the Observation

MWPTStudent = Male, White, Pony-tailed Student

FAAStudent = Female, African-American Student

FASStudent = Female, Asian Student

MWSSNDoor = Male, White Student Seated Nearest Door

MASStudent = Male, Asian Student

MRSSASStudent = Male, Red Shirt, Short Attention Span Student

MSDIHTRStudent = Male, Self-Designated 'I Hate To Read Student'

*A pseudonym was used to protect the identity of this male, white student.

MABHWStudent = Male, Asian, Baseball Hat-Wearing Student

1:00 P.M.

When the students entered the room, the atmosphere felt a bit "tight," as if the students were nervous about their upcoming homework presentations. To loosen up the classroom's atmosphere, the teacher reached out to his pupils:

Teacher: "Does anyone have a favorite song they would like to listen to before class starts?"

MWPTStudent: (a soft-spoken, long-legged, blonde, pony-tailed young man piped up) "My band just uploaded a new song and video on YouTube."

Teacher: "What's the address?" (looking at the student who suggested the video)

Observer: "Can somebody turn down the lights so we can better see the video?" (The observer spoke in the direction of students sitting next to the light switches.)

[OC (observer comment): The pony-tailed student glanced over at me and smiled; we all proceeded to watch his three minute and twelve second, black and white, quick-spliced, raging musical tale of self-evolution. The member of the class was the band's featured lead guitarist, whose talent was

prominently heard in the video and visually easy to discern as his loosened hair wagged to and fro when he head-banged with the beat. As the lights came up and class commenced, the guitarist with the Batman bracelet and red Converse tennis shoes looked over at me and grinned; I gave him a thumbs-up.]

1:16 P.M.

At the conclusion of a ten-minute Ted Talks video about the science of motivation and how if/then motivational “carrots” do not work:

Teacher: “So, after viewing this video, what do you take away from this message?” (For a few uncomfortable seconds, no one raised their hands; after about ten more seconds, the teacher elaborated his inquiry.)

Teacher: “What do you feel about what the speaker said about goal setting?” (An immediate, odd silence came over the room, as if the students felt collectively awkward as they all stared at their shoes and/or the floor.)

Teacher: “Well, goals need to be short-term and long-term. For example, an appropriate long-term goal for you all is that you would have the date of the last day of the semester in your minds. A good short-term goal would be to get off academic probation this semester.”

Teacher: (at this juncture the teacher began gesturing and explaining) “Let’s break into small groups of three, count off by threes, and move the desks, please, to be closer in proximity.”

[OC: At this point, it seemed evident that the teacher’s choice of video clip was a very effective one based on the fact that his class’s lack of motivation was a possible cause of their low GPAs. One thing that surprised me during this observation was the level of intelligence of the students, as indicated by their responses in class. My misguided preobservation expectation was that on academic probation, the students might manifest as uninterested or dull. This was not the case; in fact, most of the students were quite active in their participation level with a myriad of qualified, intuitive answers for their teacher. This experience was a good reminder to me to leave preconceived notions at home.]

1:34 P.M.

Teacher: (once the groups were broken into groups) “Who can explain what outlining is?”

MWSSN: (raising his hand in reply) “An outline can be specific or not, depending on what you want to do.”

Teacher: “Good! Anybody else?” (to the rest of the class)

Teacher: (to garner answers from everyone, the teacher then said) “Okay, let’s go around the room.”

[OC: starting at one side of the horseshoe of student desks, moving from left to right, student by student, skipping over those who had previously offered an answer, the teacher expected participation from every student.]

MAS: “I prefer ... not to answer.” (with his head down, as if he were not prepared to answer)

2:02 P.M.

Teacher: “Does anyone have a question about the assignments due on Thursday?” (no one raised their hand)

Teacher: (to the class) “In that case, class is over. Jed (pseudonym used), I need to speak with you before you leave today.”

[OC: Just then, two students approached the teacher’s computer desk setup with trepidation, as if they were nervous. One was a male Asian (in appearance) student, and the other was an Asian (in appearance) female who had slid into the room after class started (possibly a girlfriend of the student?)]

MABHWStudent: “Why did I lose so many points on ... assignment?”

Teacher: (Quietly, the teacher pulled up the X158 syllabus on the computer to show it to the student.) “If you look here at the syllabus, it says that the assignment must be *at least* 250 words and yours was 150 words. That’s why you had points deducted.”

MABHWStudent: (pausing for a long minute, looking down at his feet and then glancing up, not quite into the eyes of the teacher) “What does ‘*at least*’ mean?”

Teacher: (patiently explaining) “At least means writing *at least* 250 words or more.”

MABHWStudent: (nodding slowly, backing out of the room) “Okay.”

2:21 P.M.

End of Observation

After twelve weeks of researcher whole-class observations, six participant interviews, and one formal teacher interview, along with virtually daily unstructured teacher email questions, two peer instructor interviews, as well as unstructured, informal meetings with the Director and Academic Coordinator of The Academic Center during the Spring 2014 semester, the results of this research produced interesting findings. All interviews were collected onsite, at The Academic Center and the researcher observations were completed in the classroom on the second floor of the same building. This ethnographic, qualitative study of three student members of an academic probation required class included: one female (a freshman) and two males (one freshman and one transfer student/sophomore) and one junior peer instructor/student (none of whom had learning disabilities as established by individualized educational learning plans). All participants in this study were interviewed through an audio-record format in an interviewer/ participant voluntary agreement.

After establishing a researcher-observer presence over a twelve week period, at the end of class one afternoon, I made a brief, five-minute appeal to the entire group of students as to the nature of my project and requested interview volunteers. To my delight, three students immediately volunteered. These interview sources were key and primary in that they were the originators of my data. They recounted to me firsthand their personal, family, and school experiences contributing to their academic experiences prior to coming to college and while at college during their freshman year. I adhered to Robert Weiss’s (1994) interview methodology, in that an uninhibited flow of participant response to researcher inquiry is “better” than demanding strict adherence to a list of predetermined interview questions (p. 78).

Participant #1/Anastasia

My first participant interview was with a second-semester sophomore, Anastasia (her chosen pseudonym). During the initial part of the interview, I learned that Anastasia had a painful family history of living in three foster homes, living alone in a car in the seventeenth year of her life, and finally living completely on her own, working fulltime at an elder-care center, and attending college fulltime at the age of nineteen. An amazingly eloquent and gentle young woman, my awe at her life story was trumped only by my respect at her early maturity and persevering spirit. Just before the formal interview began to be recorded, I asked her informally, in an unstructured manner, about her leadership skills in class and her amazing command of high-level vocabulary and critical thinking skills I had observed. Her response to my query set the tone for the interview, and while not recorded as part of the transcript, needs to be scored as a key component of her background demographics.

Anastasia explained to me that during her life between the ages of twelve to fifteen, she lived with her father in small, random cities in Texas in a transient lifestyle. Her father welcomed no friends or acquaintances into Anastasia's living quarters and her father demanded they live *a more or less hidden life* (her words). Because of this, she said she excelled in high school and was always on the high Honor Roll, as she spent most of her time outside school in free public libraries where she could dwell largely unnoticed and have access to free books; Anastasia related to me that she spent many hours after school each day and weekends alone, doing her homework and reading books in libraries. She indicated that this circumstance was the source of the vocabulary development I had noticed. After this eye-opening explanation, she smiled, and I turned on the recorder in a small, private room on the second floor of The Academic Center at Northwestern University on Davis Street and my excursion into the world of underperforming college students began in earnest.

Transcript of Interview with Anastasia/P (Participant #1) and Melissa/I (Interviewer)

Melissa/I: Please tell me about your early college experience.

Anastasia/P: I had my first job when I was fourteen. I've always worked for what I've had, and I've always paid for my stuff. As soon as I graduated in March and I turned eighteen in February, I moved into my own apartment and I've lived there the last two years. So I have my own apartment a couple of miles from campus. And I do that, and I work full time, and I go to school.

Melissa/I: Wow. Where do you work?

Anastasia/P: I work at Comfort Is Yours (pseudonym). It's a nonmedical elderly care.

Melissa/I: You are paying for all your living expenses and your tuition. I don't even know how you do that.

Anastasia/P: It's hard. I saved up a lot from working a lot throughout high school. I would put half of my check aside from every paycheck. To pay for a car when I got a car and that's how I was able to move out. [She lived in this car for one year.] I still do this on a smaller scale but obviously I can't afford to put half of my paycheck in savings. But I have an automatic setup so money is automatically transferred into my savings account. I make sure that I am very conscientious of my

spending and what I do and what I don't do. Also, because I pay for my books and everything, but I also get a grant. My aunt, she had Power of Attorney over me. So when I filled out my FAFSA, she was no longer my legal guardian. Because of that situation I was accountable for myself, so I didn't have to worry about my parents' income and even if I had, my dad hasn't worked in the last 30 years and my mom is disabled so I couldn't really count their income for anything. So I was able to get a grant because of the financial situation, because it was only based on my income, which at the time was very little.

Melissa/I: So what happened academically when you first entered Midwestern University?

Anastasia/P: So, I did each semester my first year and worked full time and I did okay. So, even though I did really well academically in high school I had a hard time trying to balance everything, and I got C's and B's and I did fine for the first year. And then first semester of the second year, I was working at my job at the same rate, but taking 15 credit hours, because I was trying to catch up, so I could catch up so I could graduate when I wanted to.

Melissa/I: Right! I understand what you are saying.

Anastasia/P: I would have been doing alright, but it was so hard to balance, and I was also in a relationship that negatively impacted me. It is my nature to be helpful, and so I always think of others before I think of myself. I was way too giving and naïve, and so I dealt with guy trouble, but that's pretty normal. It's just not great when you're working and going to school, and throwing that in the mix and so, basically what happened was that he quit his job and I supported him for a month. Then I ended up having car problems and I ended up being in the hole myself. I had to get myself back financially stable. So it was pretty much like a trifecta of things, my academics were suffering, my finances were suffering, and my emotions were suffering, because of this relationship. I was able to get out of that, but even though I was able to get B's and A's towards the end of the semester, it wasn't enough to pull me up from getting C's and D's in a couple of my classes. Because I got D's in a couple of my classes, my GPA dropped to a 1.9. That was extremely unfortunate, because the rule at Midwestern University is that if your GPA is under 2.0, you are on Academic Probation. So, when I found out I had to take the class for students on academic probation, and that my GPA was just under 2.0, I was really disappointed in myself.

Melissa/I: Okay.

Anastasia/P: So my confidence faltered because the shift in my grades, because once you take someone who has this thing so attached to their social schema, when that changes, it causes an effect there.

Melissa/I: Well, too, because this happened at your age it's difficult to handle.

Anastasia/P: So I was at the point when I found out that my GPA had suffered and it really got to me because I felt worried because I want to keep going to Midwestern University because it is something that I want to do, because you know, I'm used to a bit of a lifestyle. Of course you know, I'm used to living in my apartment and I have cats, and I have comfort and the privilege to be at Midwestern University. Being able to have an apartment and my independence and freedom, because I've always been an independent person is important to me. I didn't want to sacrifice that, and I thought that if I wasn't able to get through this bump with the probation, then it would make things much harder for me ...

Melissa/I: Right.

Melissa/I: How do you feel now about your ability to earn good grades and move forward with your goals?

Anastasia/P: In my Cognitive Psychology class, I have a 'B' but the way he asks the questions is really complicated for me. I study very much for his tests and then I go in and his question is 2 paragraphs long and I am thinking, 'I know what you're asking me but it's difficult because of the way that it's worded.' Because he has this specific way that he wants to do things I understand that he has been teaching longer than I have been taking Cognitive Psychology, but I find that there are certain teachers that have a very specific way of doing things that is different from the norm. It's challenging because the way he does things is so different for me. You know, it's four tests and some of them drop one of the tests. And he drops a grade as well but his is more accelerated because we have a test every 2 weeks it seems. It's maybe a little longer between that, the way that he does his tests is that he does it in parts; a lot of it is from slides. So when you take the test, he wants you to answer in the way that he explained it. And that's in addition to the book and everything else.

End of Anastasia/Melissa Excerpt of Transcribed Interview

Seven major themes contributing to academic underachievement emerged from the participant interview with Anastasia: first and second, familial drama and strife caused an almost insurmountable financial and emotional hindrance to college academic success. Third, time management issues related to her need to work to support herself, and fourth, relationship drama (in this case that of a boyfriend) took focus away from studying and thus college academic success. Fifth, a resulting lack of confidence that emerged after Anastasia experienced trying to successfully balance supporting herself financially, and attending college, while working full time. Sixth, a fear of failure related to a fear of change in her standard of living, and finally seventh, a lack of proper testing skills preparation for college-level tests. On this note, she specified that she did not command the ability to synthesize large quantities of reading and provide essay style answers to paragraph-long questions.

Participant #2/Gabe

My second participant interview was with a second-semester freshman, Gabe (his chosen pseudonym). Gabe is a first generation college student, and was from a family whose men worked in the steel mills of Blytheville, Arkansas. He attended public high school and transferred several AP classes to begin his freshman year.

Transcript of Interview with Gabe/P (Participant #2) and Melissa/I (Interviewer)

Melissa/I: Tell me about your classes during your first semester at Midwestern University.

Gabe/P: Well, Introduction to Psychology probably would have been easy, if I had gone to class.

Melissa/I: Oh, yeah.

Gabe/P: I got a C without going to class.

Melissa/I: Did you not go to class because it was early, or you just didn't want to?

Gabe/P: I go to all my classes now; that one was pretty early for me.

Melissa/I: So how did you rationalize to yourself missing class?

Gabe/P: I stopped going to most of my classes except my Sociology because I kind of enjoyed it, and we had an attendance policy in that class. I did not have an attendance policy in the rest of my classes. The first month was easy, or I thought it was easy, so I decided not to go. I didn't stop going all together; I would just skip one day a week. As the semester progressed, it became two days out of the week, and then sometime I stopped going to class altogether. You skip one day and it's no big deal, and then you keep doing it.

Melissa/I: Now how does that work? When you don't go to class, what are you doing? Are you sleeping, drinking, and watching TV, or what are you doing?

Gabe/P: During my Psychology classes, I was usually sleeping, because it was early. During my Calculus class, I would usually just sit around and do nothing and hang out. During my K201 class, I signed up for it at 4:00 and they moved it to 8:00 p.m. So, either I just didn't feel like going because I was already settled in for the night, or I just was hanging out with my friends.

Melissa/I: Dude, if you can get a C in Psychology without attending class, that's a sign: You are capable of attending college. So how do you feel now that you are on academic probation? It sounds like you held on pretty well, without even going to class. Do you feel like you want to stay in college; do you want to stay here?

Gabe/P: Yes, I definitely want to stay here. When I first got here ... what happened to me last semester really questioned the value of college for me.

Melissa/I: Sure, that is not unusual.

Gabe/P: I really began to have a negative attitude. It was especially about my Calc class and that was the one I was doing really badly in and that was because I wasn't even going to class. I decided I don't want to sit at this desk, I don't want to be a cog in a machine, but then I began to realize: what was I going to do outside of college? You know that normal college thing. If I left after this semester, what was I really going to do? It was either this, go work in the mill, or work at some dead-end job.

Melissa/I: So your Grandpa worked at the mill?

Gabe/P: Yeah. That's where my Grandpa worked. It was either this or the steel mill and I definitely did not want to do that.

Melissa/I: Now sometimes, freshmen get into alcohol or drugs or sex excessively when they come to college. Was there anything like that that really got you off track?

Gabe/P: In high school I drank quite a bit. Actually, right before college, I got into an accident and broke my collarbone. After that, I definitely cut down a lot on how much I drank. When I came to college, I started smoking marijuana. I smoked weed back in high school, but my first semester here, I smoked a lot. Well, actually, that really had an effect on me. I had to stop that, because it was making me stop going to class. Marijuana really kills your ambition. My friends are like "Oh come on, you can do it," and I had to tell them, "Oh no man, I can't." I had to stop that altogether.

Melissa/I: I think you have found a really good strength from within now. When you get this report card, and it's so much better than your first semester at Midwestern University, you really need to pause and consider the difference.

Gabe/P: Yes, I feel good about it. First semester, I hated college. Now I love it here.

Melissa/I: In the environment where you grew up, was there pressure that you should go to college?

Gabe/P: It's kind of a weird thing. I was raised by my father and he married my stepmom when I was in the third grade. My dad went to college for a year and he flunked out. Then I think he went back, but he had me at age 21, and he had to drop out. There was always "Go to college if you want." He told me that I would have a better life if I went to college.

Melissa/I: Well, that's good. That's positive. So what made you want to go to college, what made you think "I really want to go to college?"

Gabe/P: I think it was just because from a young age, from people in general, you are told you are supposed to go to college. I don't want to sound conceited, but I am smart. I did well, but I am just horribly lazy.

Melissa/I: So what do you think about that? What did you think when you were advised you were going to have to study about three hours a day when you came to college?

Gabe/P: I came in with the attitude that it was going to be high school all over again, but that I did not have to go to class. Because, I mean, in high school, I never did homework. Until junior year, I almost never did homework, and I would just ace tests. The only time I did homework is if I had to write a paper. If I had to write a paper or do a project where I had to work on it in advance, I would. If it was something like to do an assignment or homework, I never did it and I would at least pull a B. There were a few times when I didn't do as well on a test as I should, but most of the time I would get a B or an A.

Melissa/I: Without doing any homework.

Gabe/P: At the time, I thought I would be able to do that in college and everyone told me, "No you are not going to be able to do that." I have cousins who came here, and they were all like, "No you can't do that." And I said, "No, I will be able to do that." For the first half of the semester, I thought I was going to do it, but as I stopped going to class more frequently, I kind of had the sense that I needed to go to class, but I pushed it in the back of my mind. As the days got closer to the end, I said, "Oh, this is not good." And then taking that final that you didn't study for, like I didn't study for my Calculus final, you are thinking I'm failing this class, I'm gonna fail it. You know something has definitely gotta change.

Melissa/I: Well, that's good that you realized something had to change.

Gabe/P: Well, I wish I weren't as hard-headed as I am. I should have realized it sooner when people told me what I should have done . . . it would have been a different ball game.

End of Gabe/Melissa Excerpt of Transcribed Interview

Seven significant themes contributing to academic underperformance emerged from the participant interview with Gabe: first, lack of class attendance; second, a "why am I attending college in the first place" identity crisis occurrence; and third, a realization that he did not want the job options available to him without the benefit that a college graduation would afford him. The fourth and fifth themes that can be attributed to Gabe's underachievement during his first semester in college were use of marijuana (which he indicated lessened his ambition to study and go to class) and inadequate study time. Themes six and seven of Gabe's narrative involved struggles related to being a first-generation college student and a lack of effort or self-proclaimed lazy work ethic.

Participant #3/Neff

My third participant interview was with a second-semester sophomore, Neff (his chosen pseudonym). Neff is an Exercise Science major, who completed his first year of college at State University with the intention of completing his prerequisites at a less expensive location and then transferring to Midwestern University. His other reason for staying home his freshman year in college is that his parents were going through a divorce and he needed to be at home for family reasons.

Transcript of Interview with Neff/P (Participant #3) and Melissa/I (Interviewer)

Melissa/I: What would you say were some of the difficulties you experienced that caused you to be on academic probation this semester at Northwestern University?

Neff/P: Transitioning from the college where I started, to the academic environment at Northwestern University was difficult, most definitely. You know there is a “stereotypical” situation of a house in college, but that just doesn’t apply to me. On weekends we can have fun, but on weekdays, that just doesn’t happen.

Melissa/I: That’s good.

Neff/P: Yeah. Ah, I would say generally that’s not the issue. One of the biggest issues was the transition of coursework and the sense of why exactly am I here? Which is why I feel like a lot of kids lose interest and start declining in grades. You start doing all this work and everything is thrown at you and you get stressed. You are not going to hold up if you are not studying something that you actually want to do. My issue was I started beating myself up thinking, “You are probably not gonna do very well. You don’t really know why you are here, or what you are doing.” That, in my opinion, is what got me here on academic probation.

Neff/P: I made the mistake of taking two history courses in the same semester, which between those two had fifteen hours of reading a week. Just those two classes required that much study time, and I had three other classes, which I was neglecting because of the two history classes.

Melissa/I: Oh, wow!

Neff/P: That was overwhelming because the one had papers due that were assignments with citations due every week. Yeah, my course load going from IPFW to that was rough. And the other course I took last semester, Diseases in the Human Body, which I am retaking this semester, has only 4 tests. There is no homework, there is no midterm, there are just four tests and that’s what you do. So it’s pretty difficult as well.

Neff/P: I found myself overwhelmed with how much was going on. It was not like that at IPFW at all. That was a huge thing with me last semester. You don’t do well on a homework assignment and then you don’t want to go to class because you didn’t do well on your assignment and you start to beat yourself up because you don’t want to be there. It is just sort of a downward spiral which I’ve definitely broken that habit. It doesn’t really matter what you get on any one thing.

Melissa/I: A few people have said that they felt overwhelmed that not any individual class was super difficult but dealing with everything at once was complicated ...

Neff/P: Really, students are given complete freedom here for the most part, and we had to ask to use the bathroom the year before! That’s if anything I would say what would have been really helpful like to have to take some first year student class—but an honest one, a real one that was almost like a real study table. Like, there would be peer advisors there helping you get used to the idea that everyone has to study this much. You can convince yourself that you don’t have to study as much as you need to, and then you end up on probation.

Melissa/I: So, do I hear you saying it’s hard to get your mind around the idea that you have to study three hours a day, seven days a week, at a minimum, just to stay even?

Neff/P: Yes, that’s a real number, which I didn’t believe. I always thought that was an exaggeration but if you want to do well you have to put the time in.

Melissa/I: That’s great. Earlier you said your parents were split up. Was going to college your parents’ idea for you, or was that your idea?

Neff/P: I would say that is the culture of my private high school. I think we had 99.9% graduation rate and that's what everybody does; they go to college. What I found is that, what I want to do in the future, I needed college.

Melissa/I: How did you decide what to take as a transfer student?

Neff/P: There were so many kids going through freshman orientation and I was a transfer student and there weren't very many classes to choose from. Last semester's schedule was something my advisor and I put together with what we had to use.

Neff/P: Another thing that caused me to end up on academic probation was dealing with anxiety in the classroom. Sometimes the room—during a test especially—feels really small and I just have to get out of there. That was a huge problem for me last semester. I would start sweating and my pulse would be outrageous; this semester is better. A big thing for me was tests. If we were all crammed in a small room taking the test, I would start sweating; I would freak out, start breathing heavily, almost start hyperventilating. Tests this semester were in really big rooms and we were really spread out, so I handled them much better.

End of Neff/Melissa Excerpt of Transcribed Interview

According to Neff, eight intermingled and complicated themes culminated to produce his academic underachievement: first, a lack of experience handling a heavy reading requirement as part of a large comprehensive body of work due weekly. Second, an undercurrent of confidence erosion due to his inability to manage the severe work load, and third, a nagging identity crisis not unusual in college students as to their purpose in studying their chosen major. Two additional themes of struggle Neff dealt with concurrently during his transition year to Midwestern University were the realization that he had to graduate from college to pursue the lifestyle he desired after the college years, as well as transfer student difficulties in available class choices. Unmanaged testing anxiety also became an issue for Neff as he struggled to cope in small testing accommodations. For Neff, time management issues in combination with too much freedom resulted in a breeding ground for underperformance.

1. Cause of Academic Probation: Parents Divorcing or Other Family Concerns
2. Cause of Academic Probation: Why am I at College?/Identity Crisis
3. Cause of Academic Probation: Difficulty of Coursework
4. Cause of Academic Probation: Time Management Issues
5. Cause of Academic Probation: Lack of Confidence
6. Cause of Academic Probation: Fear of Failure/Related to Fear of Change in Standard of Living
7. Cause of Academic Probation: Workload Too Heavy
8. Cause of Academic Probation: Lack of Class Attendance
9. Cause of Academic Probation: Lack of Realization of Life Goal Requiring College Graduation
10. Cause of Academic Probation: Too Much Freedom
11. Cause of Academic Probation: Inadequate Study Time
12. Cause of Academic Probation: Transfer Student Issues - Late Registration/ Lack of Class Availability
13. Cause of Academic Probation: Testing Anxiety
14. Cause of Academic Probation: Financial Issues
15. Cause of Academic Probation: Boyfriend/Girlfriend Issues
16. Cause of Academic Probation: Drug/Alcohol Abuse
17. Cause of Academic Probation: First Generation College Student Issues
18. Cause of Academic Probation: Lack of Effort/Self-Proclaimed Laziness

Table 1. Participant Interview Themes/Codes Generated From Explanations as to Why She/He Underperformed During the Freshman or Sophomore Year

Participant Rationales For Being on Academic Probation	P1/Anastasia	P2/Gabe	P3/Neff
Financial Issues	X		
Boyfriend/Girlfriend Issues	X		
Difficulty of Coursework	X		
Time Management Issues	X		X
Fear of Failure/Related to Fear of Change in Standard of Living	X		
Parents Divorcing or Other Family Issues	X		
Lack of Confidence	X		X
Drug/Alcohol Abuse		X	
Lack of Class Attendance		X	
Realization of Life Goal Requiring College Graduation		X	X
Why Am I At College/ Identity Crisis		X	X
Lack of Effort/Self-Proclaimed Laziness		X	
First Generation College Student Issues		X	
Transfer Student-Late Registration/Lack of Class Availability			X
Testing Anxiety			X
Inadequate Study Time		X	
Workload Too Heavy			X
Too Much Freedom			X

Table 2. Comparative Table Establishing Patterns of Participant Rationales/Causes of Beginning College Students' Academic Struggles

Discussion

In this small-scale ethnographic project, I opted to limit my qualitative analysis to three participants' multithemed interviews. The participants in this study illuminated eighteen different reasons why they struggled academically and ended up on academic probation at this Midwestern University. Interestingly, and perhaps most surprisingly to me, was that each participant indicated no less than seven legitimate, simultaneous, commingling causes for their underperformance. As well, the participants' reasons for being on academic probation were spread across all eighteen data base indicators in the collection (among all structured and unstructured interview sources collectively) with only four instances of crossover. The repeated rationales indicated by two of three participants were time management issues, lack of confidence, lack of realization that his life career goal required college graduation, and "why am I at college" identity crises.

The initial point this information suggests is that students on academic probation have a myriad of reasons why they experienced this academic difficulty. The following idea arose while synthesizing this small-scale ethnographic research: if students have identifiable reasons why they struggle academically during their first years in college, and if these reasons can be identified over a significant period of time in a substantial quantity of students, universities may do well to offer classes to meet these needs on the basis of retaining these highly sought "customers." After all, many millions of dollars are spent by universities recruiting high school students to attend their campuses, as well as general marketing dollars poured into individual states to create provocative, positive images of a campus's identity. Once a student has chosen a particular university as "theirs" and has

commenced the endeavor to matriculate, why wouldn't a university's curriculum benefit from offering first- and second-year students classes and support to help ensure their success, based on research that discloses the very stumbling blocks they encounter? A mandatory "Begin with the End in Mind" class or Freshman Seminar for first-semester freshmen and transfer students, focused on the rationales for underperformance from this study, would directly impact and foreseeably decrease the number of beginning college students who struggle academically. After an institution and a student resolve to benefit from a partnership, that relationship should be invested in to promote evolution and ultimate success: graduation.

Implications for Research

I am inclined to a qualitative, ethnographic methodology of research for the same reasons as Weiss (1994) when he suggests, "We will obtain more reliable information and information easier to interpret if we ask about concrete incidents than we will if we ask about general states or about opinions" (p. 150). The qualitative, ethnographic methodology of this study provides an eagle's-eye view of the living realities of real students who struggle in their initial college academic endeavors. As further study on student underachievement in college broadens through additional interviews and analyses of students on academic probation, implications for research and substantiation of methods of lessening attrition may be enhanced. At the macro level, perhaps this ethnographic data mined through scientific inquiry may stimulate institutions of higher learning to institute proactive, required classes enhancing the opportunity for student success at the college level. At the micro level, this research has allowed me to learn from individual students on academic probation, while affording the opportunity to help them crystallize their academic struggles. Personally, I hope to learn more about the causes of undergraduate academic struggles and what educators like myself can do to change that reality for so many.

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The Empire Struck Back: Cross-Cultural Communication in a Multilingual Classroom

Mathew Bumbalough

Abstract

This pilot study explores language identity in the field of World Englishes as international students in a multilingual writing classroom encounter a Western-centric teaching environment while struggling to become a part of the World English speaking community. In this instance, the students were able to bring their cultural and linguistic identities into the classroom in order to make meaning, and joined a community of practice that took into consideration their agency and L1 identities. Based on my initial classroom observations, I identified a pair of students to interview in order to triangulate and confirm my findings. By conducting semistructured interviews, analyzing paper topics, and learning about the participants' backgrounds, I was able to determine that while English was important to each of them in different ways, their identities were what was most important of all. Through an analysis of their interactions and interviews I assert that they are, in a true sense, speakers of World Englishes who are struggling to create their language identities as they bring their cultural and linguistic capital into the classroom to deal with any issues they face. As a result, there were several gaps I noticed between (western) teaching practices and the World Englishes the students speak. While this is a pilot study, I hope to further investigate my findings in a full ethnography that will expand on the issues in this paper.

Keywords: qualitative research; world Englishes; multilingual; identity; learner agency

Introduction

In Salman Rushdie's essay "The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance" (1982), he says that colonies that were part of the British Empire are now claiming the English language, and are using it for their own purposes. In fact, the uses of English around the world go much further than the colonies of the former British Empire and are now an area ripe for exploration. It is no surprise that the numbers of international students are increasing in United States universities (Alberts & Hazen, 2013), and this number will continue to rise. How, then, are we preparing our teachers and students to deal with speakers of other languages who join their classroom? Going a step further, how do we address the issue of using a World English in a classroom that is, more than likely, approaching English from a Western-centric perspective (see Cook, 1997; Jenkins, 2005; Y. Kachru, 1994; Ortega, 2011 & 2013)? The goal of this paper is to create a dialogue among current definitions of World Englishes (see Bruthiaux, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; B. B. Kachru, 1988; Schneider, 2003),

explore Bourdieu's notion of academic capital (see Bourdieu, 1990 & 1993; Calhoun, LiPoma, & Postone, 1993), and investigate Bernstein's (1999) vertical and horizontal discourses. This exploration is a pilot study more than a full classroom ethnography, but I examine how World Englishes (WE) are used by analyzing and interpreting the results from the study using an ethnographic approach along with field notes, interviews, and writing topics in a multilingual undergraduate writing classroom in order to find gaps in pedagogical practices in a classroom that uses multiple WE. By showcasing how students bring their language identities into their interactions with other students, the teacher, and the text, I demonstrate how educators can increase student engagement and create opportunities for prudent teaching practices in a guided and supportive space. This study contributes to the conversation of WE by bringing to light those instances of meaning-making when a student critically engages with other students using their cultural and language identities, and showing how pedagogy affects the classroom environment. Through this study I hope to spark a conversation that will lead to larger ethnographic studies that could contribute to the dialogue of WE in Western classrooms.

To bridge the gap between WE as it shifts the focus from viewing WE through a post-colonial lens and student practices, I took into consideration themes of learner agency, identity, and communities of practice that I observed it in the classroom. As a result I pose the following research questions:

1. How do students identify themselves when they speak English?
2. How are students able to use their agency as they join a community of practice?
3. What would a model of WE look like that takes into consideration language identity?

I also briefly explore some teaching practices that resulted in confusion between the instructor and the students.

Defining World Englishes and Language Identity

Current Definitions and Models of World Englishes

Over the past five decades there has been an increasing trend of research conducted on the use of English around the world, and there are several models that attempt to make sense of which countries use English. B. B. Kachru (1985) offered the first theoretical model of how nations make use of English through his concept of the three concentric circles. In the inner circle are the "norm setting" countries, or countries that were the colonizers. This includes the United States and the United Kingdom. In the outer circle are those countries that were former colonies of the inner circle, or countries such as India, and the Philippines. B. B. Kachru (1985) claims that these colonies use English as a result of their colonialism. The expanding circle includes those countries that are not former colonies but use English to some degree, such as Japan, Finland, or Brazil.

While this model certainly makes it easier to categorize and label countries based on how they use English, it still lumps speakers of English into groups, making it easier to apply labels that might not fit individuals. Bruthiaux (2003) takes a very critical view of this model, as, after a deeper analysis, it only scratches the surface of what English use around the world looks like, and separates countries based on nationality, race, and politics more than any academically balanced definition. On the other hand, Jenkins (2006) defines

WE as English as it is used in the outer circle. I find myself drawn to the “umbrella label” that covers every type of English (including English as a *lingua franca*) around the world and all of the ways that Englishes are labeled and analyzed (Jenkins, 2006, p. 159; Bolton, 2004, p. 367). I believe this definition helps break down any barriers that were unwittingly put up by B. B. Kachru’s (1985) model, as well as fitting better with the pilot study that I conducted, since not all of the students I interviewed came from former colonial countries. Therefore, in this paper I use the “umbrella label” definition of WE, as it best describes the English I encountered in the pilot study.

As far as the current models in WE, in the past decade alone there has been an increasing awareness of the significance of WE and the effect they have in the classroom. However, there still remains some hesitancy towards acceptance of WE in academics. Bhatt (2001) called this hesitancy the “sacred cows” of English language education; an expansion of B. B. Kachru’s (1985) concept of the state of English education and an attempt by academics to retain the hold on the current status quo in their fields through limiting English to the acquisitional (Western lens of English), sociolinguistic (local varieties of English), pedagogical (how we should model English), theoretical (native vs. nonnative), and the ideological (a standard) (p. 538). Any change in the academic field will not happen overnight, although the increasingly critical turn (read nondeficit notions of English) towards this monolingual bias in the classroom has gained some traction (see May, 2013). In fact, there should be no borders surrounding WE, much like a border surrounding a country (Bolton, 2012). In an age of increasing ease of cross-cultural communication and international travel, it might be misleading to rely on a model that offers limited mobility to countries or people that do not fit a certain criterion.

So where do we turn? Schneider (2003, p. 244) offers a newer model: the Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes that relies on five stages of English development in a specific region, rather than relying wholly on the sociohistorical (or postcolonial) implications about that territory. These five stages still depend on the use of English in previously colonized countries, and while they can be applied to countries that have not undergone a period of occupation, Schneider (2014) did not originally intend for the model to do so (p. 17). Furthermore, he even goes so far as to say that the model might not be feasible for describing the “dynamism of global English,” or the countless uses of English around the world. Instead, he calls for labeling the rise in popularity of English as a “transnational attraction” (pp. 27-28). This term seeks to define those who learn English as learning for the sake of simple attraction, and peripheralizes those who speak a WE but are not in one of the “recognized” countries where English is used socially on a daily basis. While there may be shortfalls in the current models of WE, there seems to be a prevailing theme in literature: the importance of language identity (see Bolton, 2012; House, 2003; Norton, 2013 for examples).

The classroom is not a static place; it is dynamic as identities clash, and the environment changes as students use their agency and position to negotiate meaning and increase their comprehension of another language. Even among the students I interviewed, English took on a hierarchy in their lives based upon their need to join a community.

Language Identity

Language identity is the *desire* of the speaker of a language to belong (Norton, 1997; West, 1992). This language identity in WE then realizes the desire to fit into a group that uses a language as a means of belonging, usually coming before any allegiance to culture or home. In order to belong to this language community, there must be a set of criteria that the user meets. First, the user must be part of a group that uses English as a means of communication, or a community of practice (see Wenger, 1988). This group can rise above a physical location, unfettered by physical borders, or it can be as small as the classroom setting where I conducted my study. This is more than a speech community, since in a multilingual classroom students might not share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds that make up said speech community (see Gumperz, 2001). Secondly, the individual must not be “forced” to join the group. Third, he/she must self-identify as a member of the community. Language identity is personal, and it must be up to the individual to decide whether or not he/she wants to join. I propose that meeting these three criteria and using English as a means of communication will determine whether an individual has the language identity of a WE user in a specific community of practice.

Given this presupposition, how would this ideology interweave with current theories of academic practice, and how would that theory exist outside of any bookshelf in a university library? Bloome and Hardy (2012) say that “there is no theory outside of action” (p. 133). In short, how could the actions I observed in my pilot study be reflective of *current* theories that would support the ideology that belonging as a member to a WE community is based on identity?

Bourdieu and Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital is the attempt by the dominant (in this study, speakers of a Western English) to hold onto an official standard which students try to emulate (Bourdieu, 1991). Another way to explain it would be *Language and a language* (Milson-Whyte, 2013), a way of creating a clear distinction between a standard (Western) English and (nonstandard) WE. The educator would assume dominance in their *field of power* (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 16), or the classroom, while their students would be agents in the field, unaware of the influence of symbolic violence which encourages them perform to a certain standard. The symbolic violence in the classroom is the unconscious transmission of the dominant Language in order to influence or change the social and cultural perception of the students. While not physical, the symbolic violence is powerful, as it puts the students in a hierarchy of *us* (the students) vs. *them* (the teacher). In the multilingual classroom, students who speak a form of “nonstandard” English, or WE/ELF, are marginalized as *their* English would be seen as deficient, lacking certain cultural or societal nuances that would allow them to join the dominant class. As well, there is a tendency by the dominant to keep the dominated in their position in the field; symbolic violence that once again is brought about usually unknowingly by the dominant. Even as students strive to reach the sort of competence that educators expect, there is still an expectation about what competence is.

Canagarajah (2013) defines *competence* not as simply additive (*Language over a language*), but as the “transformative capacity to mesh their resources for creative new forms and meanings” (p. 2). By thinking about competence as a form of translanguaging, or

flexible bilingualism, it helps to delineate literacy as not being just about the academic ability to read or write, but as a way that students bring personal linguistic and cultural capital into a classroom, meshing the two in a linguistic and cultural dance. The effects of this competence on current pedagogy is not difficult to see, as I noticed in my study, but the implications of looking at competence in this light helps to shed some of the Western-centric practices that we sometimes see in the classroom.

Furthermore, it is important for a researcher to use this same sort of competence in describing theory as it relates to a multitude of cultures around the world. While a Bourdieusian approach might work for describing the symbolic violence and domination seen in the Western classroom, will that same approach work in a multilingual setting? How would a classroom with a diverse international population with individual linguistic and cultural characteristics feel about Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence? A Chinese student who comes from a traditional family could see subjugation as a necessary part of life. Filial piety, for example, could be a form of sociocultural identity in which taking care of parents or listening to those who are older than you is an expected social practice (Hwang, 1999). I believe the key word is "expected." As symbolic violence is unknowingly committed, once it becomes an expectation, is it still symbolic violence? I believe not, as there needs to be a conscious effort to maintain filial piety. Going against the expectation would be seen as an act of rebellion against family rather than a chance to throw off the shackles of political or social hierarchy. With that in mind, I would say that the concept still works in the context of this study, but would need to be reconsidered if the same study were to be conducted overseas in a monolingual L1 environment or in a wholly non-Western setting. Furthermore, researchers must be aware of the various cultural and linguistic nuances of their theories, as what might be considered symbolic violence in one region might not be in another. In other words, they must know something about the students' L1. Domination itself might have different meanings, and it would be perhaps dishonest to assume that it would have the same meaning in, for example, America as it does in China.

Where, then, can we use linguistic and cultural capital to show instances where meaning is made and where domination occurs? As I said, I believe it does not need to be in a purely Western setting, but in the context of this study, my own lens is perhaps "Westernized" to see it that way. As a statement of reflexivity, I have to admit that as an educator, researcher, and student, I see the world differently than the students I observed. In short, the problems that I see might not be the same problems that the students see. However, throughout my observations and interviews, I hoped to achieve a sense of understanding about language identity, monolingual bias, and linguistic/cultural capital as I explored more deeply what it meant to be a speaker of a WE in a multilingual classroom. While the lens may not be perfect, I hope it can shed some light on the issue of learner agency and the pedagogical practices that we use in increasingly multilingual classrooms.

Methodology

The Classroom

I began my pilot study in a writing class designed for international undergraduate students, and I followed those students as they completed their course of study. The particular class I was able to observe had 16 students, all of them speakers of English at various levels. Although the majority were Chinese (13 students), others came from Korea (2 students) and Greece (1 student). As a result, the Chinese students tended to speak their native language before, during, and after class with their peers, while the other three were entirely reliant on English to converse with others. The seating arrangement and classroom groups were split up in such a way that the Korean students were not able to talk during class, and the student from Greece could only rely on her English ability. For my nonparticipant observations, I sat in the back left corner of the classroom, a vantage point from which I was easily able to see and listen to all of the students as they worked individually and in groups. To increase the strength of my pilot study it was important to find a classroom like this (multilingual) that provided at least two case study participants in the same classroom. While this study is small in nature, I believe that selecting a representative of the classroom minority juxtaposed with a classroom majority student should lead to more credible results. There were a large number of L1 Chinese speakers, and I chose to observe and interview two students in the class, a Chinese student and a Korean student. In order to protect their privacy as well as the instructor's, the students were assigned pseudonyms, and the data and their identities were kept private.

Observations, Interviews, and Data Analysis

The pilot study was conducted from March 2014 to April 2014. The first day in the classroom, I introduced myself to the students and explained very briefly the purpose of my study. I did not ask for volunteers for interviews right away, as I first wanted them to become comfortable with my presence in the classroom. I made sure to sit near the back, where I had a good vantage point from which I could watch the students as they worked in groups to complete projects and review grammar and writing with the instructor. Based on these initial observations, I picked out two students who participated the most in the classroom and who were most eager to conduct an interview with me. In addition, the two students helped me to redefine my research questions and break down some of the preconceptions about what I would find during my study. Overall, they were both instrumental in bringing a clarity and richness to my research that might otherwise be missing. After selecting and obtaining permission from these two students, I conducted one-on-one semistructured interviews (see Appendix A), asking about their linguistic background, how they saw themselves as speakers of English, why they chose certain topics to write about, why they might use their L1 in the classroom, how they interacted with other L1 speakers outside of the classroom, and why they decided to study English. I followed these initial interviews with further questions via email, and later allowed them to read and respond to the transcripts of their answers to the initial interview questions. During the initial and follow-up interviews, I made sure to take into consideration what I had observed them doing in the classroom, making certain that my interpretation of their actions aligned with how *they* perceived their actions.

Participant Backgrounds

Junjie is a Turkish-Chinese freshman majoring in chemistry. He grew up in the Han region of China with a half-Turkish mother and a Han Chinese father. As a result, he sees himself as a minority in China, and seemed hesitant during the interviews to talk about his linguistic history. Further questioning revealed that he spoke Turkish until the age of four before starting to learn Chinese. What is interesting to note is that when he speaks Chinese, he identifies with nerd culture and enjoys technology, but when he speaks English he says he is more sociable. In explaining why he felt this way, he let me know that when he speaks English, he purposefully changes his personality in order to “fit in” with his idea of Western culture. This was not what I was expecting, and Junjie continued to surprise me throughout the interviews. While he aspires to be a doctor someday, he realizes that he has many hurdles to overcome as an international student to achieve his goal. This is his first year studying abroad, and he watches dramas and TV shows in order to learn English. While growing up in China, his English education was “mute,” or focused on listening to the instructor, so he never had the chance to actually practice speaking English before he moved to the United States. He sees himself staying in the US for as long as he can and has little aspiration to return to China. For his final paper, he chose to write about GLBT marriage in China.

Eunhee is a Korean freshman majoring in Psychology. She comes from Seoul but has lived the past several years in the US. When she was fifteen, she came to the US in order to attend high school at her father’s urging. She enjoys herself in the US, but still sees herself as a Korean person who just uses English as a means of communication, rather than a Korean who uses English to engage with others on a deeper level. She does not interact with the other Korean student in the classroom, but she has many Korean friends she sees daily when attending church and other social functions. Because of this, she speaks mostly Korean throughout the day and tends to congregate with other Koreans at the university. During the class she works with Junjie in a small group to talk about the classroom readings and get feedback on writing projects. Eunhee’s final paper was on baby boxes in Europe, but touched on abandoned babies in Korea as well. Her father pushed her to learn English from an early age, and her ability is quite good. She enjoys working in small groups but feels there are some things, such as the use of Chinese among Chinese students and allowing more time for collaboration, that could be managed better in the class. Also, she wishes she could read more examples of past student work to gauge where she is and what she needs to do to become a better writer.

The last person I interviewed was the instructor. She has lived overseas for a number of years in Europe both as a teacher and a student, and this was reflected by her using examples of studying overseas in a foreign context as a way of relating to her students. By doing so she was able to engage well with the students in the short amount of class time, and provided concise instructions and examples throughout my observation.

Findings

Through the initial observations I was able to start coding instances where the students brought up the importance of English to their own lives, reflected in their choice of group interactions and final paper topics. As I collected more data, I began to code instances in my

field notes that focused on three major themes: the multilingual classroom as a community of practice, the importance of L1 identity, and any instances of learner agency through their engagement with others in the class.

Community of Practice

In analyzing the community of practice for this classroom I took the approach offered by Wenger (1998), taking note of three aspects of interactions, including 1) mutual engagement, 2) joint enterprise, and 3) shared repertoire (p. 2). While these themes developed organically through my observations, I used this model as a way to frame what I saw.

Insofar as the mutual engagement in the classroom, there were many instances of group work and participation. When observing group work I noticed that the students established a standard for working together as teams, and worked through any problems collaboratively. In some cases the groups would also self-censor if a member of that group operated outside of these norms. One instance of this self-censoring occurred when one of the groups (composed of two Chinese students, including Junjie) was working on reading an excerpt from the textbook to define terms and phrases the instructor wanted them to focus on. One Chinese student was confused about one of the words and asked Junjie, in Chinese, what it meant. While I did not understand what they were saying, I assumed meaning when the student pointed to a word on the page, and then spoke to Junjie. Junjie then told the other student, in English, to “not speak Chinese,” and then answered in English what the word meant. When asking Junjie about the practice of speaking Chinese in small groups, he had this to say:

Excerpt 1, April, 2014

Interviewer: I noticed that it’s really interesting that only Chinese groups will speak half Chinese, half English. But in uh [multilingual] groups like yours it’s usually always just English.

Junjie: We have to, I mean uh you have to respect like the members of your group. Right? You can talk secretly in your language, kind of wrong.

Both laugh.

Junjie: Oh I, I do notice that as a group they like speak in Chinese, right?

Junie described the practice of speaking in English as just being polite. Most of the students were Chinese, and while there were many instances of translanguaging among the Chinese students, the engagements I observed between the students relied on a set of rules where speaking English was expected, especially in those groups that were truly multilingual. This adherence to a shared set of rules helped the team to coalesce and form a joint enterprise, or a shared understanding of what was expected of them. As Junjie said, “you have to respect the members of your group.” This respect was a continual renegotiating of the rules depending on who was in the group, but it is what united them as a team. Finally, the shared repertoire was the use of the textbook, paper topics, and group meetings when the students would influence, define, and contribute to each other’s work. There were of course several instances of resistance to the shared repertoire, but the

sharing of resources and feedback contributed to the shared understanding when there were questions about the text or daily assignments.

L1 Identity

Because there were a substantial number of students who spoke Chinese, it was impossible for the instructor to always stop students from using their L1 and translanguage. My interview with the instructor revealed the following:

Excerpt 2, April, 2014

Interviewer: I kind of noticed in the classroom it's, like, you have your groups, like some will be all Chinese and there's two groups that are mixed or three groups. Did you do that on purpose?

Instructor: Well that's the way I did it. There's just so many people to go around and I probably put them into groups. But I can't really be picky about it in case there weren't enough students from countries other than China to mix the groups. I guess in the classroom, though, I could've mixed it up a little bit more. It's just that I have them in their peer groups.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well it was funny that when I was observing the class, the Chinese groups would kind of use English and Chinese. Kind of code meshing a little bit.

Instructor: Yeah, I talked to them about it and, "yeah, it's just so weird to talk in English," and "I know, I know, I know." I try to say that they need to use English so ... "can you just humor me here?"

Speaking English was part of the expected classroom rules. It is an English writing class, and further questioning revealed that most of the students only spoke English during that class. Their L1 identity had to take a backseat to their L2, creating resistance but not an insurmountable amount. While there might be some censoring of the L1, cultural and social issues that were important to them became a cornerstone of how the classroom worked.

Excerpt 3, April, 2014

Interviewer: It seems like a lot of them are bringing global or local issues into the classroom too. I noticed there are about two or three issues about Indiana University and the rest had to do with uh, you know, kind of issues back home almost.

Instructor: Yeah, I know one student who is doing it for the fashion industry but that, her home town has a fur factory. Um, pollution.

Interviewer: Yeah, that was a big one of them, four or so students talking about pollution.

Instructor: Yea, um, I kind of want to go there and see. I've heard so much about it and I really just want to go there and see what actually is there.

Culture and language are inseparable, and by allowing and encouraging and becoming curious about the topic her students picked, she still allowed students expression of the L1 through culture.

Learner Agency Action, Interaction, and Affordances

During my first day in class the students read an excerpt written by Julie Traves (2005) from *This Magazine* entitled *The Church of Please and Thank You* in their textbook (Mangelsdorf & Posey, 2010), describing the world of English and what it means to be a global speaker of English by taking the speaker's culture into consideration. The quote by Salman Rushdie came up during the discussion, which the students at first seemed puzzled about: "English, no longer an English language, now grows from many roots; and those whom it once colonized are carving out large territories within the language for themselves. The Empire is striking back." (Traves, 2005, section 3 para. 3). Junjie did not know what the last line meant. He asked the instructor for a further explanation, but the instructor explained that it was a reference to *Star Wars* and did not mention its connection to the British Empire.

Junjie didn't seem content with that answer, but then the students got into groups to discuss what they liked or disliked about the article. The groups were split up in such a way that a Korean student was in groups with other Chinese speakers while Junjie went into a group with two other Chinese speakers. The group was then interrupted as the instructor told them to next discuss the quote "The Empire is striking back". In the same group I watched as they found the quote, read it silently, and gave their answers in English. I was surprised at how different they were. Some thought that it meant using their native languages rather than English, others thought that countries were using their own language, and some thought that it meant the countries had mastered English enough to compete in the global economy.

Overall the students seemed confused about the pop culture reference that was several decades removed from the present. However, they agreed that the quotation means that countries that used to be colonies of the British Empire were now using English for their own purposes, and by doing so are now able to compete in business and education.

By conducting interviews I hoped to find out how the two students viewed themselves as speakers of English and what problems they might face when they confront classroom issues with a Western bias. After much deliberation, I was able to start answering the question of how students in a multilingual classroom bring their own cultural and linguistic capital into play when engaging with other students, and how they are able to overcome any constraining factors that might hinder their understanding. It became clear that the students used English for different purposes: Junjie had aspirations to stay in the US, while Eunhee was just waiting to go back to Korea. Some of the conversations during the interviews turned to the teacher's teaching style, but it helped me to determine what factors led to the gap between a Western-centric model of teaching and the WE the students in the classroom use. Eunhee had this to say about the instructor:

Excerpt 4, April, 2014

Eunhee: I think she's really nice person. She's really nice. Um, and she try to make up improve how write an essay and stuff. But uh, I have seen a lot of American like, who teaches English in Korea and also English teacher who when I was in high school. And I found out that she was a little different. Um, uh, like um, I think she should be more specific when she talks about assignment. Not just showing the presentation and just exactly what has just been written on it. More examples that she can make. Like uh...

Interviewer: Like an example of somebody's past work.

Eunhee: Yeah.

Rather than it being a clear case of monolingual bias, it seemed more about the way students wanted the information presented in the classroom. My two interviews revealed that they knew why they wanted to learn English, and it was for very personal reasons. This is not a critique of the teaching, this is simply my attempt to create a way forward for English educators who are native speakers to become more cognizant of how students are bringing their cultural and language identities into the classroom.

Outcome of the Study

Discussion

My findings show that in the multilingual classroom, students are using English for their own purposes, not necessarily the purposes of the university or teacher, depending on the rules established in the community or practice. Furthermore, this shows that although there are similar expectations of the students in the classroom, they negotiate meaning in their own way based upon their sociocultural/linguistic background. Junjie, for example, used English as a means of communicating and joining new social groups. He saw learning English as a way of escaping minority status in China and knew he had to learn it in order to stay in the US. Eunhee, on the other hand, saw English only as a means of communication. She was involved in Korean groups and spoke English only when she had to in class. They both enjoyed the classroom but wanted to claim English for different purposes. The differences in why they study English were reflected in their paper topics, interactions with other students, and affordances they took during the class.

The community of practice was different for Junjie and Eunhee, as well. The instructor's rules for group work meant not speaking in the L1 and staying on topic. Junjie followed these rules, and if he joined a group of other Chinese students, he made a conscious effort to speak English, causing some exasperation among the Chinese students who wished to translanguage. For him the classroom rules were the same as the rules in the community that students formed in small groups. Eunhee never sat with the other Korean student in the class, so for her, speaking English was by default; she had to obey the rules of the classroom since she didn't share another language with the other people in her groups. While both of them followed the rules of the classroom and therefore the rules of the community, they did so for different reasons and with different results. Junjie was irritated other Chinese students, while Eunhee seemed to work fine in groups.

The L1 identity of each interviewee was different as well. Eunhee came from Seoul and spoke Pyojunmal (an accent of Korean seen as “High” language), granting her a place in Korea as a speaker of the majority dialect. She had many Korean friends on campus and was content to use English simply as a means of communication. She had also lived in the US for several years and was comfortable with both languages, giving her a more solidified identity. Junjie, on the other hand, grew up speaking Turkish before he learned Chinese at the age of four. He sees himself as a minority and avoided going to a university in the US South, as he had preconceptions about racial biases there. English for him became a means of escape from the dominated and a chance to join the dominating. He self-censored many more times than Eunhee, and his identity was ever-shifting depending on which language or culture he found himself in or using.

I noticed instances of learner agency through the actions, interactions, and affordances Junjie and Eunhee took with other students in the classroom. Junjie was more withdrawn when with Chinese speakers, speaking only in English and content to take notes and listen rather than engage. The other Chinese students also seemed less interactive with him than with other Chinese students, pushing him into a peripheralized social corner over the course of my observations. However, when in a multilingual group he was much more interactive, speaking the most, and eager to please. Eunhee was happy no matter which group she was in, and caused many of her group members to laugh about what she had to say. Her personality also seemed the same when we spoke together in Korean during the interview, and I saw her agency as consistent with how she used language and culture.

Limitations

Throughout the course of my study, there were several limitations. The largest is that the study sample was quite small and covered a short time period. A deeper analysis over a longer period of time would help to refine any misconceptions on my part about what I saw, and the lack of quantifiable data will be worrisome to some groups. As this is a pilot study and not a full ethnography, this is perhaps the largest limitation of all. I hope my study will lead me or others to conduct further studies examining the phenomenon of WE used in a Western classroom. Another limitation is that the model that I used to view WE might not work in all circumstances. This could be for several reasons, but one is that it relies on a Western view of WE and language identity. I had to take time to explain to my interviewees what I meant by identity, and they still seemed confused until I told them it was “how they felt when they used English.” Finally, the identity model of WE I am proposing is not really a model, but more of an ethnographer’s tool kit for looking at WE. I do this on purpose, as I believe a nonstatic model will engage a more holistic understanding of WE.

Future Directions: Bridging the Gap between What We Know and What We Do

Although I approach the use of Western-centric education with a Western-centric lens, I believe that researching the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in a Western environment does have merit. Furthermore, we know that that a larger percentage of international students are coming to the US to study each year, and we as teachers must tackle the idea that a monolingual approach to English education with students who speak a variety of WE is not conducive to helping bridge the gaps between

cultures. As a result, teachers need to practice an informed pedagogy that makes use of the community of practice, the L1 identity, and learner agency in order to bridge any gaps from a wholly Western approach to education. I see informed pedagogy in this case not as knowing the theories behind teaching, but getting to know your students and what they are invested in. In looking forward, I see the results of this pilot study being instrumental in laying groundwork for a further longitudinal ethnography with multiple participants at multiple sites. Furthermore, I see the use of a community of practice as being a powerful tool to describe what I witnessed as a part of this study.

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Read This Book Out Loud: A Critical Analysis of Young Adult Works by Artists from the Poetry Slam Community

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Abstract

This article examines the efforts of notable authors from the poetry slam community who have published Young Adult works intended for the classroom. Numerous secondary educators have embraced spoken word poetry as an engaging art form for teenagers yet often express difficulty in finding age-appropriate material to share in school settings. This literature review hopes to serve as an introductory reference for secondary educators and researchers, and differs from slam-themed reviews in that it specifically highlights artists from the slam circuit who have transitioned into YA publishing. Since the featured authors hail from backgrounds in theatre and performance, the works discussed often incorporate characteristics of oral verse that seemingly transcend the print medium. Also examined is the inherent barrier between oppositional, profane narratives embraced by youth, and the expectations of educational institutions who use censorship to sterilize places of learning. Written by an educator and academic who has been a part of the slam community for over a decade, this article offers an insider's perspective for secondary educators, researchers, and fans of spoken word poetry who wish to know more about integrating the works of prominent 'slammers' into their classroom curricula.

Keywords: poetry slam; young adult literature; literacy; spoken word pedagogy; reading; censorship

The Poet That a Young Me Needed

Whenever I find myself standing in front of a cafeteria or gymnasium filled with hundreds of secondary-aged students, my arms spread wide like I'm suspended on a high dive, I always think about how badly I needed a good poet in my life when I was fourteen. Instead, I learned to write by carving on my arm with twisted staples. I learned to speak by shrieking obscenities at my teachers. The first day I can remember not wanting to die came a couple years later when I was introduced to a book called *Aloud: Voices From the Nuyorican Poet's Café*. For many spoken word enthusiasts around the world, the phonebook-sized tome of poems was the first glimpse at a radical new vehicle for performance art called *poetry slam*. Emotional and raw, with content ranging anywhere between confessional testimonials, political assaults, raunchy stand-up comedy, and hip-hop holler-if-you-hear-me flows, the poetry chronicled in *Aloud* reinvigorated a public interest in performed verse (Kaufman, 1999). A large part of that public interest was kids

like me (Weiss & Herndon, 2001). When I was sixteen I stopped writing drafts of my suicide note and I started writing poems.

Those are the memories I think about, fifteen years later when I'm rapid-fire whipping words at crowds of school kids. I became the poet that a young me needed, a move similarly made by thousands of artists who transitioned from the slam scene to the classroom. Since *Aloud's* publication in 1994, numerous educators have recognized the immediate benefits of introducing performance poetry in the classroom (Holbrook & Salinger, 2006), particularly noting the medium's ability to engage reluctant readers (Low, 2011). Despite the increased desire to use what is often simply called *spoken word* in classroom settings, many educators outside the slam community are uncertain how to introduce slam into their lesson plans beyond playing a short video or inviting a practitioner like myself to class for a one-time performance. The blame need not rest solely on the shoulders of uninformed secondary-school teachers; although slam academics have approached spoken word as a writing pedagogy (Fisher, 2007) and a performance pedagogy (Sibley, 2001), relatively little research has been published that approaches slam as a reading pedagogy.

In the foreword of *Aloud*, coeditor Bob Holmon (1994) declares, "DO NOT READ THIS BOOK. You don't have to. *This book reads you.* This book is a SHOUT for all those who have heard the poem's direct flight from mouth to ear. Hear this book with your eyes! When the Mouth marries the Eye, the Ear officiates" (p. 1). This self-professed "invocation" points to spoken word's ability to transcend the page. Many slammers record their work in audio or video in lieu of the traditional print medium; however, educators would be surprised to learn how many notable artists have published their poems in literary journals, anthologies, and as collected works on small and large presses (Somers-Willett, 2009). And although New Literacy proponents commonly use the audiovisual work of slammers to meet newly imposed digital literacy standards (Brawley, 1994; Harlan, 2008), nearly every practitioner from the slam community that I have collaborated with insistently uses textual analysis as part of their spoken word pedagogy. Just because the works are multimodal does not mean that the print form needs to be excluded (Michael, 2001).

Understandably, this textual barrier has resulted in a low number of opportunities for slammers to create age-appropriate literature ideal for use in classroom reading instruction. By reviewing the few examples of print-based literature written specifically for young adult audiences, this article aims to serve as an initial effort to establish slam as a reading pedagogy. In an attempt to create a familiar ground for instructors of literacy, I will draw comparisons between poetry from the slam circuit and common conventions found in young adult literature. By identifying the similarities between spoken-word pedagogy and pedagogies typically associated with young adult literature, I hope to give literacy educators a foothold for approaching slam through typical means such as textual analysis, group discussion, and short written responses. After exploring the history of slam's "spoken word revolution" (Eleveld, 2003), analyzing the beneficial characteristics of the art form, and addressing some of the barriers practitioners have faced using slam in the classroom, I believe educators curious about using slam will have a better understanding of the pedagogical aspects of the medium. This literature review also dually serves as a

resource for educators who want exposure to more slam artists and as a plea for young adult book publishers to collaborate with accomplished authors from the global slam community.

Themes Shared by Slam and Young Adult Literature

To begin, many educators mistakenly refer to slam as a genre, when in fact it is more of a mechanism. In 1986 a Chicago construction worker named Marc Smith decided to drastically change the way we experience poetry. Academic practices such as New Criticism had alienated casual patrons of performed verse (Gioia, 2002), and Smith fought back by devising a populist contest where competing poets faced off in front of rowdy blue-collar bar patrons (Smith & Kraynak, 2004). Some audience members were given score cards to judge each performance, while others were encouraged to cheer for the poets they loved and boo the poets they did not. Though it began as a quirky game in an Uptown pub, *poetry slam* exploded into a worldwide literary movement in the mid-nineties after it garnered the attention of mainstream entities such as MTV, Lollapalooza, NPR, and HBO (Aptowicz, 2008). More notably, teens around the world came to embrace slam as a powerful avenue for self-expression (Erich, 1999).

Since scholars are at odds regarding whether slam competitions have spawned an actual genre known as *slam poetry*, many proponents such as myself simply refer to poems used in slam as spoken word. Considering that spoken word has reached young readers from countless backgrounds and cultures (Poole, 2007), it is not surprising that poetry used in slam shares numerous conventions with the characteristics of young adult literature. By establishing such connections, educators should feel empowered to draw upon their literacy instruction skill set to form their own unique methodology for reading the poetry of slammers in classroom settings.

First, poetry slam's initial aim was to reject the cryptic nature of academic verse by crafting lyrical content that utilizes "common language" more familiar to everyday audiences (Ellis, Gere & Lamberton, 2003). In a 1988 New York Times article—one of the first major newspapers to cover the then-new slam thing—Marc Smith famously quipped "Hifalutin metaphors got no place here" (Johnson, 1988). Holman echoed Smith's cry, claiming that slam began as an attempt to return written verse back to community spaces by "mak[ing] poetry as natural a use for language as ordering a pizza" (Aptowicz, 2008, p. 10). Many slammers accomplish this task in their verse by utilizing colloquial speech, slang, and non-English phrases spoken in the home (Fisher, 2007). Numerous educators have singled out this characteristic as a critical way to revitalize the stale, antipodal material of traditional poetry units: "We think the problems teachers face with teaching poetry can be addressed by making its oral nature more visible and audible to students" (Ellis et al., 2003, p. 44).

Second, like the underdog main characters in many young adult works, the spoken-word medium often showcases protagonists with marginalized identities (Lacatus, 2009). The open format of slam encourages all participants to share their own story, which essentially promotes the voices of traditionally muted groups and allows writers to feature elements of their unique cultures and backgrounds in their attempts to construct a literary identity (Biggs-El, 2012). An ethnographic study of a youth poetry slam team in Ohio

revealed that participants referred to themselves as having “outlaw identities” (Rudd, 2012), while in another study participants of a youth writing group in the Bronx claimed they adopted a “blues singer identity” (Fisher, 2007). In both case studies young learners from diverse backgrounds used identities constructed in the writing process to form a familial bond, thus developing a literacy community. Slam scholar Susan Somers-Willett (2009) explains that slam participants often use humor and culturally rich themes to align themselves with the audience, a desired dynamic for young readers yearning for relatable protagonists in classroom reading materials.

Third, similar to the many popular socially aware young adult novels, a substantive number of slammers use spoken word as a way to address critical issues that affect their local and global communities (Stovall, 2006). Ingalls (2012) explains, “The spoken-word venue becomes a forum in which participants assert and defend the legitimacy of their social and political views, and the audience is a critical component in the exchange of ideas; their responses to the messages they see and hear help to spark and sustain dialogue, and to validate the voices of youth” (p. 101). In their own study, Bruce and Davis (2000) noticed a commonality in the background knowledge of their students: teens in the classroom were familiar with both the conventions of hip-hop and the grim realities of systemic violence. By using spoken word as a conscious alternative to hip-hop (Aptowicz, 2008), students can address issues including racism, gun violence, gang warfare, poverty, and drug dependency in a way that allows their words to function as an agent of change (Bruce & Davis, 2000).

“Please Don’t Cuss. Please Don’t Cuss. Please... Dammit.”

Considering the similarities between slam and young adult literature, it would seem that spoken word is a perfect fit for classroom reading. However, many educators who are unfamiliar with the populist aesthetics of spoken word have run into pitfalls when attempting to use performance poetry in the classroom. As is, when an educator hears a performance poem they think will resonate with students, typically they have to follow a similar mundane process: manically combing over every word in every line, praying the artist doesn’t swear or say something vulgar that would “disqualify” the poem from potential use (despite any positive content the poem has to offer). This procedure is an indicator of the few inherent barriers to using poetry in the classroom that was originally written for an adult slam audience. Before delving into our review of age-appropriate literature written by slammers, I felt it would be beneficial to analyze three texts written for the adult market in order to give educators a better understanding of the barriers they need to look out for. Arguably, an analysis of these texts will also demonstrate the malleability of the form, and will highlight some of the unique characteristics of transferring poems from the oral medium to the written page.

On one end of the spectrum is a novel written entirely in verse: *Stickboy*, by Canadian poet Shane Koyczan. In this semiautobiographical work, the reader is exposed to the seething emotions experienced by the author when he was bullied as a child. Koyczan’s school-aged protagonist matches several conventions of young adult characters: he is an orphan, raised by his grandmother, misunderstood by his teachers, learning to stand up to a world that seems entirely against him. In a dramatic retelling chock full of figurative language, the novel takes an unexpected turn when the protagonist snaps and becomes the

one thing he despises most—a bully. The novel showcases vivid metaphors that help the reader digest the complexities of violence and abuse: *I was mechanical now / with an autopilot that had grown restless / after a decade-and-a-half of being set to defense. // The once-solitary fortress of my mind / had built for itself tank treads / and it slowly rolled forward to attack* (Koyczan, 2012, pp. 125–126). The text also highlights more visceral passages by displaying them on a separate page, often changing the size and style of the font. Likely an attempt to capture spoken word’s dynamic nature in lieu of using common conventions of orality such as change of volume and use of gestures (Ellis et al., 2003), analyzing similar typographical considerations could be beneficial for linguistic and spatial learners (Gardner, 1983). Ultimately, the text demonstrates Koyczan’s efforts to advocate for the antibullying movement, an act that showcases a slammy characteristic set apart from conventional poetry in that its content often ends with a call to action (Smith & Kraynak, 2004). Koyczan’s activism is evident in many of his works, which may function as supplemental texts for lesson plans focused around *Stickboy*: his Ted Talk presentation *To This Day ... For the Bullied and the Beautiful* juxtaposes coming-of-age-anecdotes, metaphors about playground politics, and expository speech that seamlessly transitions to a live performance of his narrative poem *To This Day*.

A separate video of the poem *To This Day* went viral in 2013—with thirteen million views to date—due to the efforts of the To This Day Project which tasked over eighty animators to illustrate separate portions of Koyczan’s confessional verse, accompanied by seven musicians who created orchestral music to accentuate the dramatic arcs of the poem. By scaffolding the shared themes of the two videos to Koyczan’s longer work *Stickboy*, educators can create a brave unit that succeeds in fostering productive discussion and reflection on violence in schools. A few barriers prevent me from parading this book in every classroom I visit. First, although Koyczan rarely uses profanity in his poems, the few f-bombs he does drop have a crater-sized impact. Second, Koyczan’s immersive use of figurative language may require instructional support, which could make casual student reading difficult. Third is accessibility. In my own search, a paperback copy of the book was available exclusively on his website for \$19.95, with another ten going toward shipping costs from Canada. While I am happy that the artist received a majority of the profit from my individual purchase, I struggle to imagine a classroom buying a case full of copies at thirty bucks a pop.

In the middle of the spectrum is a collection of short essays and poems by Carlos Andrés Gómez entitled *Man Up: Cracking the Code of Modern Manhood* (2012). Part memoir and part self-help book, *Man Up* critiques the toxic conventions that young boys are often taught in our society, such as reverence for war culture, homophobia, entitlement in sexual relationships, and the various implications involved with being a young man of color. While the conversational language of each essay uses few figurative elements typically found in verse, the beginning and end of each chapter are punctuated with topically themed dramatic monologues and spoken word poems. Accentuated by shifts from line break to prose paragraph, *Man Up* essentially presents itself as a woven collection of vignettes that Gómez uses to construct a multifaceted identity in front of the reader. One chapter features the stories of an elementary-aged boy, Carlitos, living in Colombia as an American expatriate, where the author’s childhood self learns a lesson about gender roles after his aunt scolds him for painting his fingernails with his sisters. In another chapter detailing his

middle school years living on America's East Coast, a young Carlos learns that his status as a light-skinned Latino can sometimes grant him privileges not often afforded to his male friends with darker complexions. Gómez's intersectional identity is often conveyed through his liberal use of casual speech, slang, and phrases in Spanish. In a particularly memorable anecdote, Gómez recollects a time as an adult when he was invited to perform his poetry for the residents of Riker's Island penitentiary. The scene comes to a crescendo when Gómez approaches a young man in "tight cornrows" with "deep brown eyes," saying "*Hermano*, we aren't what we call each other. / *Hermano*, we've lost too many of us already. / *Hermano*, me llamo Carlos. Ya nos conocemos" (p. 8). Like *Stickboy*, the content of *Man Up* lends itself well to classroom discussions of issues revolving around aggression, masculinity, and self-esteem.

The main barrier of using this text in some classrooms is the point where Gómez's use of familiar terms exceeds the restraints of appropriate language allowed in certain learning communities. For example, the chapter called *Guys' Club: No Faggots, Bitches or Pussies Allowed* critiques the pejorative terminology that boys are often taught to use against each other at a young age. While discussion on such language is certainly warranted, the conversation forces educators to confront an uncomfortable dichotomy in their classroom: how do you critique inappropriate terms and behaviors in a learning environment that limits language use? Gómez's (2012) poem "What is Genocide?"—available in text form in the book and as a video recorded for HBO's *Def Poetry* posted on YouTube—confronts this stalemate of an issue by reenacting a conversation where a principal discouraged the author from using poems with profanity in the classroom: "They won't let you hear the truth at school / if a person says *fuck*. / Can't even talk about *fuck* even though / a third of your senior class is pregnant" (p. 203).

At the far end of the spectrum is a fictional novel of prose called *Ready Player One* (2011) by slammer and screenwriter Ernest Cline. Packed with references to Atari video games, comic book superheroes, and *Star Trek* episodes, the fantasy/sci-fi novel stands as a homage to nerd culture via its use of a common convention in postmodern stand-up verse: reverent allusion to pop culture phenomena (Eleveld, 2003). In the dystopian tale, we meet underdog character Wade Watts, an orphaned adolescent living in poverty with his aunt in a desolate neighborhood comprised of clusters of fused mobile home shells stacked upon one another. Overweight and insecure about his physical appearance, Watts uses his slightly thinner, definitely cooler online avatar *Parzival* to reconstruct a preferred identity in a not-all-that-futuristic escapist virtual world called OASIS. While the text uses far fewer figurative tools than *Stickboy* and *Man Up*, Cline's narrative is reminiscent of a popular form of cultural sharing in the slam community called "the nerd slam" (Aptowicz, 2008), a safe space where superfans can recite poetry declaring their love for *Pokémon* and *Battlestar Galactica* free from the fear of lunch money gankings and atomic wedgies. For this reason, *Ready Player One* seems special in its ability to appeal to school-aged male gamers and comic book fans who often feel discouraged from discussing their favorite literary characters in traditional classrooms. The book utilizes common language through its use of Internet jargon and other tech-head conventions (such as depicting dialogue as a chat window). Like other dystopian young adult novels, the narrative also raises questions about the implications of approaching an "always online" world. The antagonist force in the

story is a conglomerate group called the Sixers—a greedy corporate entity hoping to privatize the free-to-play online utopia the spoiled Earth knows as OASIS.

The Massive Multiplayer Online game becomes an allegorical metaphor for society's varied attempts to escape from a nonideal world. For example, Wade is shocked when he finally meets his lifelong online friend Aech in person; instead of resembling the physically fit, white male avatar Wade knows, Aech turns out to be a husky African-American teenager named Marie. Although Wade initially feels betrayed by Marie's online switcheroo, he comes to understand that his friend has constructed a Eurocentric avatar to escape real-world prejudice. "From the very start, Marie had used a white male avatar to conduct all of her online business, because of the marked difference it made in how she was treated and the opportunities she was given" (Cline, 2011, p. 320). The inherent barrier of introducing this text in the classroom is that although it is written in the style of a young adult novel, its 80s-centric references to *Monty Python* skits and the *Back to the Future* films seem more tailored to forty-something nerds from the eight-bit era. However, when combining *Ready Player One* with spoken word poems and digital components found on Cline's website, educators can create a geektastic text set sure to pique the interests of superfans eager to learn more of nerd culture.

In retrospect, although each book contains language that disqualifies it from being considered young adult literature, it is difficult to imagine that these texts were created without young readers in mind. Each work functions as a coming-of-age narrative, features a school-aged protagonist, promotes the voices of young people, and models ideal behaviors necessary for making the world a better place. And while the supplemental inclusion of topical audiovisual short works promotes the creation of multimodal author-centered text sets, some educators simply cannot get past the often explicit nature of the art form. Perhaps this clash gives credence to the fear that the culture-rich, populist vehicle of poetry slam may never fit neatly within academic institutions (McDaniel, 2000), which tasks educators with weighing the costs and benefits of introducing emancipatory literature in a structured setting. If your school is typically policed by reactionary parents and administrators, it may be a safe bet that using poetry from the adult slam circuit could be a problematic addition to a conservative classroom curriculum.

Young Adult Literature from Slam's First Wave

While most spoken-word pedagogues use poetry plucked from the adult slam circuit, a few slammers have succeeded in crafting age-appropriate literary texts written specifically for use in secondary instruction. The use of said works is beneficial to traditional educators because it circumvents many problems of using poetry written for mature audiences. This review hopes to promote an underserved arts community that desires increased representation in the established young adult literature marketplace.

Although slam has thrived in underground bars and coffee shops since its inception in the mid-80s, a market where slam artists could make a living never really appeared until 1996 when corporate media outlets like MTV gave their attention to the booming literary scenes popping up in cities such as New York and San Francisco. Poet and slam scholar Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz refers to this preprofessional era as slam's First Wave (2008). One such pioneer from this time is a poet named Allan Wolf, whose organizational efforts were

vital in helping establish slam as the sustainable grassroots community we know today (Abbott, 2008). Like many poets from the First Wave who viewed slam as a temporary stepping stone for writers (Aptowicz, 2009), Wolf eventually left the competitive slam circuit to pursue a career as a full-time author and educator. What sets Wolf apart from most of his peers from the era is that his efforts as an artist have focused almost entirely on crafting poetry for children and young adults.

Wolf is the author of two “middle-grade” novels categorized as historical fiction: *New Found Land* (2004), which details Lewis and Clark’s epic journey to find America’s rumored Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean, and *The Watch that Ends the Night* (2011), which documents the maiden voyage and final moments of the RMS Titanic. Meticulously researched and accompanied by lengthy appendix sections, both 450+ page collections follow a similar template of one- to two-page-length poems told from the first-person perspective of witnesses to each historical event. A common writing convention in the slam scene is the use of the *persona poem*; slam icon Patricia Smith (2000) explains, “in a persona poem, the writer eliminates the middle man and actually becomes the subject of his or her poem. The voice is both immediate, and immediately engaging. In the best cases, the poem’s audience is drawn into a lyrical narrative by someone they want to know better—a taxi driver, Little Richard, an undertaker” (p. 71). Wolf answers Smith’s challenge literally by ending each chapter with a poem from the perspective of Jon Snow, the undertaker tasked with identifying the bodies who died in the Atlantic Ocean. While space in the books is dedicated to notable characters like Sacagawea and the Unsinkable Molly Brown, Wolf spoke in an interview about his authorial intent, “I wanted to know what the story was from all the people behind the scenes. The ones that are in the background” (Wolf, 2012). In *New Found Land* we are privy to the thoughts of William Clark’s slave York, who observes how Clark goes to great lengths to ensure no “family men” enlist for the voyage, yet forces the servant to leave his wife and children behind.

Slammers often approach the exercise of the persona poem in a unique way by giving anthropomorphic voice to animals and inanimate objects (Smith, 2000). The title *New Found Land* is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Newfoundland dog owned by Meriweather Lewis; the shaggy pup’s internal monologue serves as the dominant narrative thread that ties the collection of poems together. In fact, Wolf juxtaposes the dog’s observations of being property owned by a master with York and Sacagawea’s own critiques of bondage, which could serve as a catalyst for in-depth issue-based classroom discussion on America’s history of slavery and colonialism. In *The Watch that Ends the Night*, a poem from the perspective of a ship rat scatters spatially across the page and the tight rhyming lines from the iceberg slowly drift in ominous warning: “I am the ice. I see tides ebb and flow. / I’ve watched civilizations come and go, / give birth, destroy, restore, be gone, begin” (Wolf, 2011, p. 7).

The books utilize common language in a multitude of ways: In *New Found Land*, the scene where the Corps of Discovery reaches the Pacific Ocean is told in a multivoiced poem, woven with onomatopoeic words and colloquial turns of phrase. *The Watch that Ends the Night* betrays spatial expectations readers have of the page when the print of Morse code messages fades lighter and lighter, and when the last words of shipbuilder Thomas Andrews sink off the paper like the drowning Titanic. As the hulking ship slips into the

Atlantic, the reader turns the page to discover a sucker punch of a concrete poem: a thrashing pile of italic phrases such as *god help us* and *you'll kill us all* pool around the center of the page, peppered with words like *frío*, *kälte* and *cold* to represent the frigid cries of the immigrant third class passengers. Surrounding the word pool are clusters of four-line excerpts of a poem called *The First Class Promenade*, which serves as an eerie representation of the lifeboats where spared passengers like Margaret Brown were left to helplessly watch their poorer shipmates die. It seems such a waste that there aren't more creative books of verse based on historical events because texts like these could be a godsend for social studies instructors hoping to embed whole-language instruction into their classroom.

A departure from Wolf's content-based poesy is the young adult novel *Zane's Trace* (2007). A heroic epic in the style of a stream-of-consciousness road-trip novel, the book-length poem reads like the sequential entries of a poetry journal penned by a teenage boy driving cross-country to the gravesite of his mother. Coming to grips with his mother's recent suicide, our protagonist Zane uses written verse to formally question the rigidity of his own fleeting mental state—a warranted assessment considering the impulsive exodus, stolen car, and loaded gun he's stashed the glove box. An introvert with few friends and tendencies for creative escapism, Zane resembles the outlaw archetype many young slammers construct through the writing process (Rudd, 2012). The one- to five-page chapters are labeled as mile markers along the historic Zane's Trace highway, which serves as an allegory for Zane's transcendental search to trace the origins of his identity. Our protagonist's ability to tell the story is confounded by schizophrenia and grand mal epilepsy, and Zane's calls for guidance are answered as he is visited by hallucinations of ancestors from his multiethnic bloodlines. *Zane's Trace* incorporates common language through pattern and repetition by visually representing Zane's synesthesia—a neurological condition of the senses where individuals may ascribe a taste to a certain word or see a sound represented as a color (Spasic, Lukic, Bisevac & Peric, 2012). Zane's synesthesia takes the form of spatial mantras that weave in and out of the narrative almost like the reprise of a piece of music. *Give my mother back her mind. / Calm the demons in her head. / Leave the darkness far behind. / If need be, take me instead* (Wolf, 2007, p. 6). The closer our protagonist gets to Zanesville, the more his internal monologue touches on the topic of suicide. Recent high-profile incidents have begged the need to discuss suicide and mental illness with young learners in our schools, and the relatable antihero of *Zane's Trace* could be an effective way to start a complex classroom conversation on the topics of mental health and self-esteem.

Closing out Allan Wolf's catalogue is a 64-page novella titled *More Than Friends: Poems from Him and Her*, coauthored with another poet from slam's First Wave era named Sara Holbrook. Holbrook's path differs from Wolf's in that she was an established children's book author first before transitioning second to the slam community. Slammers active in the early 90s participated in a time before slam became its own homogenous cultural entity, so a lot of the First Wave was popularized by writers, musicians, and performers with more varied artistic backgrounds (Abbott, 2008). If nothing else, Holbrook's success in both the slam and young adult literary circuits suggests that the two have many shared conventions. As the subtitle of the book implies, *More Than Friends* uses a dueling narrative to tell the story of two high schoolers' first romantic relationship (Holbrook authored the

point of view of the girl and Wolf wrote the point of view of the boy). The shuffling efforts of the two unlearned adolescents in the book are made instantly relatable by our access to the characters' inner monologue. In a tanka called "Foolish," Wolf (2008) writes, "My fly was open. / Spilled our popcorn on the floor. / Stepped on your foot—twice. / Yet the more the night went wrong, / The more you and I felt right" (p. 26). The dueling-author approach forces the reader to stretch their empathetic reasoning, as the young couple's relationship waxes in poems like "Making the First Move" and wanes in poems like "Do Not Bolt Screaming, Clutching All Your Stuff." Holbrook and Wolf give authentic voice to their protagonists by making the speech choices of teenagers: "I hope she likes the way my blue jeans sag— / the boxer shorts exposed. The belt bum-wrapped. / I wear 'em inside out to show the tag: / DKNY—Hilfiger—Nike—Gap" (Holbrook & Wolf, 2008, p. 18). The multivoiced poems beg to be read out loud, which could produce some fun reader's theatre exercises in the classroom. Many of the poems are written in traditional forms like tanka, sonnet, and villanelle, with a short instructional appendix to assist young writers who want to learn the conventions of traditional verse. The book could serve as a catalyst for form-based writing responses about sex, young love, consent, and the heartache involved in breakups. An author's note from Holbrook and Wolf concedes that they cannot speak for the feelings of all young men and women, which suggests that the authors would be open to instructors using their text to spark a conversation about gender roles and nontraditional relationships.

In addition to a lengthy catalogue of picture books and collections of children's poetry, Sara Holbrook is also the author of one tween-aged book of verse called *Walking the Boundaries of Change* (1998). Subtitled *Poems of Transition*, the cover of the book depicts a pair of legs—familiarily clad in rolled blue jeans and Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers—pensively walking a tightrope in the foreground of swollen storm clouds. Lending authentic voice to the anxious uncertainties many adolescent readers can identify with, Holbrook uses a common convention in stand-up poetry called *confessionalism*. Authors of confessional verse typically give voice to issues plaguing their personal lives, first popularized by Sylvia Plath's poems on suicide and Robert Lowell's poems about his deteriorating marriage (Rosenthal, 1959). In the poem "A Different Fit," Holbrook (1998) uses first-person narrative to articulate the awkward feelings of preteens experiencing physical changes brought on by puberty: "Today / I want to fit in / another speck in the sparrow crowd. / Not be perched like ostrich hiding / with embarrassing parts sticking out" (p. 8). Employing a lens popularized in second-wave feminist thought, Holbrook's protagonists use Carol Hanisch's (1970) concept of "the personal is political" to examine how large-scale issues manifest themselves in the personal experiences of the individual. In her poem "Blown Away," Holbrook uses street speech to tell the story of a boy named Tony whose dress and slang are the envy of the entire school. When Tony inevitably joins a gang, which swallows up the individuality his classmates once admired, Holbrook addresses the issue of urban tribalism as it manifests through the experiences of young people. Whereas many young adult novels focus on crafting supercharacters who exhibit desirable behaviors and execute world-saving decisions, *Walking the Boundaries of Change* creates a space where young readers can approach life issues therapeutically alongside Holbrook's characters, with little attention paid to formulating strategies for solving life problems. The poem "My Plan" features the perspective of an adolescent girl vocalizing the insecurities

she feels about her physical appearance—detesting her beak nose, big feet, and Minnie Mouse voice. While many young adult authors might feel compelled to teach this protagonist a lesson in self-acceptance, Holbrook instead allows the character to air her grievances in an environment free from judgment and recourse. Although permitting honest discussions can be a difficult activity for educators quick to give advice, allowing young people a safe space to express themselves is in itself a thoroughly political act.

Like the adult texts analyzed in the previous section, Wolf and Holbrook use live performance and digital resources to make the reading of their poetry a multimodal learning experience. Additionally, since these First Wavers were pioneers in introducing slam to traditional classroom settings in the mid-90s, Wolf and Holbrook have each written several instructional texts to aid educators hoping to practice spoken-word pedagogy in their schools. While uniquely talented in their own right, the successful efforts of Wolf and Holbrook suggest that artists from the untapped poetry slam community could produce powerful texts for teens.

The Later Waves Have Their Say

In 1996, poetry slam exploded into a mainstream global phenomenon, meaning that poets from the Second Wave did not have to leave the slam circuit to make a living as an artist (Aptowicz, 2008). Perhaps it is for this reason that few slammers have made the transition to the young adult market. However, a major characteristic of slam's Third Wave has been a resurgence of small press publishers, giving a few spoken-word practitioners the chance to create texts ideal for reading instruction in secondary schools. Possibly the most successful independent press featuring artists from the slam community, Write Bloody Publishing, was created in 2004 by Second Wave slammer Derrick Brown after he observed that many career poets still relied on Kinkos to personally craft their own shabby chapbooks to sell on tour. Although primarily a publisher of adult-market poetry and prose collections, Write Bloody has released two collections of poetry for young adults: *Learn Then Burn*, and *Courage: Daring Poems for Gutsy Girls*.

The cover of *Learn Then Burn* depicts a flaming book sitting on top of an empty classroom desk, beside the words *A modern poetry anthology for the classroom* inscribed within a sunflower seal. Edited by Chicago teacher and poet Tim Stafford and Write Bloody owner Derrick Brown, *Learn Then Burn* features classroom-friendly poems by dozens of poets on the slam scene—including fan favorites such as Buddy Wakefield and Shira Erlichman. Some poems are original works written specifically for the publication; others are popular poems edited for content, such as Anis Mojgani's (2010) poem "For Those Who Can Still Ride an Airplane for the First Time: I'm 31 years old and I'm trying to figure out most days what being a / man means. / I don't drink fight or love / but these days I find myself wanting to do all three" (p. 82). Fans familiar with the poem will recognize that the editors substituted the euphemism 'love' for another four letter word. Vocalizing what many teenage boys may experience as they grow to question societal expectations of manhood, Mojgani's sobering tone could provide an open door for classroom discussion on gender roles and masculinity. Several authors in the anthology adopt the voices of their younger selves in order to address issues important to young adults. Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz's "Benediction for Prom Night" gives voice to a young girl's anxieties as she

prepares her hair and makeup for the prom, while Geoff Trenchard's "Pox" depicts a teenage boy's inner monologue as he examines his acne-inflicted complexion in the bathroom mirror. To help bring the poem to life, an audiorecording of a live performance of "Pox" is available on an online site called IndieFeed—a performance poetry podcast featuring an archive of thousands of poems. With material ranging from hip-hop sonnets to 8-bit Nintendo odes to zombie persona poems, the verses featured in *Learn Then Burn* use digestible language to address topics that kids care about. A separate *Teacher Guide & Workbook Companion* is also available as a resource for educators, edited by Stafford and fellow public school teacher and slammer Molly Meacham.

A recent release from April 2014, *Courage: Daring Poems for Gutsy Girls* is labeled for ages "twelve to twenty-one," as "a fierce collection of poems for anyone who is, or has been, or knows a teenage girl." Featuring the work of thirty-three women—all prominent artists on the slam scene or in peripheral literary circles—the anthology contains works original to the publication and selected works from other Write Bloody titles. Edited by an all-woman team of Second Wave slam vets Karen Finneyfrock, Rachel McKibbens, and Mindy Nettifee (2014), *Courage* showcases poems that tackle issues important to girls such as body image, sexual assault, gender roles, and motherhood. Addressing the brightline between emancipatory spoken word and the confines of the traditional classroom, a letter from the editors states, "These are the poems we wish we had had when we were younger. They're not all easy or 'classroom friendly'" (Finneyfrock, McKibbens & Nettifee, 2014, 17). This concession puts the burden on educators to select works they themselves deem both appropriate and relevant for their own classroom community. Like *Learn Then Burn*, several authors in *Courage* adopt a reflective voice to address topics important to their younger selves: in the poem "Pretty," Shanny Jean Maney uses a humorous tone to reminisce about her awkward attempts to match the "beautificiality" standards of Vanna White and Miss Piggy, while in the poem "A Letter to the Playground Bully, from Andrea, Age 8 ½," Andrea Gibson uses whimsical childhood imagery to create an imaginary confrontation between the author and the third grade boy who used to torment her. Several poets also utilize non-English words spoken in their childhood households. In the poem "What It's Like for a Brown Girl," Jessica Helen Lopez addresses the struggles she faced as a bilingual speaker in a stuffy MFA program. Lopez uses artistic license to vocalize the thoughts she believes her professors had of her: "You slam poets you, with all your hip-hop and speaking in / tongues. I hope you choke on all that alliteration" (p. 133). As promised, the content of some poems carries a weight much heavier than others, meaning discussion facilitators should be prepared to navigate difficult subject matter if such poems are chosen. Tara Hardy's poem "My, My, My, My, My" offers healing encouragement to victims of rape while Jeanann Verlee's "Swarm" instructs young girls how to urgently say no to young men who have overstepped their boundaries. Video and audio of other similarly themed works by all of the contributors can be found online for educators looking to create a multimodal text set for their poetry unit.

In addition to being a Write Bloody author and editor, poet Karen Finneyfrock achieved success outside the small-press market when her first young adult novel *The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door* (2013) was published by Penguin Groups Viking Press. The cover art depicts a pigeon-toed girl wearing knee-high black boots and black fishnet stockings, with folded arms and a head conveniently cut off by the top of the page. Celia

Door is a friendless fourteen-year-old girl tasked with navigating through catty school hall politics and her parents' impending divorce. Incessant teasing and bullying has urged Celia to "turn Dark," meaning she's adopted a Goth identity with black eyeliner and skull hoodies. While young adult books commonly use toxic tropes to depict members of Goth culture as whiny, cynical, and emotionally unstable, Celia stands in stark contrast as an earnest, relatable, lonely little girl whose only wish is to find a friend. "When I say I turned Dark, what I really mean is that I gave up. I gave up on trying to fit in and make everyone like me ... I realized that, in a field of sunflowers, I'm a black-eyed Susan" (Finneyfrock, 2013, p. 7). While a majority of the novel is told through prose, the chapters are peppered with little notes and poems that Celia writes to herself in her journal—which could lend themselves to prompted classroom short writing responses. The young protagonist even utilizes metaphors to help the reader internalize the emotional implications of plot points in the story. "All you need is one friend and suddenly a weekend looks like a wide-open field" (Finneyfrock, 2013, p. 138). Celia's luck changes when a cool, handsome kid from New York name Drake moves to town and befriends her. Though the relationship begins as a love interest for Celia, Finneyfrock flips the young adult trope on its head when Drake admits to Celia that he is gay. Although she is initially crushed, the well-read Celia helps Drake learn more about LGBTQ culture by taking him to the library to learn about the Stonewall Riots and the anti-AIDS activist group ACT UP. When Celia attempts to take revenge against her middle school tormentors, her plans backfire, and as a result Drake's sexuality is outed in front of the entire school. Feeling the brunt of the backlash Celia learns a valuable lesson about the responsibilities of friendship. The *Sweet Revenge of Celia Door* tackles themes such as self-esteem and suicide, and Celia's perspective could be a fresh way to approach a classroom conversation about the impacts of bullying.

Hopefully, more large-scale publishers will pay attention to artists from the slam community. Karen Finneyfrock's second book of prose for young adults, *Starbird Murphy and the Outside World*, was released by Viking in June 2014, which is a testament to her success at entering the young adult market. Representation in both large and small presses is vital for a healthy arts movement, so it is also important that poetry patrons support the young adult efforts of independent presses like Write Bloody. If publishers recognize that there is a desire for more young adult works written by slammers, perhaps they will be willing to take risks by giving new authors a chance.

Hear This Book with Your Eyes

This article is just an initial attempt to familiarize educators with the conventions of spoken word written for young adult audiences. Though some poetry from the slam circuit is captured on YouTube videos or Compact Discs, literacy educators should not feel discouraged from approaching the written work of slammers through conventional textual analysis. The best advice I can give to educators is to turn their reading instruction into a multimodal learning process (Cazden et al, 1996; Ong, 1980) by reading poems out loud, listening to audio and watching video along with reading texts, crafting written responses, drawing pictures and text on graffiti boards, discussing the content of poems in small and large groups, and even facilitating a classroom poetry slam tackling themes discussed in shared work. Although educators should feel encouraged to treat artists from the community as a resource, it is imperative that teachers avoid quick fixes and familiarize

themselves with the arts community they intend to promote. While this article more or less serves as a comprehensive review of notable slam works marketed as young adult literature, there are thousands and thousands of poems written for adult audiences that could also be effective in the classroom. Educators who wish to dive deeper into the slam medium should feel encouraged to use the works cited in this literature review to learn more about spoken word and its artists.

It is also beneficial for young adult publishers to embrace populist movements like slam that are commonly revered for their inclusion of diverse artists (Somers-Willett, 2008). A study of the 2013 New York Times Young Adult Best Sellers List revealed that only 15% of main characters were nonwhite, only 13% of overall characters were LGBTQ and only 3% of overall characters were disabled (Lo & Pon, 2014). The multicultural artists from the slam community could help meet the public demand for literature that features diverse characters; however, the authors featured in this literature review are a poor representation of slam's overall diversity, which suggests that nonwhite authors from the slam circuit have faced similar barriers in regards to being supported by young adult publishing companies. The cost of not being represented in academic and literary institutions means that many artists from the slam community are not being canonized.

As a spoken word practitioner tasked with assessing my own biases (Peshkin, 1988), I welcome additional research and discourse from academics and educators who are further removed from the community. While other researchers may need convincing, I know that spoken word can save lives, because it saved mine when I was sixteen years old. I'm sure the educator who placed that copy of *Aloud* in my hands had no idea how far that book would take me. Those of us who were inspired by the anthology know the power of placing poetry in the palms of a young person, and it is the duty of this poet-that-my-younger-self-needed to ensure that the youth of today do not walk away empty-handed.

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The Intercultural Reconstruction of Guarani School Linguistic Human Rights: Social Purviews and Literacy¹

Carlos Maroto Guerola

Abstract

This paper seeks to contribute to the intercultural reconstruction of the school linguistic human right to literacy². It questions the monoglossic and universalizing nature with which that right is inserted in the social purview of the dominant groups of global capitalism. Based on a theoretical framework that articulates discourses from Applied Linguistics, Cultural Studies, the Bakhtin Circle, and the New Literacy Studies, in my data analysis I interpret discourses on this concern by the Guarani teachers of the Itaty Indigenous Primary School, located in the Guarani village of Morro dos Cavalos, Santa Catarina, Brazil. Those teachers interculturally reconstruct the right to literacy as the right of the school to safeguard Guarani cultural tradition (claimed upon transformations of the community's forms of utterance and legitimated practices of knowledge generation and transmission which are brought about by transformations in their economy). This right is also reconstructed as a "weapon of defense and survival" with which to struggle for fuller sovereignty over their forms of utterance and, inseparably, over their economy.

Keywords: speech-literacy; Indigenous school; linguistic rights

The Intercultural Reconstruction of School Linguistic Human Rights

Indigenous protests and demonstrations all over Brazil—recently instanced by examples such as the Indigenous National Mobilization or Indigenous April (*Abril Indígena*) (APIB, 2012; CIMI, 2012)—are living threads of the intense and vivid web of articulations in the struggle over Indigenous rights and causes. They illustrate the

¹ This text was previously presented at the Fifth International Symposium on Bilingualism and Bilingual Education in Latin America in Valparaíso, Chile, in October 2013; it was published in Portuguese in the Brazilian journal *Trabalhos em Linguística Aplicada* in July 2014. The Portuguese version of this text can be retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0103-18132014000100012>. English translation by Carlos Maroto Guerola. All quotes originally in languages other than English have also been translated by the author/translator of this text.

² When making reference to 'school linguistic human rights', the word 'school' is used as an adjective (such as, for example, in 'school uniform' or 'children of school age'). 'School' is used instead of the word "educational", once Guarani teachers and leaders always emphasize that "Indigenous education" (*educação indígena*) and "Indigenous school education" (*educação escolar indígena*) are not synonyms and, hence, should never be confused. Therefore, I avoid using 'educational' to make reference to the linguistic human rights concerning schooling.

never-ending battle that these peoples have been waging against the violence of the economic and political projects through which capitalism has taken shape in Brazil for centuries. These projects (called *neoliberal* these days) seek to accelerate *growth* and *development* at the same costs of exclusion and violence of those preceding them.

Many of these enterprises today mean a dire threat against rights that were recognized for Brazilian Indigenous groups for the first time only in the 1988 Federal Constitution. These projects mean a threat particularly against the rights that concern "social organization, customs, languages, creeds, and traditions recognized, as well as [...] the lands they traditionally occupy" (Brasil, 1988/2010, pp. 152-153). Furthermore, they have resulted in the large-scale violence—both symbolic and physical—that many Indigenous communities are forced to face in the daily life of their villages, both in rural and urban contexts.

Within this conjuncture, the master's thesis *There Are Some People Who Do Not Even Think of Listening, Who Give Indians No Right to Speak* (Guerola, 2012), which was based on ethnographic research, sought to contribute to the intercultural reconstruction of the school linguistic human rights of the Guarani community of Morro dos Cavalos, which is located in the city of Palhoça, in the Greater Florianópolis area (Santa Catarina, Brazil). For that purpose, Guerola (2012) researched the language practices that community demands for its school, as well as how those practices are intertwined with the political and economic context that makes them indispensable to the extent of being demanded as school linguistic human rights.

That research was grounded on Sousa Santos's (2002) questions on the alleged universalism of the human rights concept and politics, for they were established upon a "well-known set of presuppositions, all of which are distinctly Western" (p. 44). It is on these grounds that Sousa Santos (2002) puts forward the intercultural reconstruction of human rights. For this author, "cross-cultural dialogues on isomorphic concerns" (p. 46), which cast light on traditionally silenced perspectives, may give birth to rights with "global competence and local legitimacy" (p. 44). These features represent, for Sousa Santos, "the two attributes of a counter-hegemonic human rights politics in our time" (p. 44).

Thanks to the words and help of the Guarani teachers who collaborated in the research,³ the approach to the intercultural reconstruction of linguistic human rights in Guerola (2012) questioned allegedly *universal* rights, such as schooling or literacy. He points out that these *rights* are universal only as human *duties* (bound to capitalist political and economic projects), and that they are actually human rights in the sense that people appropriate those duties and use them as weapons to struggle with when interculturally reconstructed, many times against those duties bound to them. For example, school education is compulsory for all Brazilian

³ I would like to heartily thank the teachers and Guarani leaders Marcos Moreira, Eunice Antunes, Adão Antunes, João Batista Gonçalves, and Joana Mongelo, for their great assistance and meaningful participation in this research. All of them authorized the use of their real names for academic purposes.

citizens of school age according to their Constitution (as it is in many other countries). It is also *compulsory* because it is harsh (if not impossible) to earn a living (and economically survive) in that country for someone without schooling. It is in this sense that schooling is a universal human duty. Guarani people, nonetheless, are taking advantage of this duty by interculturally reconstructing it and transforming it in a way to better prepare themselves to struggle for their rights, for example, their right for an *Indigenous* schooling or their right to have their lands officially demarcated.

Because of this, Guerola (2012) suggests a notion of rights that is closely tied to duties and needs: Within the previously described conjuncture, the violence that most Indigenous communities are forced to face every day—fostered by some elites and lobbies willing to exploit Indigenous lands—prevents them from being able to satisfy their needs and to survive autonomously. Because they are dispossessed of their resources and of the viability of their self-sufficiency, those communities remain tightly locked inside an economic, political, and cultural system that is imposed on them as the only available alternative. It is within such a context of conflicts and violence that denying, demanding, and/or acknowledging rights by some groups in relation to others elicit the “ideological semiotic reaction” (Voloshinov, 1929/1986, p. 22) that assigns meaning to those actions and to the signs that represent them.

Thus, the Guarani people of Morro dos Cavalos currently demand school linguistic human rights such as the right to voice, visibility, and legitimacy, the right to a cross-cultural exchange of knowledge, to (bi)literacy, and to “differential” Guarani schooling, among others. They clamor mainly for land, for this is the key to a fuller sovereignty that makes it easier to guarantee their own rights (whether linguistic or not) by themselves. It is important to note that all of these demands arise from the needs created by the system that harasses them. Both school and literacy are today, for most Guarani people, a need (they need them to survive), a duty (the State and the Law impose them as such), and a right (Guarani people demand them as rights as they are essential to the satisfaction of their needs). Extracted from Guerola (2012), this paper aims to question the monoglossic nature assigned to the right to literacy as inserted within dominant social purviews.⁴ It seeks, moreover, to contribute to the intercultural reconstruction of that right by academically enhancing the visibility of the voices and discourses on the subject of Itaty School Guarani teachers. The following section establishes a dialogue among some discourses of Applied Linguistics, Cultural Studies, the Bakhtin Circle, and the New Literacy Studies. This dialogue is established in order to shed light on the interpretation of the discourses by the Guarani teachers playing the lead in the data analysis section. They interculturally reconstruct the human right to literacy, firstly, as the right to the school record of the Guarani cultural tradition that is demanded as a result of economy-based transformations of community forms of utterance and the practices of knowledge creation and

⁴ For Voloshinov (1986), a social or evaluative purview is “all those things that have meaning and importance for a particular group” (p. 106).

transmission that they consider legitimate. Secondly, the right to literacy is reconstructed as a “weapon for defense and survival,” in the words of chief Eunice Antunes. In this sense, Guarani intercultural rights emerge as viable weapons, as acceptable dissidence according to modernity’s own objectives (Mignolo, 2004).

Hierarchy, Bases of Material Life and Literacy

For the Bakhtin Circle’s philosophy of language, there is an organic relationship between language, ideology, and socioeconomic relations. Once the full range of verbal contacts, forms, and means of verbal communication are determined by the relations of production and the sociopolitical order, changes in economic relations result in changes in the forms of utterance. Those transformations also modify ideology, once the domain of ideology corresponds to the domains of discourse, utterance, and signs (Voloshinov, 1929/1986).

The rigid hierarchy of capitalist socioeconomic relations and political order exerts an enormous influence over the forms of utterance, as well as over the social evaluative purview of particular social groups:

The generative process of signification in language is always associated with the generation of the evaluative purview of a particular social group, and the generation of an evaluative purview—in the sense of the totality of all those things that have meaning and importance for the particular group—is entirely determined by expansion of the economic base. (Voloshinov, 1929/1986, p. 106)

For an object to elicit the “ideological semiotic reaction” that creates a sign, therefore, it is essential that it “somehow, even if only obliquely, makes contact with the bases of the group’s material life” (Voloshinov, 1929/1986, p. 22). The economy patterns social evaluative purviews, that is, “all those things that have meaning and importance” in the eyes of each and every social group. Those purviews lead, for their part, to the “generative process of signification in language” (Voloshinov, 1929/1986, p. 106). It is upon the dialogic relationship between language, ideology, and economy that social groups insert literacy and its forms of utterance in their social evaluative purviews.

Heath and Street (2008) suggest a definition of culture as metanarratives through which social groups make sense of their particular history, habits, and behaviors. It is only through such a semiotic definition of culture that it becomes possible to begin discerning possible links between this concept and Voloshinov’s (1929/1986) concept of social evaluative purview. In this regard, it is worth pointing out the dialogic threads that stitch the evaluative purview of capitalist dominant groups to the metanarrative of modernity (Lander, 2005). This metanarrative encompasses discourses that represent the *Western* and *modern* model of civilization as the most developed one, and hence, superior within an evolutionary scale that subordinates those groups underprivileged by global relations of production and socioeconomic structures. By doing that, dominant groups establish a “radically exclusive universalism” (Lander, 2005) that proscribes

social groups by labeling them either as irrelevant, incomprehensible, or noncredible alternatives to what already exists (Sousa Santos, 2010).

The asymmetry between the symbolic control of the evaluative purview of the groups at the top of the capitalist socioeconomic hierarchy and the delegitimization of that of the groups at its base is supported by the capacity that "socially significant world views" have to exploit the "intentional possibilities of language." Those views, through their metanarratives, "attract its words and forms into their orbit by means of their own characteristic intentions and accents, and in so doing to a certain extent alienate these words and forms from other tendencies, parties, artistic works, and persons" (Bakhtin, 1981, all quotes p. 290).

It is the exploitation of the intentional possibilities of words and forms of utterance that best instantiates the ideological clashes inside the network of signs, discourses, and meanings of social heteroglossia. In Bakhtin's eyes, discourse is constituted by a heteroglossic internal dialogism that is progressively made monoglossic with the help of "centripetal forces" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 425). Those forces reduce the internal plurality of signs and discourses to exclusive meanings that serve a particular evaluative purview. After all, different social classes use the same language and, therefore, in every single ideological sign there is a clash of conflicting value judgments or accents. Dominant classes seek to make signs monoglossic, with meanings beyond class differences, to be able to conceal the clash of accents that takes place inside them (Voloshinov, 1929/1986).

Both the signs and discourses that represent the interactions and practices mediated by written forms of utterance have fallen under the influence of centripetal forces throughout history. Those forces silence the clash of value accents that occurs inside those semiotic elements. That is what happened, for instance, through the exclusion of the meanings that those signs have for Indigenous peoples. In this sense, Franchetto (2008) declares that, despite the impact of writing (alongside its corollaries, literacy and schooling) being among the most indelible experiences in the history of the relationship between Indians and non-Indians, almost nothing has been heard from what Indigenous groups in Brazil have to say about literacy.

As a result of this exclusion, the contrast and polarization between orality and literacy have favored discourses related to the metanarrative of modernity, and hence, the interests of the groups that determine the dominant social purview. In these exclusive discourses, literacy has been defended as a civilizing good, inextricably bound to the "vital needs of modern and developed individuals and societies" (Galvão & Batista, 2006, p. 424). That allegedly evolutionary breakthrough categorizes human beings in "two species, cognitively distinct: those that can read and write and those that cannot" (Kleiman, 1995, p. 27). Within this paradigm, writing has not only been overvalued but also judged essential to the fulfillment of the fullest human potential (Ong, 1982, as cited in Gee, 1994). Furthermore, writing has been considered as the only valid system to demonstrate the human capacity for abstraction (Galvão & Batista, 2006).

The New Literacy Studies, on the other hand, identify those representations with the privilege of Western ideas about literacy over those of other cultures, or, within the same country, of one social class over others (Street, 2003). The distinction orality–literacy contrasts, after all, diverse cultural practices that, in different contexts, require distinct uses of language (Gee, 1994). And if social practices dialogically link discourse to the material activities, social relations, and beliefs, values, and desires of the agents and communities involved in them (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), the polarization of oral and literate practices, to the subsequent detriment of the former, leads to the delegitimization of the material activities, social relations, beliefs, desires, and values of those who grant higher legitimacy to oral forms of utterance.

Such disdain is tied, as noted earlier, to the hierarchization of the socioeconomic structures of capitalism in its current neoliberal version. In this sense, César and Cavalcanti (2007) question how, progressively,

[d]iscourses about the universalization of education grow stronger, as do discourses about almost mandatory digital literacy and the *eradication* of illiteracy—seen as a disease, one that needs to be eradicated—among others. It seems that the more totalitarian and exclusive the model becomes, the more insistently the discourse of the need for inclusion is vindicated. What kind of inclusion? To reaffirm dominant political projects and ideologies? (p. 51)

It is worth illustrating Cesar and Cavalcanti's (2007) questioning of the *universalization* of education and the *eradication* of illiteracy, through the celebrated words of the founder of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the academic-religious institution that has dominated the research and production of grammars and dictionaries of Amerindian languages since the 1930s. The following quote exemplifies the link established by the missionary Cameron Townsend between the initiation of Indians into reading practices and the awakening of their interest in the purchase of manufactured products:

Once they can read, even when initially only in their native language, [Indians] lose their inferiority complex. They become interested in new things. They get interested in buying manufactured articles – implements, mills, clothing, etc. To buy such things, they need to work more. Production grows, and so, eventually, does consumption. All of society, apart from the barman and the wizard, gains some benefit. The Indian is found to be worthier as a cultured man than as an uneducated one sunk in ignorance. (Townsend, 1949 as cited in Barros, 1994, p. 25)

In line with this, the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1957), highlights the authoritarianism of the universalism with which the right to reading and writing has been traditionally represented. Levi-Strauss links the systematic action since the 19th century of European countries in favor of mandatory universal education to the spread of military service and proletarianization. The fight against illiteracy

would be related to the submission of larger population contingents to the capitalist system and its laws. Thus, from Levi-Strauss's point of view, because of allowing and naturalizing the submission of thousands of workers to exhausting jobs in exchange for a salary, written communication favors the exploitation of men rather than their enlightenment. It is in this sense that, according to him, the primary function of writing is to facilitate servitude (as cited by Meliá, 1979, p. 57).

At this point, the relationship between signs, forms of utterance, discourses, and evaluative purviews has been theoretically grounded; the dialogic threads between the dominant social purview and the metanarrative of modernity have been tied; and the polarization between orality and literacy has been identified as a strategy for delegitimizing the material activities, social relations, beliefs, values, and desires of certain social groups. So I shall now move on to the section of data analysis. In the following section, the clash between the discourses of the Guarani teachers of Itaty School and the relations of production and sociopolitical structure that exploit certain intentional possibilities of the signs and discourses related to literacy is illustrated.

“We need to leave everything written at school because the elderly do not exist culturally any more”: Literacy in the Guarani's social purview

As part of their traditional territory, Guarani Indians have occupied the coast of what is today Santa Catarina since at least the beginning of the second millennium (Litaiff & Darella, 2000). However, this is not at all the discourse conveyed by the individuals, groups, and media against the demarcation of Indigenous lands in Brazil. Indeed, some of them have aggressively campaigned against the homologation of the Indigenous Land of Morro dos Cavalos, whose demarcation process became two decades old in 2013 (Guarani Community et al., 2012). The wait is an anxious one for the Guarani, once only the relocation of the Non-Indigenous land-dwellers still living in the demarcated area to non-demarcated areas will warrant the Guarani of Morro dos Cavalos—quoting article 231 of Brazilian Federal Constitution—the land that is “indispensable to the preservation of the environmental resources necessary for their well-being and for their physical and cultural reproduction, according to their uses, customs and traditions” (Brasil, 1988/2010, p. 153).

While awaiting the guarantee of the rights to their own land, the Guarani lack sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency. For this reason, they are dependent on the dominant society, the Brazilian State and the globalized neoliberal market economy. Their current means of support are making and selling craftwork, wage-labor jobs, scholarships for study and research, government conditional cash-transfer programs and sporadic farming and cattle breeding. It was as a result of their harsh living conditions and of the dependence on Non-Indigenous society and their commodities that in the 1990s, alongside the demarcation of specific areas to survive and exist, the Guarani started demanding schools for their communities (Vieira, 2006).

It was in that decade that Itaty Indigenous School was inaugurated in the Guarani village of Morro dos Cavalos. Located immediately next to the edge of BR-101, the main Brazilian highway, the school hosts countless events that take place in the village. Protests, manifestos, official letters, prayers, lessons, etc., are some of the usual discursive genres and practices at Itaty School. The discourses bound to them constitute a unique sample of the silenced social heteroglossia that is voiced there.

At their school, the Guarani of Morro dos Cavalos reinterpret and interculturally reconstruct rights, signs, and forms of utterance. Despite the fact that many of those rights (such as the right to school or the right to literacy) were originally imposed on them as needs by the groups and systems that still harass them, the Guarani appropriate and use those rights as weapons for defense and survival in favor of the economic and political objectives of their evaluative purview. It is in this sense that universal duties (such as elementary instruction, compulsory according to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Brazilian Federal Constitution) are reconstructed as intercultural human rights by the Guarani.

That reconstruction, however, encounters obstacles in the monoglossic nature with which some signs and forms of utterance were *universally* constructed by traditional schooling. In this sense, during my first weeks of fieldwork,⁵ collaborators insistently mentioned how easily their students learn through orality and the difficulties they run into when they need to learn *theoretically*, through writing. In my classroom observations, I actually started noticing how central reading and writing were in daily classroom activities. When I decided to inquire about this matter, the answers started revealing the link between the community's forms of utterance and their social purviews, economic practices and bases of material life:⁶

Antigamente [...] toda criança tinha que ficar na Casa de Reza, aprendendo, era... o ensinamento era passado na oralidade mas ele era praticado, você chegava assim, a criança ali falava assim "Ô, eu quero pescar, eu quero aprender a pescar". O vô, o tio, o pai chamava [...] o filho e ele sentava ali e ele passava todos os conhecimentos oralmente, depois ele pegava e falava "agora vamos pescar". Então quando o filho chegasse lá no rio, tudo aquilo que o pai tinha passado ele ia praticando e aprendendo, então é assim que ele aprendia, com tudo, na agricultura, mesma coisa [...] era toda a questão religiosa e tudo, envolvia tudo [...] Quando os europeus invadiram, começaram a catequizar, eles tiraram, tiraram a criança da Casa de Reza, do dia a dia dele, do aprendizado dele e trouxeram pra escola, a criança começou a perder os

⁵ The research that led to the dissertation from which this paper is excerpted was carried out between 2011 and 2012, using a qualitative and ethnographic approach based on participant observation of lessons and the daily life of the school, as well as on the recording of semistructured interviews with the Indigenous teachers of the institution.

⁶ Fully conscious of the impossibility of a faithful translation that conveys in English the equivalent social meanings conveyed in the Portuguese originals, I decided to keep the original utterances of the Guarani teachers in Portuguese so that the translations could be fairly literal and could be easily compared to the originals.

ensinamentos, começou a ficar sentado ali aprendendo a ler e escrever [...] ai deu-se um conflito, claro né, e dai a criança já não tava aprendendo aquilo que era pra ser né, que era pra ele aprender, e hoje né, hoje a gente já... aqui não tem como eu tar passando na oralidade. (Interview with Eunice Antunes, 07/11/2011)

In the old days [...] every child had to stay in the House of Prayer, learning, it was ... all learning was passed on orally but it was practiced [...] the kid would say "I want to fish, I want to learn how to fish." The grandfather, the uncle, the father would then call [...] the-kid and sit down and pass on all knowledge orally, and then he would say, "Now let's go fish." So by the time the son got to the river, he was practicing and learning everything his father had passed on, this was how he used to learn everything, the same thing with farming [...] it involved all the religious matters, absolutely everything [...] When the Europeans invaded, they started to catechize, they pulled the children out of the House of Prayer, out of their everyday life, and brought them to school, the children started to lose the teachings, they started to remain seated just learning how to read and write [...] there was a conflict and the child was no longer learning what needed to be learned, and today, today we don't ... here it's impossible to pass on [teachings] orally.

In this statement, the teacher and community chief Eunice Antunes contrasts two periods, separated by the invasion of the European colonizers and the introduction of the first schools among Guarani people. Please note that the demand for schooling by the Guarani communities themselves mentioned before in this text arose much later than the first period represented in Eunice's speech, from early colonial times. Within this first period, the legitimated knowledge institution was the House of Prayer. In the *Opy*, knowledge is conveyed through oral practices where social roles are those of the family sphere ("the grandfather, the uncle, the father") and the material activities are economic activities such as fishing and farming, organically linked to practices such as those of a spiritual nature ("all the religious matters, absolutely everything").

Eunice stresses how learning was *practiced* ("all learning was passed on orally but it was practiced"), contrasting this way of acquiring knowledge with the learning conveyed, since early colonial days, by the school, the knowledge institution originally alien to the community that was imposed as a universal human duty. Once introduced in Guarani communities, school, according to Eunice, took children out of the House of Prayer and made them "lose the teachings." Eunice relates this loss to the fact of children having started to "remain seated," undertaking a task alien to "their everyday life," namely, learning to read and write.

The introduction of schooling and literacy in colonial times, according to Eunice's words, was not appropriate to the social practices of the Guarani communities ("the child was no longer learning what needed to be learned"). However, the violence of the imposition of those universal human duties led to the radical transformation of Guarani forms of utterance and practices of generation and transmission of knowledge, thus impeding their current validity ("today [...] here it's impossible to pass on [teachings] orally").

Another transformation that resulted from the presence of school in the Guarani universe, pointed out by the collaborators of the research, is the transfer of the responsibility for the children's education to social roles different from solely family ones. This displacement was accentuated after the (re)introduction of schools in the villages at the request of the communities. Nevertheless, the school is not the only entity responsible for these transformations. The teachers of Itaty School also represented certain consumer goods (whose purchase by the Indians Townsend related to learning to read and write) as responsible for the transformation and delegitimization of oral forms of utterance and oral discursive practices. The following are Adão Antunes's words on this issue:

A gente notou assim [...] quem sabe não seja por causa da escola também, que já não tá quase mais existindo as histórias na oralidade, portanto... que os pais tão... estão soltando os filhos pros professores ensinar [...] o pai tá deixando de passar os ensinamentos oralmente pras crianças, contar história, contar os mitos... [...] Os alunos [...] não tão mais procurando o pai pra perguntar as coisas, eles matam todo o tempo dele na frente da televisão ou ouvindo música direto, mp3 [...] hoje mesmo os próprios pais em vez de sentar ao redor do fogo pra contar historia eles vão todos pra frente da televisão, pai, filho, tudo, a família toda vai pra frente da televisão assistir novela. (Interview with Adão Antunes, 01/11/2011)

We started noticing [...] and this might be also because of school, that there are almost no more stories being told orally, therefore ... the parents are ... handing their children over to the teachers to teach them [...] the father is giving up passing on teachings orally to the children, telling stories, telling the myths ... [...] students [...] don't chase their parents to ask about things, they just kill their whole time in front of TV or listening to music, non-stop, mp3 [...] today even the parents themselves, instead of sitting around the bonfire to tell stories, they all sit in front of TV to watch soap operas.

In this quote, it is possible to identify the shift between the social roles responsible for the education of children ("the parents are ... handing their children over to the teachers to teach them") which is making parents feel exempt from "passing on teachings orally to the children." Teacher Adão establishes a link between this displacement (and the children's inattentiveness to their parents' teaching) to the intense (and harmful, as implied by Seu Adão's lexical choices) relationship they have with some consumer goods ("they just *kill* their whole time in front of TV or listening to music, non-stop, mp3"). This relationship accelerates the progressive transformation, within the family environment, of the knowledge practices performed through oral forms of utterance as much as it transforms the discourses conveyed by them ("instead of sitting around the fire to tell stories, they all sit in front of TV to watch soap operas").

Assuming, with Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), the overdetermination between the discursive and nondiscursive elements of social practices, it is possible to affirm that transformations in the forms of utterance lead to transformations in the material activities, social relations, and values, beliefs, and desires that pattern

the interactions of groups and individuals in social life. The next utterance by teacher Joana illustrates this point:

A tecnologia, ela vem afetando muito o povo indígena guarani principalmente, e tira totalmente da... em vez das crianças estarem brincando, irem pro mato, elas tão em casa, ouvindo música, estão na frente da televisão, eles querem videogame, eles querem jogos. (Interview with Joana Mongelo, 09/11/2011)

Technology has been transforming to a great extent Guarani people mainly, it pulls the kids out ... instead of them playing, going into the forest, they stay home listening to music, sitting in front of TV, they want videogames, they want games.

Those consumer goods identified with *technology* modify the forms of utterance and, with them, the material activities in which speakers get involved (“instead of them playing, going to the forest, they stay home”), as well as their beliefs, values, and desires (“they want videogames, they want games”). In this sense, for example, according to the teachers’ speech, newer generations are paying less attention to the teachings of those that many recognize as the quintessential Guarani libraries, *the elders*. According to teacher João Batista, “*depois que entrou a escola na aldeia, ai já muito poucos que ouvem, os jovens quase não ouvem mais os mais velhos*” (“Since school came into the village, there are very few youths that listen to them, youths almost don’t listen to the elders anymore.” Interview with João Batista Gonçalves, 01/11/2011). From this utterance, it is possible to say that the transformation of forms of utterance induces the transformation of the knowledge practices regarded as legitimate. It triggers, furthermore, the transformation of the epistemology and the ways of generating knowledge that are congruent with the social purview of the group to which one belongs.

Teacher João Batista's words show the participants’ worry over the loss of the elders’ knowledge. They also show their worry over the role school and literacy play as tools for the relief of such an adverse condition:

Tem que deixar tudo escrito na escola porque culturalmente não existe mais os mais antigos também, e acaba esquecendo da língua, ai vai saber só as novas línguas também, ai já não vai ter mais a língua antiga, tem que ter tudo registrado [...] se não deixar registrado vai esquecer de como era a língua antiga também. (Interview with João Batista Gonçalves, 01/11/2011)

Everything has to be written at school because culturally the elders do not exist anymore either and, therefore, it’s easier to forget the language and speak only the new languages, and so there will not be old language any more, everything must be recorded [...] if we don’t leave everything on record, people are going to forget the way the old language was.

For teacher João Batista, writing *has to* play an essential role (“everything has to be written at school”, “everything must be recorded”) in the schoolwork to prevent the “old language” from falling into oblivion. The written *register* of the elders’ knowledge and cultural tradition is considered by the Guarani to be a tool for

preserving that knowledge. It is because of this that the signs *record* and *register* have become recurrent in the speech of Guarani teachers when talking about school literacy:

Esse registro vai ficar guardado, pra sempre também, quando os novos alunos, novas crianças que virão pra estudar, eles já vão diretamente nesse material “ô, tá aqui registrado: nossa história, conhecimento guarani, tá aqui registrado”. (Interview with Marcos Morreira, 31/10/2011)

This record will be kept forever, when new students, new kids come to study they will go directly to that material: “Look, it’s recorded here: Our history, Guarani knowledge, it is recorded here.”

The transformation of the forms of utterance regarded as legitimate enough to be considered knowledge practices, over a change from oral practices toward literate practices, is represented in teacher Marcos’s speech as definitive in the future. From his point of view, newer generations will resort to this written record of the tradition and not to its oral sources (“they will go directly to that material”).

By way of summary, teacher Eunice Antunes’s words below synthesize the relationship pointed out by the Guarani teachers between the forms of utterance linked to the generation and transmission of knowledge and the community’s foundations of material life. Her words also represent the role school is to play in the reconstruction of this relationship:

Hoje aqui no Morro dos Cavalos principalmente que a gente [...] tá muito em contato com as coisas de fora, e aí a tecnologia também tá matando muito a cultura e aí as crianças já não... Aqui não tem um Karai, um rezador que vá todo dia na Casa de Reza [...] não tem um rio próximo pra eles tar pescando, caça, não tem como, agricultura, piorou [...] então pra as crianças aqui do Morro dos Cavalos crescer aprendendo a tradição é difícil [...] aí a escola aqui eu acho importante porque [...] nós como professores temos a obrigação de passar a parte cultural, que é a questão da religião, da tradição, nem que seja no papel [...] eu acho que se não tivesse escola a cultura hoje ia se perder. (Interview with Eunice Antunes, 07/11/2011)

Today, here in Morro dos Cavalos [...] we are in such close contact with the things from outside, and technology is killing our culture so much that children here no longer ... Here there is not a *karai*, a shaman that goes every day to the House of Prayer [...] there is not a river around for them to go fishing, hunting, no way, farming, even worse [...] so for children here in Morro dos Cavalos to grow up learning their tradition is very difficult [...] and therefore I find school here important because [...] as teachers we have the duty to pass on the cultural part, which includes religion, tradition, even though it is on paper ... [...] I think that if we had no school, our culture today would disappear.

These words point out the link between tradition, learning, and the foundations of material life. Eunice makes reference to the impossibility of carrying out some economic practices (“there is not a river around for them to go fishing, hunting, no

way, farming, even worse”), to the lack of spiritual leaders that gather villagers in the House of Prayer, and to the resulting difficulty of *learning* their tradition (“for children here in Morro dos Cavalos to grow up learning their tradition is very difficult”).

To overcome this difficulty, school and literacy are reconstructed by Guarani people as intercultural rights, as tools to reorient and reinterpret the transformation of forms of utterance and knowledge practices regarded as legitimate. Within this conjuncture, literate practices are regarded as the lesser of evils, ones that can assist in maintaining continuity in the transmission of Guarani traditional knowledge (“as teachers we have the duty to pass on the cultural part, which includes religion, tradition, even though it is on paper”). Literacy is an inevitable and indispensable lesser evil for the maintenance of tradition, which is a concept quite often bound up, in the discourses of the collaborator teachers, with the concept of culture (“the cultural part, which includes religion, tradition,” “I think that if we had no school, our culture today would disappear”).

At this point, it is necessary to highlight how recurrent the references are to culture and knowledge as static objects and as synonyms for *tradition* in the speech of all the research collaborators. They are used to referring to sociocultural practices of an idealized past time, *the old days*. It is this perspective that supports discourses about culture and knowledge as objects that can *disappear* and be *killed* (“technology is killing our culture so much,” “I think that if we had no school, our culture today would disappear”), and thus, as something that can be *written* and *recorded* (“Everything has to be written at school because culturally the elders do not exist anymore,” “Our history, Guarani knowledge, is recorded here”).

Such discourses can be resignified upon a dynamic notion of culture, such as that of Geertz (1973) or Heath and Street (2008). As mentioned earlier in this text, these authors defend a semiotic notion of culture, linked either to webs of significance (Geertz, 1973) or metanarratives (Heath & Street, 2008) through which social groups make sense of their particular history, habits, and behaviors. Heath and Street (2008) emphasize the dynamism of culture in their argument in favor of an understanding of the sign *culture* as a verb, due to its infinite and kaleidoscopic power of transformation, rather than as a noun, in order to avoid the static nature denoted by that grammatical category.

It is this semiotic notion of culture, nonetheless, that underlies the Guarani appropriation of universal human duties such as schooling and literacy, as well as their reconstruction as intercultural human rights. It is due to the dynamic nature of culture that the Guarani appropriate those duties, reinterpreting them and locating them within their social purview as weapons they need for resistance and survival because of the harassment of the Non-Indigenous world and the capitalist political and economic system. Those intercultural rights enable, to some extent, the reorientation of the transformations of the knowledge practices and forms of utterance that are threatening the transmission of knowledge and the epistemological bases of the Guarani tradition. Writing represents an indispensable instrument within this strategy of resistance:

A questão da escrita guarani, das historias guarani [...] a gente usa como uma arma também de defesa, de sobrevivência [...] E aí então a gente usa como... uma estratégia [...] tu aprende a falar em português pra me defender, tu aprende a escrever alguma coisa pra me defender, então é tudo defesa mesmo, divulgar a minha cultura pra que a pessoa que conheça a minha cultura ele me respeite do jeito que eu sou assim como eu tô respeitando ele. (Interview with Eunice Antunes, 07/11/2011)

The matter of Guarani writing, of Guarani stories [...] we use it also as a weapon for defense, for survival [...] we use it ... as a strategy [...] you learn to speak Portuguese for defense, you learn to write something for defense, so everything is indeed defense, everything aims at spreading my culture for the person that gets to know my culture to treat me as respectfully as I am treating him.

Teacher Eunice's speech does not represent “the matter of Guarani writing” either as a civilizing good or as an inherently positive evolutionary breakthrough. On the contrary, she represents it as a weapon for defense (“everything is indeed defense”) before the transformation that the hierarchical organization of social relations exerts over the Guarani forms of utterance and discursive practices and, inextricably, over the foundations of their material life and their social relations, beliefs, values, and desires. It is upon this assertion that the concluding remarks are offered in the following section.

Concluding Remarks

The intercultural reconstruction of linguistic human rights at Itaty School enabled the emergence of meanings still plundered from the “intentional possibilities of language” that are exploited by “socially significant world views” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 290), especially by those views that are identified with the metanarrative of modernity (Lander, 2005). In this metanarrative, the distinction between orality and literacy serves to categorize individuals in two distinctive cognitive classes, one of them primary and primitive, to be eradicated (the category of illiterates), and another identified with the essential needs of *modern* and *developed* individuals and societies (Galvão & Batista, 2006). Thus, ever since the social heteroglossia and the clash of social value judgments occurring in the signs and discourses on literacy was concealed, literacy has been traditionally inserted in the social purview of the already monoglossic dominant groups, represented as an evolutionary process which is inherently good and is a universal right that must be granted to all human beings.

This silencing of discourses about literacy invisibilizes the meanings that it has for those communities that are traditionally regarded as illegitimate, such as the Guarani communities and all Indigenous communities alike. Literacy is inserted in these communities’ social purview as a weapon for defense and survival which became necessary due to violent transformations in their forms of utterance— inextricably linked to transformations in their foundations of material life, social relations, beliefs, values, and desires. With this weapon, Guarani people seek to

reorient the changes in their discursive universe and to keep struggling for a fuller sovereignty over their forms of utterance, inseparable from a fuller sovereignty over their economy.

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Bilingual Education in Guatemala

Adriana Soto-Corominas

Abstract

Language shift is a phenomenon by which one language is lost and replaced by another one. This project focuses on the language shift process happening in Guatemala, a country where the majority language, Spanish, coexists with 24 Indigenous languages. The objective of this project was to assess the role and development of the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) model, which was implemented with the aim of promoting a type of education that would integrate the cultures and languages of the country. In order to carry out this project, teachers from different schools and members of the government and of the Academy of Mayan Languages were contacted. Data were gathered by means of informal, semistructured interviews. After analyzing the data, it became clear that the IBE model was not being implemented as it was supposed to be and, therefore, the language shift process continues following its course in the country.

Keywords: language shift; bilingual education; Indigenous languages; Mayan languages; education

Introduction

Antonio de Nebrija (2011), in his prologue to *Gramática de la lengua castellana* [Grammar of the Castilian Language], asserted that language had always been the companion of empire (p. 13, my translation). Although an empire is somehow temporary, the linguistic destruction that it leaves, unfortunately, tends to have permanent consequences. The most widely spoken languages today, such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese, are the present-day traces of historical relationships of conquest and power (Austin, 2008).

Language and power have always had a close relationship. On many occasions, a language has been imposed by forbidding or discouraging the use of other languages. There exist all sorts of discouragements, which range from explicit prohibitions against certain languages, as in the case of the ban on publishing in Kurdish in Syria or the Francoist motto “One Flag, One Nation, One Language” in Spain, to subtler strategies, as in the use of only one language in mass media, the promotion of those who speak a certain language, or the ostracism of those who speak a different one.

Prohibited or discouraged languages are known as minoritized languages, which is not to be confused with minority languages. The difference between the two terms is that the latter refers to languages that are spoken by a small number of people, whereas minoritized languages suffer discrimination or persecution. A minoritized language does not necessarily have to be a minority language, although this happens to be the trend. For example, during the conquest of the Americas, Spanish was the minority language but Indigenous languages rapidly became minoritized.

Regardless of how frequent minoritization is, the importance of preserving languages, and even of being multilingual, is commonly accepted and endorsed by the vast majority. Each and every language reflects a culture, a history, a wealth, a body of knowledge, and a way of perceiving the world that belong to the people who speak it. When a language is lost, all these elements are at risk of being lost, as well.

The process of losing a language is called language shift, since no language is lost without being replaced by a different one. According to the document *Language Vitality and Endangerment* by UNESCO (2003), a language is lost when it is used in fewer and fewer environments and is not transmitted to the next generation. But why would somebody not transmit his or her own language to the next generation? According to UNESCO (2003), there are external and internal causes. The external causes are those which are not related to the speakers, but to their environment, such as in cases of military or religious subjugation. Migration is also an important cause of language shift. In this case, migration should not only be understood as crossing the border into another country, but also as moving from a rural community to an urban one, where there are more possibilities and more jobs, but typically only one language.

Internal causes are those that arise from the speakers themselves (although these are commonly related to their environment). These are cases in which speakers might feel a certain pressure to abandon their language, stemming from a negative attitude of the people around them in respect to the language, or from the fact that these speakers identify their language with unfavorable social conditions. In such a scenario, the possibility of abandoning their language in favor of the majority one seems to be the only way to improve their living conditions and those of future generations. Frequently, together with this language loss, there is also a loss of the culture. Not as frequently, however, there may be an improvement in the living conditions despite these losses. Moreover, there is a misconception that worsens the situation: the idea that monolingualism is the default state. On many occasions, certain communities whose languages are endangered conceive of bilingualism as a transitory stage and assume language shift, that is, the ultimate replacement of their language by the more privileged one, as the only possible outcome (Sicoli, 2011, p. 161).

The question we ought to be asking, then, is how this situation can be prevented or ameliorated. Although it is true that it is the speakers who ultimately uphold or lose a language, there are a certain number of measures that must be

taken that can aid in the preservation and recovery of languages. UNESCO (2003) proposes five main approaches to achieve this goal:

1. Basic linguistic and pedagogical training: teachers must be educated in basic linguistics and in the methodology of teaching and preparing materials.
2. Sustainable development in literacy and local documentation skills: speakers must be educated and should be able to document the language so that it can be studied in a more accessible manner.
3. Supporting and developing national language policy: all languages must be respected and included in national languages policies.
4. Supporting and developing education policy: support not only the teaching of minority languages but also their use as vehicular languages in education.
5. Improving living conditions and respect for the human rights of speaker communities.

In the implementation of these five points, three focus groups need to be drawn upon: speakers, teachers, and government. A large-scale linguistic change in a country is not and will not be likely if any of these three groups is against it. The aim of the present study is to examine the roles of these three groups, as well as their attitudes and motivations regarding the language shift that is currently taking place in Guatemala, a country where, for the last 20 years, the necessity of improving the vitality of their languages is being defended by the Government (or so it appears). In order to do so, we must first acknowledge the global situation of the country and its education system.

Guatemala Before and During the Conquest

In 1492, the first transatlantic encounters between Europe and the Americas took place. In all likelihood, these encounters had a great impact on both the conquerors and the conquered peoples, since each found themselves in very different historical moments. The conquerors imposed their customs, their social organization and, of course, their language. They also welcomed many advances in different areas of knowledge from the conquered peoples. The territories of present-day Guatemala (derived from Nahuatl *Quauhtlemallan*, land of many trees) had already given in to the Spaniards by 1530.

The Catholic Monarchs, especially Queen Isabella I, were the leaders behind the Conquest of the Americas, which came after the Spanish victory over the Moors and the reunification of Spain. Because of this, both Catholicism and the Spanish language played crucial roles in the new territories. One of the first phenomena that took place was *mestizaje*, the mix between the men sent from Spain and Indigenous women. This mix of cultures and races fostered the expansion of the Spanish language and Catholicism. With the arrival of Spanish women, *mestizaje* began to be viewed negatively and *mestizos*, those of mixed American and European ancestry, started to be marginalized. Juan de Solórzano y Pereira, a Spanish jurist of the

sixteenth century, claimed that *mestizos* were despicable because “they are born out of adultery or out of other unions, always illicit and punishable, since there are few Spaniards of honor who marry Indians” (Traslosheros, 1994, p. 54; my translation). It appears, then, that racism was the order of the day at the beginning of the colonial period.

Population growth became the trend, with the *mestizos* (who would soon be called *ladinos*¹) being the group that increased the most in numbers. Some Indigenous communities, together with their languages, recovered from the damage suffered during the Conquest. Other communities, nevertheless, perished over that period of time (Luján Muñoz, 1999).

Guatemala Today

The Republic of Guatemala is administratively divided into 22 departments, each one headed by a governor appointed by the President of the Republic. Currently, Guatemala has a population of more than 15,000,000. Approximately 40% of the entire population proclaim themselves Indigenous. This 40% is not equally spread throughout the country. In some departments, there are more than 95% Indigenous people, as in Sololá or Totonicapán, whereas in other departments, there is no registered Indigenous group, as in El Progreso (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2011).

The Indigenous 40% of Guatemala’s inhabitants, however, does not reflect the reality of the country. It is estimated that the real figures go beyond this percentage by 20% (AECID, 2008). Since proclaiming oneself Indigenous, unlike in other countries, does not provide any social or economic benefits, many prefer to define themselves as *ladinos* to avoid prejudice (Sodepaz, 2011).

The ubiquitous discrimination against the Indigenous communities was aggravated by the Guatemalan Civil War (1960–1996) (Interamerican Commission of Human Rights [ICHR], 2003). During this period, an estimated 200,000 people disappeared or were killed. Of these, 90% of the crimes were committed by members of the military and the vast majority of the crimes (an estimated 98%) were left unpunished (REMHI [Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica], 1999). These were terrible crimes against the civil population, especially in the rural areas, since the intention was to prevent them from forming guerrilla groups. The Indigenous population was deeply affected by this conflict (Pablo & Zurita, 2013). The language, always sensitive to any political conflicts, not only suffered the consequences of the war, but also became a reason for violence itself. *Guatemala, Never Again!* (REMHI, 1999), the result of a daring initiative by the Office of Human Rights of the Archbishop of Guatemala's Recuperation of Historical Memory, is a compilation of the personal stories of the victims of this conflict, such as these two:

¹ The term *ladino* designates the *mestizo* population of Central America who speak Spanish as a mother tongue. This term does not bear any relation to the language spoken by Sephardic Jews.

And so there was a woman named Dominga; she was a Qeqchi. And they always ridiculed her because she didn't speak Spanish, or "Castilian" very well. *Case 1280 (Kiche' man), Palob, Quiché, 1980.* (REMHI, 1999, p. 48)

Rosa and her children can't speak their own language anymore; they have learned to speak other languages. Because of the violence they lost their tradition. *Case 10004, Chacalté village, Chajul, Quiché, 1982.* (REMHI, 1999, p. 48)

The Linguistic Scenario in Guatemala

Despite the difficulties, Guatemala is still a country with great cultural and linguistic richness. As of 2003, as Table 1 below shows, 25 languages were spoken, 22 of which were Mayan, together with Spanish, Garifuna and Xinka.² Spanish is by far the most widely spoken language and is spoken by both *ladinos* and Indigenous people, both as a mother tongue and as a second language. Indigenous languages are scattered throughout the country, but are especially present in the central region (Richards, 2003).

² Garifuna is, strictly speaking, not a Guatemalan Indigenous language since it is the language spoken by the descendants of the African slaves who settled on the coasts of the Caribbean Sea. However, for the purpose of this project, Garifuna will be considered an Indigenous language, together with Xinka and the Mayan languages.

Language	Family	Speakers
Spanish	Indo-European	9.075.469 ³
K'iché	Mayan	922.378
Q'eqchi'		726.723
Kaqchikel		475.889
Mam		519.640
Q'anjob'al		99.211
Poqomchi'		69.716
Ixil		69.137
Achi		51.593
Tz'utujil		47.669
Poptí		38.350
Chuj		38.253
Chalchiteko		35.000
Poqomam		9.548
Ch'orti'		9.105
Sipakapense		6.334
Akateko		5.572
Sakapulteco		3.940
Awakateko		1.272
Tektiteko		1.241
Uspanteko		1.231
Mopan	468	
Garifuna	Arawaka	203
Itzá	Mayan	123
Xinka	Isolate	18
Source: Richards (2003)		

Table 1. Languages Spoken in Guatemala, Language Family and Number of Speakers of the Language as a Mother Tongue

Regardless of this enormous linguistic richness, article 173 of the current Constitution of Guatemala, which dates from 1993, considers only Spanish as the official language, relegating the others to being just *vernacular*: “Official language. The official language of Guatemala is Spanish. Vernacular languages are part of the cultural heritage of the Nation” (my translation). Nevertheless, article 76 expresses an interest in and obligation for bilingual education in specific areas of the country: “Education system and bilingual education. [...] Teaching should be preferably bilingual in those areas with a population that is predominantly Indigenous” (my translation).

³ Spanish is not only the language with more native speakers but also the language that has more speakers of it as a second language. In the same census, the addition of speakers of Spanish as both L1 and L2 resulted in, roughly, 80% of the entire population of the republic using Spanish on some level.

Education

Due to the extremely precarious economic situation of most of the Guatemalan population, especially in rural areas where resources are scarce and are typically intended for survival, education is considered a luxury, rather than an obligation or a right. Because of this, Guatemala is the country with the highest illiteracy rate in Latin America (SITEAL, 2010). Although the overall literacy rate is 76%, this percentage varies significantly across the country. In the department of Guatemala, where the capital is situated and where the majority of the population is *ladino*, the literacy rate is 90%. In contrast, in departments such as el Quiché or Alta Verapaz, which have a significant presence of Indigenous people, it barely reaches 60% (INE, 2011).

The formal education system in Guatemala has five basic levels, as shown in Table 2, some of which are optional and some of which are obligatory.

	Level	Age
1 st	Initial	0 - 3
2 nd	Preprimary	4 - 6
3 rd	Primary	7 - 12
4 th	Secondary - basic	13 - 15
	Secondary - <i>diversificado</i>	16 - 18/19
5 th	Higher	19/20 - onwards

Table 2. Guatemala's Education System

Students are required to complete preprimary, primary, and basic schooling. On the other hand, initial level and *diversificado* are not compulsory. In *diversificado*, which starts immediately following the basic level, students choose one of the possible paths: teaching, secretarial studies, accounting, sciences, or arts, among others. The purpose of the last two paths is to prepare students for university, whereas the first three allow students to enter the labor market with a diploma.

There are two main schooling options in Guatemala: public and private. Private schools have an abundance of resources, but their fees are far too prohibitive for the vast majority of Guatemalan families to afford. In the national standardized tests on reading and mathematical skills, private schools typically occupy the highest positions in the ranking, leaving public schools in the middle and lowest positions. For example, the mathematics tests in 2013 showed that the first public school was ranked 78th, while the second one was ranked 510th (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2014). In contrast to private education, public education is entirely funded by the government and is free for its students. Since it is this public system that the majority of the Indigenous population attends, this will be the system on which this project will focus.

While discussing the education system, the option of scholarships is worth mentioning. In regard to public schools, grants for school transportation and materials are available. In private schools, there are a number of available grants, as well, but they function differently. Private schools offer the opportunity of studying with a full or partial (50%) grant to high-achieving students with references from teachers, but without the necessary resources to pay for their education. Each school dictates its own criteria for students to be awarded the grant, which tend to be very demanding. A number of international NGOs also provide excellent students in financial need with scholarships to pursue their studies until the *diversificado* level (COED Association, 2014).

According to article 74 of the Constitution of Guatemala (1993), children must attend school until they have completed the basic level. In spite of this, education in Guatemala faces several challenges.

Challenges of the Guatemalan Education System

Despite the three first education levels being obligatory, many children do not actually attend school for preprimary and basic levels. Those who live in rural areas do not have the opportunity to attend classes due to the very limited offerings of these two levels outside urban areas. Because of this, many children start primary school without having learned how to read and write. Although it is true that primary schools are significantly more present in rural areas than preprimary schools, the wide dispersion of the rural communities makes it very hard, if not impossible, for a school to be found in each village. This forces many children to walk daily to a nearby village in order to attend class. This becomes a problem in itself since this walk can constitute a danger to young children due to cars driving past them or even frequent kidnappings (Cawley, 2013).

School dropout rates are one of the greatest problems that Guatemalan schools face. Only 46.2% of young people between ages 12–15 were enrolled in basic level schooling between 2008–2012 and unfortunately, there is no available data regarding the percentage of students who attended classes regularly (UNICEF, 2013). The reasons for dropping out of school can range anywhere from personal lack of interest to forced child labor.

The existing Labor Code of Guatemala, last updated in 1995, establishes the rules of labor and, according to article 32, does not prohibit child labor, although it regulates it: “Employment contracts involving youth under the age of 14 must be signed by their legal representatives and require the approval of the General Labor Inspectorate” (my translation).

Nevertheless, and although this is not reflected in the Labor Code, Guatemala ratified in 2011 the agreement of the International Labor Organization, whereby it is established that no child under the age of 15 is allowed to work (Indigenous, Peasant and Trade Unionist Movement of Guatemala, 2011). Despite this fact, 20% of the children in Guatemala between ages 7-14 are already working, and a great number of children (approximately 12,000) already work at ages 5 and 6 for an average of 47 to 58 hours per week (Fundación Proniño, 2014).

Child labor does not affect all of the population of Guatemala equally. Indigenous children living in rural areas are more prone to it than other children since they tend to be poorer and their families usually live on their own agricultural production.⁴

The teachers

The key to quality education is the professional training of teachers. Nevertheless, the teachers in Guatemala are not always adequately trained. Eligibility for primary and secondary school teachers consists of any of the following three criteria:

1. Teaching diploma through *diversificado*: this is obtained after a 3-year period of preparation as a teacher that begins at age 16. At the end of this period, students receive a diploma that allows them to work as a qualified teacher, which makes this option very attractive.
2. Bachelor's degree: this means three more years of university education.
3. Master's degree and PhD: these two types of higher education are highly infrequent in primary or secondary teachers and are more oriented towards university teaching.

The fact that the first option grants the right to enter the job market as a qualified professional makes it very appealing to young people. Therefore, the teaching diploma has become an option that many have chosen. In 2005, 15,050 teachers graduated from *diversificado*, of which only 1,839 were actually hired as teachers (USAID, 2011). It is worth mentioning that many of these young adults choose to pursue the teaching diploma in order to have access to a job that may allow them to fund their studies in higher education. This implies that teachers, besides lacking knowledge in didactics and methodology, might also lack the vocation for a teaching career.

Both public and private schools have monolingual and bilingual positions. If a teacher wishes to occupy a bilingual position, the candidate must pass a language exam. This exam contains oral and written components. The oral section of the exam asks candidates to either narrate a story or answer some basic questions. In the written section, candidates are asked to complete a translation exercise. Because of the simplicity of this exam, not all teachers occupying a bilingual position are necessarily fluent in the Indigenous language they teach (Save the Children, 2011, p. 14). Once a teacher occupies a bilingual position, he or she must be paid a monthly cash incentive, the so-called *bonus for bilingualism*, which is a monthly supplement of 10% of the teacher's basic salary (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2013b).

⁴ It is estimated that 82% of the rural population lives in a state of poverty (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2009a).

Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE)

Bilingual education came into existence in different parts of Guatemala towards the end of the 1980s (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2013b). It grew with the intention of spreading a balanced bilingualism across Indigenous children and bringing them closer to education. In 1995, the Ministry of Education of Guatemala, through the newly established Directorate-General of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DIGIBE), started to regulate the country's bilingual education.

In 2000, DIGIBE drafted and passed the Intercultural Bilingual Education model (IBE), whereby the government established the new school curriculum and the new national language policies. According to the model, the new school curriculum, which is still in force, posits that students have to spend at least 4 hours per week learning the first language (L1). In addition, 2 hours have to be invested in the learning of the second language (L2), which can be either Spanish or the Indigenous language, depending on the school; and 2 more hours in the learning of the third language (L3), English. Apart from this, the current curriculum has the objective that, at the end of primary schooling, children demonstrate high-level linguistic competence in the three languages. More specifically, in the L2, students are supposed to know how to express their opinion, explain, clarify, organize ideas in texts and make use of a wide range of vocabulary (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2013a).

It was not until 2008 when the government, led by Álvaro Colom, carried out the first consultations in different department to uncover, at a practical level, the strengths and weaknesses of the IBE and how it was being implemented. Several schools, national and international organizations, students, parents and teachers took part in these consultations, which were reflected in the document *Modelo Educativo Bilingüe e Intercultural* [Bilingual and Intercultural Education Model] (Ministry of Education of Guatemala, 2009b).

The implementation of the IBE model was supposed to have a number of advantages. To start with, if children were educated in their own language or surrounded by their culture, there should be presumably more class attendance (Chevigny, 2007). On top of that, in the schools where this model was present, teachers would promote respect for and interest in non-*Ladino* cultures and would motivate intercultural relations. Moreover, job positions would be created that would benefit bilingual teachers.

Nevertheless, in the consultations carried out in 2008, many weaknesses in the model were detected. In the first place, the school dropout rate had not been reduced. In the second place, it became clear that the objectives of promoting culture, interculturality, respect and equality among ethnic groups had not been addressed in the classroom. In fact, the Ministry of Education of Guatemala (2009b) determined that “in the practice of the IBE, assimilationist, subtractive bilingualism remains present and focused on the Indigenous population, subsequently contributing to racist and discriminatory practices” (p. 13, own translation).

In summary, the first decade of the IBE did not meet the initial expectations in terms of results. The government in power in 2008 considered improving the IBE model a priority but, so far, no consultations regarding the current application of the model have taken place. It is within this scenario that this study takes place.

The Study

The aim of this project is to investigate the linguistic situation in the education system of Guatemala. The main questions to be answered are whether the Indigenous languages of the country are still being minoritized, whether the language shift is happening at the same pace in different areas of the country and, crucially, whether the IBE model is being fulfilled. All of this takes into account the three aforementioned focus groups: teachers, speakers, and government.

All the information was collected through informal interviews. The selected schools were four public Official Co-Educational Rural Schools (EORMs) in four different villages or towns. Additionally, two teachers from the Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala (ALMG) and one representative of the Directorate-General of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DIGEBI) were also interviewed.

Schools

El Rejón (Sacatepéquez)

Although the vast majority of inhabitants in the small mountainous village of El Rejón, in the department of Sacatepéquez, are Indigenous, the permanence of the language, in this case Kaqchikel, is at risk. Currently, virtually no children and only a few adults speak the language.

Except for a weekly hour and a half class of Kaqchikel, all other classes are delivered in Spanish, since it is the native language of all of the students. The teachers who are in charge of this class, none of whom receives or has ever received the incentive cash payment from the government, are native bilinguals of Kaqchikel and Spanish.

Teachers explain that they have very limited resources in the classroom. They do not have appropriate materials for the students since the very few books they received are out of date or of a much higher level than that of the students. For example, they have sometimes received literature for adults of a very advanced or even native level. Students who only take 1 hour 30 minutes of this language per week are not able to read any of these books. The lack of suitable materials forces teachers to create their own or to purchase them with their own money.

Another difficulty teachers face is their lack of knowledge in teaching Kaqchikel. They claim that they are unprepared and have not been trained to take on the task of teaching a second language to students. This unpreparedness becomes even more evident when teachers are required to instruct more than 30 students at a time, which is the case for the Kaqchikel language classes in this school. This lack of training, together with the lack of the necessary tools, makes teachers use educational techniques that are hardly communicative or dynamic,

such as repetition, copying, and drawing.

Children in this school typically start learning Kaqchikel during their first year of primary school and continue throughout, although the opportunity for studying it cannot be offered every year. Due to the lack of bilingual teachers, a drawing takes place at the beginning of every school year in order to determine in which grades Kaqchikel will be taught.

Upon completion of primary school, the majority of students have a very limited knowledge of basic vocabulary, expressions, and grammar rules. Therefore, their linguistic competence in the Indigenous language is, overall, extremely poor.

When asked about the reason for the observable language loss in the area, one teacher explains that that it is twofold. Firstly, there continues to be fear amongst the oldest generation in the village that their children and grandchildren may suffer the discrimination and humiliation that they themselves had been subject to. Secondly, the shame of the Indigenous people, even of the teachers, towards their own culture is still present. This often causes them to reject their customs and distinctive traits such as their traditional clothes and, of course, their language.

Regardless of this, the teacher claims that the youngest generation in the village shows an interest in and curiosity about the language that their grandparents and great-grandparents speak (or used to speak), and that they even reproach their parents for not teaching them the language. What they are not aware of, in all likelihood, is that their parents are not to blame for the break in language transmission. It was their parents' parents or even grandparents who made the decision not to transmit Kaqchikel to the following generation. However, what the attitude of the children seems to imply is that they are freeing themselves from the prejudices and fears that their parents had internalized.

Quetzaltenango (Quetzaltenango)

In one primary school in this town, Indigenous students coexist with *ladinos* in virtually equal measure. The linguistic situation in this school differs slightly from the previous one. The vehicular language is Spanish, since it is the native language for a little more than a half of the children; however, an Indigenous language, K'iche', is the mother tongue for the remainder of the students in the school. Although a great number of students speak K'iche' as a mother tongue, many deny any knowledge of it. Teachers think this is due to their embarrassment in front of their peers. The story behind this embarrassment, however, hardly differs from the one in the previous village. These children's parents or grandparents internalized the idea that speaking a Mayan language was a reason for being discriminated against and many decided not only to free their children from such a burden, but also to transmit the prejudices against the language. In Quetzaltenango, according to one of the teachers, there is the widespread idea that a person who speaks a Mayan language is backward and not competent in today's world.

Only one and a half hours per week is dedicated to the teaching of K'iche', which is the same amount of time that is dedicated to the L3 (English). The number of students per class is notably smaller than that of the previous school—approximately 26 students in each class. The teaching techniques do not differ from the ones in the previous school, though: repetition, copying, and drawing. Like the school in El Rejón, teachers hardly receive any materials or opportunities to be trained as teachers of a second and third language. Similarly, none of the teachers here receive the incentive cash payment that they are supposed to receive.

San José El Yalú (Sacatepéquez)

The third school was in the small village of San José El Yalú, again in the department of Sacatepéquez. Unlike the previous schools, this one offers not only primary, but also preprimary schooling, and unlike the two previous communities, the transmission of the Indigenous language, again Kaqchikel, is almost 100% in this village. This means that most children in San José El Yalú are fluent bilinguals of Kaqchikel and Spanish. The few parents who decided not to speak Kaqchikel to their children did so because they thought the language would not be useful for their future. The other parents, always encouraged by the schoolteachers, think that their children's bilingualism will improve their chances of finding a job.

Although it is true that children in all grades are taught Kaqchikel daily, especially writing skills, most subjects are taught entirely in Spanish, with clarifications in the Mayan language. The decision to use Spanish for the subjects was made by the teachers, who thought that it was the most appropriate way to make their students totally competent in both languages.

Teachers in this school also have a lack of materials. In fact, the materials they received from the Directorate General of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DIGEBI) were not effective because they were not at the appropriate level for the students. Nevertheless, teachers claim to receive support from the DIGEBI and the Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages (ALMG) in the form of frequent training sessions.

Another difference between this school and the previous schools is that some teachers here receive the much-deserved incentive cash payment.

Santo Domingo Xenacoj (Sacatepéquez)

The last school was in the village of Santo Domingo Xenacoj, also in the department of Sacatepéquez. This village is one of the very few where preprimary is available, which is possible thanks to the intervention of an American nongovernmental organization. The Guatemalan government, in fact, only provides for one teacher in the school. This American NGO looks for funding to implement and promote what is referred to as *early stimulation*. Through early stimulation, children learn how to read and write before reaching primary school and, therefore, start from a more advanced point. The requisites that the NGO imposes on all teaching staff are to master both Spanish and Kaqchikel and to use both languages when speaking to

students and their parents. Apart from this, a clear effort is made by this school to raise awareness among parents of the value of preserving and transmitting their language to their children and to convince them that Kaqchikel is not a backward language but that, on the contrary, it constitutes an enormous advantage. Indeed, this encouragement seems to work when looking at the figures of language transmission. Even immigrants who arrive to this village from different areas of the country show an interest in learning Kaqchikel.

The employees of this school are involved in other aspects besides education. In order to motivate their students to attend class, and taking into account that the vast majority of this village lives in poverty, a system was developed which allows the students to eat breakfast at the school. The NGO purchased lands around the school that they turned into vegetable gardens, thus creating a project that relies on the cooperation of children, parents, and teachers and that is currently working at its full potential. Everyone takes part by tending to the gardens once a week and the produce they yield are for students to eat.

Institutions

Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages (ALMG) (Guatemala)

The ALMG is an autonomous Guatemalan organization that regulates the Mayan languages spoken in the country. Although the ALMG has many offices around the country, it is headquartered in Guatemala City. The role of this institution is crucial in the sense that it occupies a privileged position between the Guatemalan government and other educational institutions. This academy is making great efforts to promote the knowledge and dissemination of Mayan cultures and languages. It is also responsible for teaching a Mayan language to recently graduated teachers so that they can occupy a bilingual position. In addition to that, it provides training to teachers who are interested in improving their teaching skills.

A teacher from the ALMG acknowledges the ambiguous role of the government in how it develops bilingual education in the country. He estimates that the IBE model is carried out at about only 5% of its potential. This means that only 5% of the current curriculum is met, that only 5% of the money which should be invested is actually invested, that there are only 5% of the bilingual teachers there should be, and that this education only reaches 5% of the schools it should reach.

He also admits that the incentive cash payment for bilingual teachers is not being distributed equitably. Most of those who should be receiving it are not, and others with the appropriate connections in the government are.

This is not the only flaw of the government regarding the issue of bilingual education. Another clear example, according to a member of the ALMG, is the sea of red tape that prevents the Ministry of Education from making use of its allocated budget, which, in turn, allows for an annual reduction of the allegedly underused budget. He also agrees with the view that bilingual teachers do not have the required knowledge of L2 teaching methodology and teaching skills, and that the Ministry of Education is not providing them with appropriate instruction. In other

words, the government is not training teachers who are able or willing to take on the crucial task of teaching an L2 in the country. He finally concludes that the IBE model, designed as it is, cannot work, since it was initially designed in government offices, without knowing or taking into account the reality of the country and the options that it may offer.

When asked for possible paths of linguistic recovery in the country, his answer is clear-cut. The first step to be taken is to stop treating Guatemalan Indigenous communities as part of the country's heritage and to start treating them as living, contemporary communities. The second step is to promote the officialization of Indigenous languages and not to relegate them to vernacular languages. These languages should be normalized, they should be used in daily situations in public and official venues, they should appear on signs and advertisements, and they should be perceived as normal and vehicular languages. The attitude of the government with respect to bilingual education must change, as well. Immediate results of bilingual education cannot be expected. Most times, the results of this type of education are only apparent in the long run and the most significant result, the one that should really matter, is attitudinal, and so it is not easily quantifiable. After these changes are made, he claims, it is only a matter of effort and time before Indigenous languages regain social acceptance and, consequently, speakers.

Directorate General of Intercultural Bilingual Education (DIGEBI) (Sacatepéquez)

The last stop was the DIGEBI, which is part of the Ministry of Education. One of its members acknowledges that the government has a remarkable interest in defending and preserving Mayan languages that, unfortunately, not everyone in the country seems to share. They claim that a considerable amount of material is sent out to schools for bilingual teachers, especially paper, pens, and, in some cases, dictionaries and books. He says that the lack of bilingual teachers is to blame for the ineffectiveness of the IBE model because in areas where there are enough bilingual teachers, bilingual education works perfectly. In addition to that, he maintains that the incentive cash payment for bilingual teachers has not been implemented for five or more years, so nobody receives it nowadays.

It is hard to discern whether the words of this member of the DIGEBI are the result of a well-learned propaganda-driven account or of utter conviction, which, in turn, would reflect a profound ignorance of the current situation as it stands. In any case, it is undeniable that his words do not reflect the current state of the IBE model in any way.

Conclusions

The transatlantic encounters of 500 years ago did not bring good luck to the autochthonous languages of present-day Guatemala. After centuries of being minoritized, the Indigenous languages started to gain, at least apparently, political recognition around the 1980s. Nevertheless, after listening to different testimonies, it seems that this recognition is not as solid as it appears, and that Indigenous

languages are still perceived as a negative identity trait. These languages are no longer being transmitted to children everywhere outright. This implies that the Indigenous languages of Guatemala are undergoing a process of language shift, although at a different pace in different areas of the country.

After talking to teachers of different schools and members of two important institutions, it goes without saying that the current law put forward by the IBE model is neither enforced nor obeyed the country. There are seven closely interrelated challenges to the IBE model. The first challenge is Guatemala's language policy, which minoritizes all languages except Spanish, and consequently supports subtractive bilingualism. The second problem is the lack of qualified bilingual teachers who can take on the task of teaching a second (or third) language. The third main problem is the lack of economic resources provided by the government, which prevents many children from having access to preprimary and basic education, hampers the creation and distribution of new materials and hinders the training of teachers. The fourth problem is the inefficient administration of the resources that do exist, as seen in how the incentive cash payment is distributed and the several bureaucratic difficulties in making use of the allocated budget for bilingual education. The fifth problem is the huge lack of materials that are appropriate to the level, age, and circumstances of the students. The sixth problem is an academic curriculum that is not implemented in reality. Its hours per week requirements are not met and its social and communicative aims are not dealt with, let alone attained. The last, and possibly most important, problem is the widespread disinterest in the preservation of these languages. Since many speakers of Indigenous languages think that their language lies at the root of their situation of inequality, inferiority, and marginalization, many of them perceive their language shift as a way of improving their living conditions.

If history has taught us anything, it is that language shift, before completed, is a reversible phenomenon, but reversing it is a long-term process in which society needs to become involved at all levels. This requires commitment, dedication, investment, and effort, but, above all, it requires great amounts of respect.

We have the right to be equal when difference diminishes us; we have the right to be different whenever equality decharacterizes us.

—Bonaventure de Souza Santos

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Multimodal Literacy through Children's Drawings in a Romani Community

Hsiao-Chin Kuo

Abstract

Being part of an ethnographic research project, which investigated the funds of knowledge and literacy practices of a Romani community in northwestern Romania, this paper presents an exploratory examination, seeking ways to understand drawings and sketches as multimodal texts produced by five Romani children in this community. In general, Romani people, living on the margins of society, have often been labeled illiterate and been discriminated against. The examination of these Romani children's drawings and sketches illuminated two features of their multimodal literacy practices—intertextuality and design—and scrutinized the stereotype of illiteracy thrust upon the Romani people. Based on the examination of the multimodal literacy practices of these Romani children, implications are drawn, including pedagogical applications, and future research directions are suggested.

Keywords: ethnographic research; funds of knowledge; literacy practices, Romani community; multimodal literacy

Introduction

The Roma¹ are an ethnically distinct group inhabiting almost all continents. A great number of the Roma make their homes in Europe (mostly in Central and Eastern European countries) and in North and South America (Hancock, 2002; Miquel-Martí & Sordé-Martí, 2008; Vargas Clavería & Gómez Alonso, 2003). To the Gadge (the non-Romani people), they are commonly known as Gypsies, a term that originated from a mistaken assumption that they came from Egypt (Liégeois, 1987, p. 10). Instead, many scholars believe that they originated from Northern or Central India and took various migration routes in a mixture of groups beginning around the ninth century, possibly due to military persecution (Achim, 2004; Hancock, 2002; Margalit & Matras, 2007; Mayall, 1988; Vargas Clavería & Gómez Alonso, 2003). Throughout their history, they have experienced racism and persecution in various forms, such as *Porrajmos* (a Romani Holocaust during the Nazi era), enslavement, and deportation under communist governments (more examples in Stauber & Vago,

¹ Around the world, different names are used to refer to those commonly known as Gypsies. In this paper, the term *Roma* is used to refer to this group. As suggested by Jean-Pierre Liégeois (2007), this name reflects “the sociocultural reality and the political will of a growing number of groups in the world, who do recognize themselves as Roma” (p. 9).

2007). Due to political and social discrimination, many Romani people worldwide are marginalized and live in poverty (Revenge, Ringold, & Tracy, 2002).

A great number of Romani people are labelled as illiterate, and thus their children are often viewed from a deficit viewpoint (Crespo, Pallí, & Lalueza, 2002; Cudworth, 2010). However, from a multimodal literacy viewpoint, I hope to make visible their hidden strengths through the drawings and sketches created by the Romani children.

This paper presents an exploratory examination, based on my dissertation project which investigated the funds of knowledge and literacy practices of a Romani community in northwestern Romania. Research in the Romani context has mostly addressed social issues, such as discrimination and poverty. Not many studies focus on literacy practices of Romani children. In the following section, I review the limited extant research on this topic.

Literacy Practices in the Romani Context

From a perspective that views literacy as a set of discrete skills for the decoding of print texts, the Romani people are considered to account for about 50% of the illiteracy rate in Europe, while in some areas the number can reach 80% or higher (Cudworth, 2010). In some studies, the concept of literacy is investigated “in the context of access (or the lack of it) to the mainstream education system” (Levinson, 2007, p. 9). Regardless, these views present an autonomous model that has been challenged by scholars, particularly from anthropology and sociolinguistics.

Rather than taking the illiteracy perspective, some studies investigate literacy practices in the lives of the Roma from a sociocultural aspect. For example, in the Romani culture, *Patrins* were used in olden times as trail signs coded with natural materials, such as sticks, to represent messages, such as warnings and directions, on the road in nomadic and seminomadic Romani groups (Woods, 1973 cited in Smith, 1997). Additionally, literacy is usually practiced through an oral tradition; thus many Romani people are good storytellers (McCaffery, 2009; Smith, 1997). Furthermore, Levinson (2007) argues that to the Roma, languages are seen as a medium for daily communication, rather than an abstract concept to be studied (Piasere, n.d., Liégeois, 1987, cited in Levinson, 2007, p. 13). Along the same line of thought, Smith (1997) indicates that in Romani communities, languages are acquired “through contact rather than direct instruction” (p. 247). Many studies regarding literacy practices of the Roma are in the context of Western Europe. For example, McCaffery (2009) inquires into the literacy practices of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers in Southern England. Levinson (2007) explores the literacy practices of English Gypsy communities in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, many Roma-related studies focus on social and political issues, such as race, identity, and ethnicization processes (e.g., Rüegg, Poledna & Rus, 2006), and access to education and schooling as well as to welfare and social services (e.g., Ringold, 2000; Vincze & Derdák, 2009). Such differences point to the need for more studies dealing with literacy practices in Central and Eastern Europe; thus, this is one major area this paper will contribute to.

Purpose of Study

Children's drawings are one type of literacy practices and can be used to illuminate children's literacy development (Kendrick & McKay, 2004). Furthermore, children in the research site dedicated a significant amount of time to drawing while I was doing my fieldwork in the community. Thus, this paper seeks an understanding of Romani children's literacy practices through drawing, using the lens of multimodality.

Theoretical Framework

The notion of multimodality offers a framework for this study. In multimodality, meanings are constructed and understood through multiple representations, including images, sounds, and traditional printed text (Jewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012). In this article, multimodality is highlighted via the following terms: modes, materiality, and affordance. Modes are units of "socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource(s) for meaning making" (Kress, 2010, p. 79), containing images, music, movement and so on (Kress, 2010; Kress & Jewitt, 2003). Citing the work of Halliday (1978), Hodge and Kress (1988), and Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006), Albers and Harste (2007) indicate the significance of modes: "multimodal communication is comprised of 'modes,' forms within various sign systems that carry the meanings that a social collective recognizes and understands" (p. 11). In materiality, the emphasis is on the "material 'stuff' of the mode" (Kress, 2010, p. 80). Affordance refers to the "possibilities that a particular form offers a text-maker" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012, p. 31). These three terms are closely related to one another, as text-makers constantly make decisions about kinds of modes as well as what materials to use based on the "power and attention" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012, p. 31) the materials can give to the representation and communication of meaning.

Children's drawings and sketches are one type of multimodal text, as they frequently contain images, symbols, and print. These drawings and sketches provide a communication channel to understand the Roma children's world and their multimodal literacy practices.

Methodology

A qualitative study with an interpretive stance is conducted to gain a contextual understanding of a group of Roma children in the northwest area of Romania. This research site is very close to the border with Hungary, and thus contains a multiethnic population. While the majority of the residents in this area are Hungarians and Romanians, the Roma comprise the third largest group, yet many of them live on the margin of the community (Fundăția Jakabffy Elemér).

Research Setting

The research setting of the study is an after-school program at a local church. The staff consisted of one Romanian teacher, a male program leader from the Romani neighborhood, a Romani woman in charge of preparing food and cleaning the building, and a missionary from the US. The program leader usually opened the building, and other staff members arrived around noon to prepare lessons and activities. The Romani woman also came at noon to prepare simple sandwiches for the children. The program started in the early afternoon. Younger children usually arrived at this time, while older children arrived a few hours later, at the end of their school day.



Figure 1. Children's artwork

My fieldwork in the after-school program was divided into two periods, October–December 2011 and May–July 2012.

During the first period of fieldwork, children often drew during the beginning of the program as they waited for the teacher and other children to arrive. Drawing was used as a way to keep the children occupied during the winter when outdoor activities were not available. These drawings improvised by the children did not seem to be considered to be serious, academic learning. At the end of the day, the Romani woman often put many drawings and sketches in the trash can. Sometimes the teacher would design lessons that integrated artwork, yet many lessons involving artwork were bound within the framework of conventional literacy practices. Other times, the teacher would ask the children to draw by following fixed guidelines (e.g., Figure 1). Those drawings improvised by the children themselves were seldom displayed.

Data Collection

The data were collected from the following two sources:

Drawings and sketches

Children's drawings and sketches were collected over two periods of fieldwork. In this paper, I focus on the drawings and sketches of five children. Figure 2 below presents basic information on these five children and their drawings presented in this paper.

Name	Age	Gender	Reference of Drawings
Sorin	12	Male	Figure 3 Sorin's drawing of the "Pasărea Floare" story
Iulia	12	Female	Figure 4 Iulia's drawing of princess Figure 8 Visual space of Iulia's drawing
Bianca	12	Female	Figure 5 Bianca's drawing of princess Figure 9 Visual space of Bianca's drawing
Diana	7	Female	Figure 6 Diana's drawing of her parents Figure 7 A close-up of Diana's drawing
Adi	7	Male	Figure 10 Adi's drawing of Santa Claus I Figure 11 Adi's drawing of Santa Claus II
Figure 2 Background information on the five Romani children			

Participant observation

I took copious field notes to document my participant observation as a volunteer in the after-school program. I also wrote down informal conversations with the children and their parents in order to gain a contextual understanding of their drawings and sketches.

Data Analysis

The analysis of children's drawings and sketches was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, I drew from the field notes of my observations and informal conversations with the children (some with their parents or family members). I wrote a short passage regarding the context in which the drawing or the sketch was situated (Riessman, 2008, p. 177). After that, I did a preliminary "reading" of the drawings and sketches by answering the following questions, which are adapted from Albers (2007, p. 154):

- What is this child trying to convey in this drawing?
- What immediately comes to your mind?
- What colors and shapes are used?
- What impressed you in this drawing?

During this initial phase, some of my general impressions were that some children used drawings to convey their emotions, such as love and affection, and to describe their daily life experiences. Another impression is that many children used rich colors (e.g., red, blue, yellow) in their drawings. In the second phase of the analysis, I worked iteratively and recursively across all the drawings again with the following two foci:

(1) The use of space. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) proposed a model to explain how meanings are represented and communicated in visual space. In their model, a visual text can be understood in terms of three dimensions. In the first

dimension, components in a visual text are divided into left and right sections. Similarly to Western languages, such as English, sections of the visual components are read from left to right. The components on the left suggest information that is given or known, while those on the right suggest new information. In the second dimension, components of a visual text are divided into top and bottom sections. The upper section represents information that is ideal and tends to have “emotive appeal” (p. 193), while images on the bottom suggest information that is real and tells “what is” (p. 193). In the third dimension, components of a visual text are structured as central and marginal zones. The components of the central zone are the focal point, while those on the margins are subordinate. Because of the prominent oral tradition in their non-Western Roma culture, only the top–bottom and center–margin dimensions were used to analyze the visual space of their drawings and sketches.

(2) Thematic elements. In this aspect of analysis, emerging themes were captured by closely examining elements in the drawings and by cross-referencing with other documents, including field notes from my observations and interviews (Riessman, 2008, p. 163).

Analysis of Drawings

Two categories were discerned through this exploratory examination: intertextuality and design. Intertextuality refers to the process when children make connections among different modes, including connections with past texts to produce drawings. The category of design highlights the process of how children integrate different modes, as well as the use of space in their drawings.

Intertextuality

According to Short, Kauffman, and Kahn (2000), intertextuality refers to a process in which children “[make] connections with past texts in order to construct understandings of new texts” (p. 165). This feature can be identified in 12-year-old Sorin’s drawing (Figure 3), produced during my second phase of fieldwork.

One afternoon in mid-May, Sorin mischievously grabbed a textbook from a girl in the after-school program and started to read aloud from the book, which was for Romanian Language and Literature (*Limba și literatura română*) in public elementary school. I asked Sorin to read a story to me. He chose to read the story “Pasărea Floare” (Bird Flower), written by a Romanian writer, Silvia Kerim. “Pasărea Floare” is a fairy



Figure 3. Sorin’s drawing of the “Pasărea Floare” story

tale, presenting dialogues between Copăcelul (Shrub), Lună (Moon Fairy), and an ill little bird. Copăcelul asked Lună to cast a spell to make clusters of flowers on the tree to save the ill little bird.

After Sorin read some of the story, to check his comprehension, I asked him to summarize the story for me without reading from the book. He shook his head, and then read the whole story from the book. After he completed it, I asked him to draw the story on a piece of sketch paper (Figure 3). After drawing, he told me a story about his drawing:

Sorin:	<i>A fost odată ca niciodată un copăcel. El la primăvara o înverzit și prietenele sale au fost floarea, iarba, soarele și cerul. Ele...toți au înverzit și înflorit și copăcelul a facut măr, mere și iarba a fost tăiată.</i>
	(Once upon a time there was a tree. In the spring, it sprouted leaves and became green. Its friends were the flower, the grass, the sun and the sky. They ... everything was green and blooming. Then the tree had apple, apples, and the grass was cut.)
Me:	<i>Măr. Mere?</i>
	(Apple. Apples?)
Sorin:	Yes.
Me:	Oh.
Sorin:	<i>Și, (pointing to the flowers in his drawing) floarea o fost tăiată și la sfârșitul anului și copacul a fost tăiat. După aia, norul tot a plouat. Și atât.</i>
	(And the flower was cut, and at the end of the year the tree was also cut. After that, the cloud kept raining. And that's all.)

In Figure 3, his drawing of a tree and flowers is a connection back to the characters in the textbook story: Copăcelul (Shrub) and the flowers. He added the sun, the grass, and the cloud to his drawing. As he recounted the story about his drawing, he kept the imaginary friendship between the tree and its surroundings as it was featured in the textbook story. However, he changed the shrub to an apple tree. One possible explanation is that the image of the apple tree traced his experience or the practice he observed in his surrounding environment (Pahl, 2007; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012), as there was a big apple orchard in the neighborhood and working in apple orchards was a common labor job for the Romani people living there. In Sorin's case, he produced new meanings in his drawing based on his experience of reading the "Pasărea Floare" story and his personal experience with apple orchards.

Similar features of intertextuality can also be identified in Iulia's and Bianca's drawings (Figures 4 and 5). Both drawings were created on a Friday afternoon in late June, during my second phase fieldwork. On that Friday, I brought a pile of picture books, donated by friends in the US, to the after-school program. The children were told to pick their favorite books. Bianca and her friend, Iulia, both 12 years old, sat next to each other flipping through the book *Pinocchio*. Bianca stopped at the two pages with fairy characters and told me that they were princesses. She ascribed the first princess to Iulia and the second princess to herself. Then the children were given paper to draw about their favorite books. Both Bianca and Iulia drew the princess and added other graphics on their papers. In Figure 4, Iulia added another princess and changed the characters' names. They also drew flowers, a

butterfly (Figure 4), and a sun (Figure 5) to illustrate the outdoor scene where the new princess was situated.



Figure 4. Iulia's drawing of a princess



Figure 5. Bianca's drawing of a princess

The princess characters in Iulia's and Bianca's drawings were created based on their reading of the fairy pictures in the book. When the image was transferred from the picture in the book to their drawings, they changed the princess's appearance and accessories, as well as the scenery and surroundings of the fairy, and then gave new identities to their characters, which were Bianca and Iulia themselves.

Design

According to Kress (2010), the notion of design in multimodality refers to “the use of different modes—image, writing, colour, layout—to present, to realize, at times to (re-)contextualize social positions and relations, as well as knowledge in specific arrangements for a specific audience” (p. 139). Using the concept of design to understand the drawings and sketches of the Roma children can be discussed from two perspectives.

Process of designing

One feature of design is demonstrated in the process of producing the image. One example is Diana's drawing in Figure 6. Diana created the drawing one evening in early June. That evening, Diana came with her mother to join a women's event at the church. I helped watch the child on the other side of the room while her mother participated in the event. Diana was given a piece of blank sketch paper and a few pages of coloring paper. In Figure 6, Diana drew three human figures: an adult woman, an adult man, and a girl. I asked her if the adults were dad and mom (tată și mama), and she responded “yes.” Then she drew a girl next to the woman figure and told me that she would draw her sister and herself. She did not have the chance to finish her drawing, because her mother took her home from the event before she could.



Figure 6. Diana's drawing of her parents



Figure 7. A close-up of Diana's drawing

In the process of producing the images in Figure 6, she first drew a female figure, as illustrated in the middle among the three human figures. After that, she drew a male figure. While drawing the male figure, she tried to locate the position of the man's eyes. First she used her index finger to point at where the woman's eyes were. Then she moved her finger horizontally toward the face of the man and stopped her finger at a certain spot. The process occurred several times until she finally decided where to draw the man's eyes. Upon closer examination (Figure 7), it can be seen that the man was looking toward the woman while the woman was looking toward the audience of the drawing. The human figures were composed with simple shapes, including circles to represent heads, squares for the upper bodies, rectangles for the man's legs, and a trapezium for the skirts. She used a pencil to draw the basic shapes, and then used color markers to add red lips on the woman's face and a brown beard and mustache on the man's. This contrasting use of colors (i.e., pencil and color markers) highlighted the gender difference in the human images. In the process of producing her drawing in Figure 6, Diana used simple shapes to represent male and female figures, and carefully measured the location and distance between the eyes of the two human figures. She also used contrasting colors to highlight gender difference in her drawing. In her design of the drawing, her use of shape, color, and layout demonstrated her observation of her family members and knowledge of gender difference.

Use of space

Another design feature is presented in the use of space. Using Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006)'s top-bottom model to examine the visual space of Iulia's and Bianca's drawings about the princess (Figures 8 and 9), the princesses and the heart-shaped symbols are presented in the upper half of the space, which communicates an "ideal" and "emotive" message (p. 193). This upper position of the princesses revealed an ideal self that Iulia and Bianca perceived in the image. This projection of an ideal self is supported by Bianca's statement above when she pointed at the fairy images in the picture book and said that they were Iulia and herself.



Figure 8. Visual space of Iulia's drawing



Figure 9. Visual space of Bianca's drawing

A similar feature is also discovered in Adi's drawing about Santa Clause in Figures 10 and 11. Adi, 7 years old, created these drawings in early December during the first period of fieldwork. It was the Christmas season, so the children at the program were taught to draw Christmas trees (Figure 11). During the first period of fieldwork, at least three nonprofit organizations from Western Europe and the US came to this neighborhood to give the children Christmas presents. The presents from those organizations were usually one of the highlights in the lives of the children in December. I asked Adi who the person in the red dress was and he said, "Moș Crăciun" (*Santa Claus* in Romanian).



Figure 10. Adi's drawing of Santa Claus I



Figure 11. Adi's drawing of Santa Claus II

Examining the position of the Santa Claus demonstrated Adi's longing toward Santa Claus and Christmas. The Santa Claus images in these two drawings are all positioned on the upper level of the drawings, and that illustrates Adi's emotive feeling toward Santa Claus and the atmosphere of Christmas. The hearts drawn in Figure 10 also indicate his emotive feeling.

Another way to examine the use of space is through what Van Leeuwen (1999) called "perspective," which "creates horizontal and vertical angles" from the viewers' point of view (p. 13). For example, both Adi's drawing of Santa Claus and Bianca's and Iulia's princess drawings demonstrate a vertical angle of position, so

that the viewer would look up at the characters in the image, in this case Santa Claus and the princess. This kind of position creates “an imaginary power relation” (p. 13), in which the characters are granted power over the viewer. That imaginary power relation reveals Adi’s perception of Santa Claus in his inner world, as well as Bianca’s and Iulia’s self-projection toward the princesses they drew.

Moreover, according to Van Leeuwen (1999), a horizontal angle can be “frontal, confronting us directly and unavoidably with what is represented, *involving* us with what is represented, or profile, making us see it from the sidelines, as it were, in a more detached way” (p. 13). Not only were Adi’s Santa Claus and Bianca’s and Iulia’s princesses drawn in the frontal position, but they all also faced directly toward the viewer. This creates a “relation of imaginary intimacy” (p. 13) between these characters and the viewer.

Implications

The implications of the visual analysis in this paper can be addressed in four aspects. In the first aspect, the analysis has revealed that these Romani children have capacities to create rich meaning through multimodal representations. For example, Sorin’s drawing (Figure 3) represents a story, which combines what he read from the textbook and what he experienced in his daily life.

Furthermore, the two categories also provide directions for how such curricula can be designed for the Romani children. For example, as mobile phones are commonly used by the Romani children in the neighborhood for oral communication and game playing, teachers could ask the students to design a mobile phone advertisement to teach the concept of persuasive texts (United Kingdom Literacy Association, 2004). Teachers can encourage these Romani children to use different modes (e.g., images, symbols, space, words) and materials (e.g., papers, crayons, pencils, types of fonts) to present their art work. While designing their work, they will need to consider the affordance of chosen modes and materials. For intertextuality, the children will need to connect to their experience of cellphone use. For example, they may create a game image in their cellphone advertisement based on a game they have played in the past. They may need to investigate the market price of popular cellphones in order to promote their cellphone value. Such purposeful design of a curriculum that incorporates ideas from the above two categories and integrates multimodal texts along with words can help engage these children in a more meaningful learning process.

In addition, multimodal literacy, as seen in the drawings and sketches in this paper, provides an alternative way to understand the unique world perceived by these children. Throughout their history, the Romani people have been portrayed negatively, such as dirty, poor, and uncivilized, through the eyes of non-Romani people (Hancock, 2002). On a personal level, when I walked into this Romani neighborhood for the first time, I saw many broken houses and children with dirty clothes. Yet the drawings and sketches of these Romani children have taught me a different story about their world. For example, in Adi’s portrayal of Santa Claus (Figures 10 and 11), heart-shaped images in cheerful red reoccurred in his

drawings. Adi's drawings create a space for him to express the joy and delight in his world. After studying their drawings and sketches, beyond poverty, I started to see resilience in the lives of these Romani children. Albers's (2007) profound statement describes my new understanding of their life and culture through their drawings and sketches:

Understanding these recurring details in artworks allows readers to recognize the composition more immediately, and then to make their own meaning from these visual texts. In other words, artists develop "memory images" and continue to reproduce these images time and again. In so doing, they visually teach viewers how to look at particular aspects of culture, life, and experience. (p. 158)

Finally, future research can include more follow-up conversations with the children about their drawings to gain deeper contextual information about each child. Some scholars have argued that children's drawings provide a critical communication space for others to understand their world (United Kingdom Literacy Association, 2004; Coates & Coates, 2006). Such a space allows conversations and dialogue about their artworks to take place naturally. For example, Sorin mentioned apple trees in his drawing (Figure 3), and picking apples in the orchard is a common income source for families in this Romani neighborhood. A follow-up conversation with Sorin could include his experience or observations about apple picking. This type of communication brings forward information about children's home practices and funds of knowledge. An indepth understanding of children's lives can be possible through examination of their multimodal texts and conversations about them. This is especially important for educators who deal with children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion

This study reveals the complexity in the use of visual space, composition and structure, and meaning-making of multimodal texts produced by the above five Romani children. These texts also illustrate a world that is seen, heard, experienced, and creatively imagined through the eyes, the ears, and the minds of these Romani children. Nevertheless, this complexity is not valued in a traditional print world, and thus labels such as *uneducated*, *deficient*, *problematic*, and *illiterate* are commonly used in public to describe Romani children. Therefore, curriculum design for the Romani children should include a purposeful use of multimodal literacy. The categories of intertextuality and design provide a helpful initial framework for such curriculum design.

Furthermore, the findings of this study carry implications for Roma-related scholarly work in the future. As the Roma population grows rapidly across the globe, research regarding their culture is especially important, not only because many Romani students come from marginalized or neglected communities, but just as importantly, because Roma-related topics are often neglected in the discourse of minority education. As this study focuses on the Romani people in Europe, the

findings will benefit future scholarly and educational inquiries regarding Romani groups around the world.

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New Literacies, New Narratives: Impact on a Portuguese Kindergarten

Sónia Pacheco

Abstract

The present article aims to discuss our daily need to read everything that surrounds us and to properly use the information which comes to us from different kinds of media. The country, society, schools and teachers have to keep up with the new roles that children attribute to them in order to meet their needs as they grow up in a digital world. This article seeks to understand how the decisions and government guidelines made today by policy makers have a real impact on the everyday life of a Portuguese kindergarten and in the practices of teachers and their students. I used both interviews with kindergarten teachers and nonparticipant observation of the children's computer activities to collect data. This study concludes that the teachers who were interviewed feel the need for a change, and their educational suggestions show exactly that need to keep up with the interests of children.

Keywords: literacies; narratives; digital media; Portuguese; education

Introduction

Reading and interpreting information and texts has become a requirement in a world full of technology, where every individual is invited to review and act with creativity. The new possibilities of narratives associated with new information and communication technologies have become a reality which requires a more thorough, precocious search for answers. Preschool education in Portugal has been the subject of several studies in different areas, but not nearly enough has been done compared to other levels of education.

I aim to address the pedagogical practice of teachers and the daily routines of kindergarten children, framed in the argument that both the school and the teachers' roles need to be updated in order to meet the increasingly digital and technology-based needs and interests of children from 3 to 6 years old. I will analyze the Portuguese case in terms of recently developed government projects and guidelines and relate them to a case study.

Theoretical Framework

Digital Literacy and New Narratives

The individual's ability to read has become a requirement—not only conventional and socially accepted reading, but also interpretive and comprehensive reading of all the information available. This knowledge and an information-based society requires a change in roles and functions of each individual in this same society. So many resources and social networks gave us the power to educate and guide others, which means that our network actions challenge us and our role as members of society.

According to the Horizon Report (Johnson, Levine, Smith & Stone, 2010), it is not only the role of the individual that changes, it is also the school's role in preparing its students for real life. Collaborative work is, thus, in demand among students, faculty, departments, schools, communities, and families. According to the report, "Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession" (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 6). However, it is also seen as a challenge in an economic-based society, and schools are no exception.

Glister (1997) is another recognized expert in digital literacy, mainly due to his dedication to his studies on the concepts of literacy and digital literacy, particularly in regards to hypertext, interactivity, and user ability of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to collect, evaluate and use information. He adds a comprehensive and utilitarian component in the use of ICT.

More recently, Eshet-Alkalay (2004) introduced a broader definition of digital literacy: "Digital literacy involves more than the mere ability to use software or operate a digital device; it includes a large variety of complex cognitive, motor, sociological, and emotional skills, which users need in order to function effectively in digital environments" (p. 93). This is a very important and relevant study that supports the idea that new literacies, both digital and technological, are contributing to the development of increasingly younger readers, and that the environment where young children interact is important to their actions and learnings, considering that children are growing up in a digital world.

The information collected is effective only if the individual has appropriate reading skills which allow them to research, process and understand that information in order to build knowledge. It is in this regard that school plays a crucial role, regardless of the level of education. The report of the Young Children's Use of Popular Culture, Media and New Technologies Study, funded by BBC Worldwide and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (Marsh, Brooks, Hughes, Ritchie, Roberts, & Wright, 2005) stresses that "[a]s educators we need to have a great amount of knowledge on all agendas that will affect a child's future" (p. 59). That is why it is so important to focus on how this works in a Portuguese kindergarten.

The education system, through the roles of the school, teachers, students, and the community, is responsible for promoting dialogue and collective learning based on social mediation, self-reflection, and through the deconstruction and reconstruction of information. It is necessary to actively participate in this

information- and knowledge-based society, to “have a say” and act critically and creatively, and with everyone's contribution being valued to make them feel part of a society in constant change. Reading has become an essential and a universal right. The new ICTs can help readers to become more competent and critical towards different kinds of texts in different types of media. We may be witnessing a change in the concepts of *reading* and *reader* as a result of the introduction of multiple technological supports in our daily lives (Carrington, 2005).

Reading is not limited to a text on paper or the act of decoding words. It covers onscreen reading in its multiple forms, which, at the same time, encourages new readings and the development of new readers from the earliest ages. I am referring to children who, with relative ease and by trial and error, can use a cellular phone, play with consoles, interact with games on television and make use of the multiple tools of a computer to read texts (Levy, 2009). Children's motor flexibility, along with their predisposition to integrate and absorb new messages and information, regardless of the source, allow them to master the computer tools, such as the keyboard or the touchpad. From a very young age, children can transfer information from one particular digital medium to another.

Rachael Levy (2009) refers to a study with children aged 3 to 6 years old which highlights this same ability. Children who did not have access to a computer at home, but used other forms of digital media, managed to apply their knowledge about multimedia texts when confronted with a computer at school.

The learning opportunities that digital literacy may offer to different actors in the educational process are numerous. Schools and teachers must adapt to the new digital age, mobilizing students and taking advantage of all the possibilities for action in the digital age. The acquisition of their native language and the exposure to literacy within the family context can help children develop skills in different areas, and school must accept this consolidated knowledge in order to meet individual needs.

As children become skilled in the use of technology and proficient in both hardware and software handling, they develop strategies to access, read, and interpret texts, computer graphics, and symbols, and to act upon them. They become proactive and competent in digital literacy. The concept of reader is changing, as well as the traditional concept of text. The digital reader has the power to decide what to do with different kinds of texts, while being exposed to a greater number of textual features that involve motion, sounds, colors, words, and pictographic writing. Decoding is not the most relevant aspect for readers in the digital age. New readings and increasingly younger new readers will contribute to the development of the individual's ability to build new narratives with multimedia texts.

Schools need to keep up with textual diversity and the constant transformation of society and its resources by recognizing the diversity of interpretations, readings and technology that we deal with in our daily lives. All these changes require direct, immediate action from all actors in the educational process, and indirectly from policy makers, who have the power to modify practices

and intensify the educational intention in the promotion of individual contribution to the benefit of the collective in different domains.

Children's skills and knowledge about emergent and digital literacies, about the possibilities of interpretation and construction of digital narratives and yet in the laterality and fine motor skills are later transferred and used in other learning moments in other levels of education, giving them more chances of success in school.

Portugal, Preschool Education and ICTs: A Brief Framework

In Portugal, the education system is divided into four levels: preschool education, basic education,¹ secondary education,² and higher education. Preschool education has its own characteristics, such as the fact that it is optional, and it is governed by a guiding document instead of a mandatory class curriculum or program. This guiding document is designated *Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-Escolar* (Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education) (Ministério da Educação, 1997). It gives preschool teachers freedom of action regarding the management of the curriculum, teaching options, and the educational opportunities that can be explored in the classroom. Another aspect worth highlighting in this document is the educational intention in the actions, positions and pedagogical practices of preschool teachers, as well as the fact that this document can be used as a common reference for all the teachers at this level of education.

Focusing on the data in the report entitled *Perfil do Aluno* (Student Profile) 2011–2012 (Direção Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência e Direção de Serviços de Estatísticas da Educação, 2013), I found that preschool education had an enrollment rate of 89.3% in 2011–2012, and the gross enrollment rate for the same school year is 90.9%. These figures show that there was a large investment in preschool education in order to cover a greater number of children from 3 to 6 years old. There were more than 18,896 children of 3–5 years old enrolled in preschools. There has been a considerable increase in the scope of this level of education. In 2002–2003, the actual rate of enrollment in preschool was 76.3%, 13% higher than the numbers of 2011–2012.

Public education continues to demonstrate a greater response among children from 3 to 6 years old, with 135,130 children enrolled, versus 78,067 children in private schools that depend on state funds and 44,317 in independent private schools.

¹ 1st to 9th grade. Basic education is divided into 3 cycles: 1st cycle from the 1st grade to the 4th grade, 2nd cycle from the 5th grade to the 6th grade and 3rd cycle from the 7th grade to the 9th grade.

² 10th to 12th grade.

ICT Projects in Portugal

Several projects have been developed over the years in Portugal in order to place the country among the most technologically developed countries in the European Union. The MINERVA (Meios Informáticos no Ensino Racionalização, Valorização e Atualização – Computer Resources in Education Rationalization, Recovery and Update) project was one of the first to be developed, between 1985 and 1994. Funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, it aimed to create new courses within the education system, introduce research projects also in the ICT field, introduce the use of ICTs in the classroom context, and create a specialized class in this area, which became part of the study plan for initial teacher training and helped design educational software for college students. The Faculty of Science and Technology of the New University of Lisbon had a leading role in this matter.

The Nónio-Séc. XXI program lasted from October 1996 to 2002. This program included such projects as Ciência Viva and Internet@Escolas. It was also divided into four subprograms, which included the implementation and development of ICTs in classrooms, IT training, the creation and development of educational software, and the dissemination of information and international cooperation.

Several other important projects were created between 1985 and 2002, which translated into greater investment and awareness by the government regarding the information and knowledge-based societies of Portugal and Europe. The Law of the Education System of 1986, the integration of Portugal in the European Union in the same year, the establishment of the Fundação para a Comunicação Científica Nacional (Foundation for National Scientific Communication - FCCN) a year later, the Missão para a Sociedade de Informação (Mission for the Information Society) in 1996, ENIS (European Network of Innovative Schools) three years later, and the Action Plan–Learning at the Information Society were some of these projects.

On January 18, 2001, Decree-Law 6/2001 approved the basic education curriculum reform, regulating and cementing the changes and actions previously developed. This legislation promotes changes to the core competencies of the national curriculum for basic education by defining citizenship education, good knowledge of the Portuguese language, civics, and ICT training as transdisciplinary training.

The Unidade para o Desenvolvimento das TIC na Educação (Unit for the Development of ICT in Education) (EduTIC), was established in 2005 by Order No. 7072/2005. This unit continued the activities initiated by the Nónio Séc. XXI program with the intent to coordinate the network of Competence Centers, revitalize the ENIS schools network, implement Portal da Educação (Education Portal) and work with European Schoolnet.

The Equipa de Missão Computadores, Redes e Internet na Escola (Computers, Networks and Internet in Schools Mission Team – CRIE) was created in 2005 along with EduTIC, with the aim of organizing the actions of the Ministry of Education in

terms of the educational use of ICTs and improve the teaching and learning process in Portuguese schools.

In my study about the evolution of ICT in Portugal throughout the years, I now focus on the year 2007. This was a crucial landmark for the use and implementation of new technologies in education due to the creation of the Plano Tecnológico de Educação (Technology Plan for Education, PTE) (Ministério da Educação, 2007). This plan aimed to reduce the digital divide, equip schools with hardware and technological resources, generalize the use of ICTs in teaching, and make some changes in the teaching and learning processes.

PTE involves several initiatives which target different age groups and levels of education, namely e.escola, e.professor, e.oportunidades and e.escolinha. With the e.escolinha initiative, the Ministry of Education wanted to make sure that all students of the first cycle of basic education had access to ICTs by granting each student a Magalhães personal computer. Records show that more than 470,000 children in this level of education had access to a personal computer with Internet connection. However, this measure was first subject to budget cuts, and then suspended in 2011 by the current government. The State managed to create favorable conditions for the acquisition of equipment and Internet access, thus fostering collaborative networking at all levels of education.

According to the information provided on the PTE site, schools were more complete and equipped with wireless network access in 2010, and also most students had access to laptops. However, the number of computers in schools is still insufficient, and the ones available are becoming obsolete and have slow Internet connection. Similarly, it is becoming urgent to integrate ICTs in all subject areas and invest in training focused on the teaching and learning processes.

In August 2012, the curricular goals for Portuguese, Mathematics, ICT, Visual Education, and Technical Education in basic education were approved by Order No. 10874/2012, Series II. The purpose was to serve as a common reference between the different cycles of the Portuguese education system by promoting interaction between cycles and an articulated construction of contents, which encourage continuity in the teaching and learning processes.

ICTs in Preschool Education

The implementation of ICTs in preschool education is a challenge. This level of education covers children from 3 to 6 years old, who are not yet familiar with writing or reading conventions. So far, the ICT programs that have been developed at this level of education are still not enough. The PTE did not include any e.iniciativa (e.initiative – my translation) program to purchase Magalhães computers for this age group. It focused only on compulsory education years, which in Portugal begins in the first cycle of basic education. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge lies in the ability to innovate and to improve the quality of education from the earliest ages.

The use of ICT at this level of education is especially focused on educational purposes. Socialization and cooperation among peers are some of the goals. The learning goals set for preschool education are based on work, preparation, and implementation of several educational opportunities to be developed with children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. Among other areas, ICT is perceived as a requirement in a society where children deal with all kinds of media from an early age, while interacting with peers and adults.

In the specific case of ICTs, the learning goals were organized according to four areas: Information, Communication, Production, and Safety (Metas de Aprendizagem). The goals set for the Safety item require that children know the rules for the use of different equipment in their activity rooms. They are also supposed to be careful and be responsible for the hardware to which they have access.

The Production item is directly related to the use of different digital tools that involve sounds, texts, or pictures and that allow children to freely express themselves. Information and communication skills reinforce the importance of socialization, sharing, and the use of network communication. This not only strengthens the reciprocity between peers or even schools, but also gives them the possibility to collect, select, and search for information on the World Wide Web. However, after reviewing the literature on national and international technical reports which analyze the use of ICTs in an educational context in Portugal, I came to the conclusion that these reports do not study the use of ICTs in a preschool context.

As an exception, we can refer to the KidSmart program (KidSmart), whose main goal was to “Add value to education through the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the planning and overall organization of the teaching and learning processes in Preschool Education”³ (Ministério da Educação and IBM Portugal, 2008, p. 8). This is an excellent example of the integration of ICTs in a preschool classroom context, as it calls attention to the best practices that have been developed since its implementation in 2003. However, this program targets only the preschools covered by the Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária (Priority Educational Territories – TEIP) network set by the Ministry of Education and Science, and by some private institutions of social solidarity in underprivileged communities. This fact substantially reduces the number of schools covered by the KidSmart program.

On the national scene, and regarding projects which involve preschool education, there is the Kinderet – Educative Technologies in Kindergarten Context project, which is cofinanced by the European Commission and integrated into the Leonardo da Vinci program. This was a partnership between the School of Education of the Polytechnic Institute of Beja and the University of Cambridge in the

³ Original quote: “Acrescentar valor à educação através da promoção da integração das Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação (TIC) no planeamento e organização global dos processos de ensino e de aprendizagem da Educação Pré-Escolar.”

United Kingdom between 2002 and 2005. It aimed to analyze and identify the needs within the framework of ICT use in preschool education in order to develop a more suitable model of continuous training adapted to the Portuguese school reality.

Also in connection with the projects and studies carried out in Portugal on the use of ICTs in preschool education and ICT is NetInfância. This project aimed to analyze the studies which focused on the use of ICTs in preschool education and that were developed during a degree in Preschool Education (NetInfancia).

The Relatório de Avaliação (Evaluation Report) – KidSmart Early Learning Program stresses the importance of exchange and interaction between peers or between the user and the equipment or software. The use of ICTs fosters educational opportunities that help the individual to develop cognitive and social skills and to actively build their educational process. According to this report, the investment made by the partnership between the Ministry of Education and IBM Portugal was of great benefit to the education arena. The first partner was responsible for facilitating the technical and didactic training of teachers and the provision of networks by the schools that were covered by the program, whereas it was IBM's duty to provide and install KidSmart workstations (Ministério da Educação & IBM Portugal, 2008).

Methodology

The corpus of this study consists of the observation of 25 preschool students (from 3 to 6 years old) attending a kindergarten in the municipality of Lisbon, which owns a KidSmart Early Learning workstation within the protocol between the Ministry of Education and IBM. This school is part of the TEIP network created by the Ministry of Education and Science, which covers underprivileged communities. This kindergarten serves a multicultural community.

The data for this study was collected during nonparticipant direct observations in an educational context, and interviews with preschool teachers. I have not interviewed other stakeholders such as the school's principal, parents, or policy makers. This happened because I needed a strong and focused look at the teachers in their practices, so that I could define their difficulties and their strengths. During the observations I was able to record both verbal and nonverbal interactions between children as they used the computer, and their actions towards the educational software. The interviews with teachers were carried out according to an exploratory script that included several sections, among which stand out sections C and H for addressing questions about Interpretation and Digital Narratives and the Portuguese School Scene.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Teachers and The Concept of Digital Narratives as Promoters of The Use of ICTs

Based on the content analysis of the interviews, I came to the conclusion that the concept of digital narratives was seen from different plans of action. They are:

1) A first plan, in which the teacher becomes part of the story with the help of the computer, and 2) a second plan, in which children use the same computer support and additional software to write stories.

3) The next plan—mentioned by interviewee B—situates digital narratives around the use of a certain program which, for its presentation possibilities, is a resource that is, according to her, “flooding our e-mail accounts”⁴: stories in PowerPoint.

4) Interviewee B also defines the fourth plan: the use of computer support and word processing to create image files with the correspondent’s written identification. The files are available for children to play with on a daily basis in their activity time, and may include manual tracing, identifying letters and words, and matching letters with the ones in their names.

Interviewee A states that digital narratives consist of “Us telling the stories through the computer or them [the children] doing it themselves,”⁵ stressing that these stories can resort to educational software. The teacher criticizes the hardware currently available in the classroom, the KidSmart Workstation, which, according to her, does not allow children to write unless they are playing a game. In this specific case, the KidSmart Workstation had a word processor, math and science games, and the teacher purchased her own Portuguese language games and some more math games.

Interviewee B defines digital narratives as the stories that are provided or built in PowerPoint, stating, “those are stories on the computer ... in PowerPoint.”⁶ The teacher believes that these stories can be an asset in the development of literary skills, but at the same time, that the lack of a Datashow projector is demotivating, as it complements the stories in PowerPoint presentations in a classroom full of small children. She states, “I do not have access to a Datashow projector. There is a computer in the room, but it is an obsolete one and sometimes I have to bring stories on my own USB flash drive and transfer them into the computer for the children, but it is not the same[.]”⁷

Lack of maintenance and difficulties in the acquisition of new IT resources and hardware is an obstacle that both teachers face. This is a constant problem often mentioned by the teachers who are part of both international (UNESCO, 2002), and national (Carneiro, Queiroz e Melo, Lopes, Lis, & Xavier de Carvalho, 2010; Paiva, 2002) studies about the use of ICTs in schools.

Interviewee B emphasizes the need to develop strategies in which the use of ICTs is part of children's daily lives and their learning experience. The teacher believes that the use of ICTs is not limited to the viewing of the stories nor to the direct action on the educational software. It also includes activities that have

⁴ Original quote: “*estão a inundar o nosso email*”.

⁵ Original quote: “*Nós a contarmos histórias através do computador ou podem ser eles a fazerem*”.

⁶ Original quote: “*São as histórias ao nível do computador ... em PowerPoint*”.

⁷ Original quote: “*Eu não tenho Datashow tenho computador na sala mas está um bocadinho obsoleto às vezes levo histórias na pen e ponho lá para eles verem mas não é um Datashow*”.

become part of the daily routine. As an example of this, the teacher mentions the activities in her classroom, such as the creation of files with images that are identified in written form and that serve not only as a resource in the computer area, but also to name all objects, games, and furniture in the room. For this teacher it is a crucial, natural activity for children to be surrounded by printed text and also be exposed to writing in a natural fashion. This way, the teacher can also respond to their needs, focusing on the students, on their experiences, on what they have already learned, and helping with what they will learn in the future.

Interviewee A states that reading and writing are two areas where children work and invest when they are on the computer. According to the teacher, the children can transfer what they learn with the reading and writing software to the remaining work to develop in other areas in the room. According to this, “children began to seek support to build words on the computer, which they then use daily in the classroom.”⁸

Accordingly, interviewee B believes that children use writing and the computer as a complement to consolidate what they learn and clear their doubts. There are image files on the computer and printed images, and children relate those images to the different objects in the room, copy them manually or on the computer, and print copies. Then each child makes a correspondence between the letters that they already know, the words that they have at their disposal, and the letters in their own names.

This same teacher states that her actions and educational intention take into account the development of skills through the use of ICTs in different moments of their routine, and that the ITC-based knowledge that they build daily helps children develop their literary skills. The teacher gives an example of this: “They really like to identify the letters in their names: ‘Look teacher! This letter is also in my name!’ And I encourage them and say, ‘Is that so? Let’s read it.’ And we make many games with words.”⁹

Interviewee A states that children develop deeper relationships between peers and reinforce socialization when they are working on the computer. Besides socializing, the teacher emphasizes that the field of mathematics is also one of the most privileged in learning, since children learn math concepts, such as geometric figures or patterns, among others. She also emphasizes that the ease with which children actively perform on mathematical games makes those same lessons fun and effective.

Interviewee B says that she is aware of the necessary skills in a so-called information society: “We really need to keep up with new technology. They [the

⁸ Original quote: “*As crianças começaram a pedir-me apoio para construir letras no computador que depois usam no seu dia a dia na sala*”.

⁹ Original quote: “*gostam muito de identificar as letras que fazem com o nome ‘Olha professora o meu nome também tem esta letra’ e eu depois incentivo e digo ‘Ai é então vamos ler’ e fazemos muitos jogos com palavras.*”

children] will have ICTs and will have all these things during their school life, and they have the Magalhães computer in the first cycle.”¹⁰

The analysis of the interviews conducted for this research allowed me to define the existing technological resources and educational software both in the interviewees’ classrooms and as a resource available for the school faculty, as can be seen in Table 1.

Interviewee A's Classroom	Interviewee B's Classroom
KidSmart Early Learning Workstation	Desktop computer Speakers Printer
Educational Software	
KidSmart software Sammy's Science House Coloring Book Milly's Early Mouse Skills Wordsearch games Millie's Math House Tangram Uma Aventura no País das Letras (Porto Editora) CD-ROMs Word Paint PowerPoint	Paint PowerPoint Word CD-ROMs Millie's Math House Tangram Magical Garden
First cycle of basic education and kindergarten Common technological resources	
Desktop computer Multifunction printer	

Table 1. Technology Resources/Educational Software in Kindergarten Classrooms

The Use of The Computer

After interviewing the teachers, it is necessary to observe the way children interact with ICTs. My intention is to analyze the nonparticipant observations in the classroom context in order to understand what the actual use of ICTs in kindergarten is. With a deeper analysis of these observations, I intend to evaluate what children learn from the use of ICTs and how they use that knowledge in other fields of action.

The observations I made allowed me to come to the conclusion that the computer is used on a daily basis, and that it is part of the children's work routine. Classrooms are divided into areas which include the computer. Children are free to choose between the computer area, the writing area, or some other areas in the

¹⁰ Original quote: “*Temos mesmo de acompanhar estas novas tecnologias eles vão ter as TIC e vão ter durante a escola toda essas coisas e no 1º ciclo têm o Magalhães.*”

classroom. This choice can either be an individual one or it can involve a small group of two to five children. In either case, the teacher respects the children's choices and adopts an attitude of scaffolding towards the students (Vygotsky, 1993). Children resort to educational software mostly for individual or peer work. They play reading and writing, mathematics, science, drawing, or painting games.

Table 2 synthesizes the multiple uses of the computer and software by children and sometimes with the support of the teacher.

Word processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing letters without a printed basis • Copying words/first name • Inserting automatic shapes in the text • Writing stories about the work they do • Writing dialogues between peers and about the work they do • Making oral presentations about the work they did in the classroom after printing it • Using the keyboard • Using the mouse
Drawing software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inserting shapes and clipart images • Drawing with tools available in the program • Associating writing and drawing • Writing stories about the work they do • Writing dialogues between peers and about the work they do • Making oral presentations about the work they did in the classroom after printing it • Using the mouse
Math games Science games Reading and writing games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicting and interpreting the text in the program in its multiple possibilities • Selecting tasks • Writing stories about the work they do • Writing dialogues between peers and about the work they do • Learning the different aspects of subjects available

Table 2. Multiple uses of the computer by children

After this compilation of the children's actions, it is important to briefly describe or characterize the different programs that were used during the observations and that the teachers said were frequently used in classroom activities.

Word: word processing

The location of the toolbar at the top of the screen allows easy viewing, and children can use all the tools that are provided there with relative ease, from changing letters

to text highlight color or shading. Word is referred to by teachers as a facilitator of creativity, encouraging construction of stories, fantasy, verbal peer interaction, and developing prereading and reading skills.

Paint

This program is one of the most used in interviewee B's classroom, and its use is immediately facilitated by the program's toolbar and icons. These icons make it easy to predict the text about to be written, since they are very easy to identify and use. Children identify the eraser icon with erasing, the pencil for drawing, the paint bucket that pours color on the different forms in their drawings, the brushes that draw thick and thin lines and that they can use to draw what they want. The letter A is a letter that can be found in their names, and finally, the color palette, which they are constantly changing and taking turns in using it.

The records of the observations show that the use of this program encourages a great variety of verbal interaction, dialogue, creativity, idea association and problem solving among the users.

PowerPoint

According to interviewee B, this program is used primarily for viewing and reading stories in multimedia text format. She claims to have stories in this format and says that the children read them independently on the classroom computer. At times, these stories are used in group reading, other times the stories are invented by the teacher and children. The only downside to the use of stories in PowerPoint is the lack equipment to project them on a big screen, which creates less impact on the children.

KidSmart software and the "Uma Aventura no País das Letras" program

This kind of software normally comes with a narrator who interacts with the children and gives them feedback on their decisions and choices. It is the narrator who encourages the children even when they give the wrong answer, stimulating them to try and give the right answer or choose the right path. The children insist on playing until they get the reward for their achievements, which is followed by the sound of "applause" and the verbal positive reinforcement of the narrator.

The programs that are part of the KidSmart Workstation display less written text; the menu is entirely visual, with the addition of sound to vocalize the name of the game and the movements of the narrator. Children have easy access to the multiple features of the program through icons that they easily recognize and read, and a reward system that encourages them to progress. Based on the observations, the presence of motion, sounds, and colors encourages them to move forward and create a relationship with the intermediary/narrator.

Children have fun, laugh, talk with their peers about the intermediary/narrator's comments, and keep playing. An example of this was recorded during one of the observations in Interviewee A's classroom, when a child

showed their satisfaction with the successful completion of the tasks: “Look! I'm playing very well! I'm doing so many things”¹¹ (Child L).

During the observations, I could identify two areas with records of important and relevant learnings in the children's development, as well as in the active construction of individual and collective knowledge. Those areas are socialization and educational learning integrated in the areas of development.

With regard to socialization, children who use digital media in a classroom context learn to wait their turn to use the computer and mouse; to share relevant information in order to get successful results when playing games or in the completion of tasks; to ask their peers with whom they share digital and technological moments for help (when using the equipment itself, selecting software, or even interpreting a multimedia text with its different icons); to exchange questions and sometimes to go through situations of failure together. These situations do not make children feel frustrated. On the contrary, they encourage brainstorming with peers to achieve success in the task that they are performing. I found that children use trial and error to achieve success, and they define a competitive goal with themselves during the different steps or tasks when playing games. In one of the observations, I recorded examples of the kind of peer interaction and strategies mentioned above:

In interviewee A's classroom, two children—a six-year-old girl and a five-year-old boy—are working in the computer area. They choose to play Tangram, which requires fitting several geometric shapes into other shapes. They can't see the lines of the shapes which they have to fit into the predefined shape. These two children were already playing this game for some time, always alternating their turns to play without any kind of conflict. Girl R is the leader and boy U the observer-apprentice-actor.

It is boy U's turn to play. He drags the geometric shapes into the predefined shape, but does not succeed in completing his task. Girl R tries to help him by giving suggestions about the steps to complete the task: “Now you click on this one and you put it here.”¹² She first points at the shape on the screen with her index finger and drags it to the right place. Given that the boy does not succeed in his task, the girl puts her hand over the boy's hand, holding the mouse and helping him drag the picture to the right place. The boy insists and persists, finally managing to succeed in putting the shape in the right place.

The girl was able to support the boy's performance and he could build knowledge based on their mutual support to succeed in the task and be recognized and appreciated by other members of the group of children and the teacher.

It was possible to pinpoint, based on the observations, various educational lessons with the use of technological equipment and software:

¹¹ Original quote: “*Olha eu estou a conseguir fazer muitas coisas*”.

¹² Original quote: “*Agora carregas neste e pões aqui*”.

The use of hardware

laterality; moves back and forth depending on the selected item; interpretation and reading of icons on the computer screen; fine motor skills with mouse manipulation; eye–hand coordination; on and off.

The use of software

1) Proficiency in math: patterns; logical sequence; classification; virtual fitting of shapes; numbers; geometry; naming, identification, and attribution of colors; quantities; sizes; one-to-one correspondence; input to fill in tables.

2) Proficiency in language skills and approach to reading and writing: verbal interactions with the software's narrator/intermediary; verbal interaction with peers; definition and naming the letters of the alphabet; introduction of the user's first name in the game and success achieved (highest scores); fill in the blanks with words; storyteller allows children to hear a story, turn the pages, define the sequence of the story and perform tasks related to the story after listening to it; identifying the letters in their names and in the names of their classmates; creating stories based on tasks and on interaction with peers; associating sounds and letters; relating words to different contexts; copying words and producing invented writing; word exploration; use of the keyboard; understanding and exploring writing and reading features by producing texts that can be printed, combining different kinds of texts, for example, drawing in Paint and adding letters; the audio component of the programs allows children to “play” with words and their sounds, helping them with their pronunciation and correcting any mistakes in verbal language.

3) Knowledge of the world: identification of different kinds of food, everyday objects, actions, landscapes of different seasons of the year and of foreign countries; development of scientific reasoning through hypothesis testing by trial and error throughout the different tasks in the game.

Conclusion

The analysis of the collected data confirms that the use of ICTs in the preschool context and in the first levels of the educational process helps children develop a range of skills, such as solving problems and making decisions. These skills can be applied in different areas of development and help solidify new knowledge. In addition to these opportunities for personal development, I also saw improvements in educational interventions and intentions which characterize the practices of preschool teachers.

It is also possible to conclude that, over time—focused on the Portuguese scene—there was a greater investment in projects and programs from the first cycle of basic education on. Also, those covering preschool education are more focused on the field of ongoing teacher training and on the assessment of their knowledge, and not on the implementation and use of ICTs in a kindergarten context. However, the KidSmart Early Learning project stands out in this matter, with results in what concerns hardware and software and in the daily use of the workstations available

in the establishments covered by the protocol between IBM and the Ministry of Education and Science.

Based on the interviews with both teachers, I concluded that they consider peer work to be very important in the computer area. Interacting and sharing equipment help consolidate some social rules and strengthen social skills, such as waiting their turn to play a game, exchanging equipment and doubts, respecting opinions and solving problems together. I noticed that this was a reality in both classrooms, and that there were no conflicts during the time the children were working on the computer.

Despite the two-children limit on working together on the computer imposed by the teachers, the number rarely holds. Several children move closer to where their classmates are, observe them performing their tasks, make suggestions and build narratives, and interpret the texts that are being worked on by the two children who are on the computer.

The children observed in this study show interest and pleasure when interacting with the technological resources and software. It is possible to infer by our observations that the use of hardware in these preschool classrooms is part of the daily routine.

In spite of the difficulties which the two kindergarten teachers defined as being obstacles to the improvement and strengthening of their knowledge in the ICT area, their effort and commitment are clear in the educational opportunities which are promoted in the daily routines of the children.

The teachers have a self-evaluative capacity to define the need to know how to act and how to keep up with the technological evolution in education. They believe that the use of ICT is becoming increasingly more important in the definition of classroom activities, within a range of educational intention and active learning so as to help develop technological and literary skills in preschool children.

Regardless of the difficulties described by the teachers, it appears that children show interest, pleasure, creativity, and critique towards hardware and software. They interpret the texts in their multiple possibilities, put into practice what they learn, build their knowledge, and contribute to the construction of the collective knowledge of both their peers and adults. The teachers are aware of their students' needs, invest time in them and use their own economic resources on training and software, refusing to fall behind in an information society.

In conclusion, there is a real need to invest in the acquisition and installation of diverse educational software and hardware in order to meet the needs of children today. It is also important to form work teams to do maintenance of the computer systems, since they cannot be replaced for newer ones. These computer systems need upgrades and adjustments that require technical knowledge and skills that the teachers do not have.

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Literacy and Language of Instruction in Nigeria: A Case Study of Integrated Science Teaching in Selected Primary Schools

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Abstract

Research has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that children can acquire knowledge better in their mother tongue (MT) or language of immediate environment (LIE) rather than in the second language (L2), which is often a colonial master's language, but also the recognized official language in the country. The present paper explores the functions of both the Indigenous language or mother tongue (e.g., Yoruba) and the official language (English) in the dissemination of education, particularly in the primary schools in Nigeria. It also discusses the policy statements on the two languages and their social realities or practices in the educational set-ups operating in the country. Using six private and public primary schools as a case study in Southwestern Nigeria, we found that codeswitching between English (L2) and Yoruba (MT) could be more effective than either of the languages alone, and that the MT or LIE should never be jettisoned in the education of the child, especially in teaching subjects other than English, such as Integrated Science.

Keywords: mother tongue; official language; second language; instruction; policy statements; implementation

Introduction

The specific objectives of the study are to identify and investigate the language(s) of instruction of Integrated Science in six selected primary schools in two of the four Ife Local Government Areas (henceforth LGAs). Second, the paper will consider the effectiveness and appropriateness or not of the language of instruction. The two Ife LGAs are Ife North, with its headquarters in Ipetumodu, and Ife East, with its headquarters at Oke-Ogbo. Ife Central and Ife South were omitted because of time constraints. All the selected LGAs are situated in Osun State in Southwestern Nigeria. The primary schools in these LGAs can be broadly classified as private and public. To ensure proper representativeness of the primary schools located in Nigeria, we have purposively selected three types of primary schools in every LGA, representing three further categories of primary schools found in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general: public but elitist, private and

elitist, and public but not elitist. The public but elitist and the private and elitist charge tuition but the tuition in the latter is higher than the former. However, the public but not elitist schools do not charge tuition and most parents can afford to send their children and wards to such schools.

Research Methodology

The subjects of the study are mainly Primary Four (IV) pupils and their teachers in the selected primary schools. The test instruments are of two types: questionnaires on the teaching of Integrated Science (IS) for the teachers in the selected schools, and interview guides for pupils selected from each of the six schools under study:

Questionnaires for Teachers

- (a) What language do you use to teach IS?
- (b) What language is stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) for teaching IS in Primary IV?
- (c) Are you aware of the language of instruction in Primary IV?
- (d) Do your pupils comprehend your lessons in IS?
- (e) What language do you recommend for the teaching of IS in primary schools?

Interview Guides for Pupils

- (a) What language do you and your teacher use during Integrated Science (IS)?
- (b) Do you understand IS better when taught in English than when taught in Yoruba?
- (c) Do you understand IS better when taught in Yoruba than when taught in English?
- (d) In what language do you write your answers during examinations?
- (e) Do you like it when English is combined with Yoruba in teaching IS?

The number of pupils randomly selected from each school is thirty (30) with a mix of male and female. Also, the pupils are of mixed abilities: very superior, superior, average and poor. They average nine years of age. Our findings are quantified by using simple percentages, as shown in each of the tables generated from the study and in the data analysis and discussion.

Types of Literacy

Literacy traditionally involved three aspects: reading, writing and arithmetic (pronounced as rithmetic, to generate the nickname “the three Rs”). In modern times, however, the term literacy has been tremendously expanded in scope. According to Hornstein (2005),

So, educating for literacy in a democracy becomes both a function of what we teach and the contexts in which it is taught as well as extending beyond ourselves to the notions of creating a just and humane world. For me this means focusing on what Luke (1998) calls “multi-literacies” and includes print literacy, critical literacy, multi-cultural literacy, mathematical and statistical literacy, internet literacy and media literacy, all taught in a context

that encourages dialogue, choice ownership and participation. Such literacies are not discreet (sic) and cannot be taught as such. Rather, these multi-literacies are continuous and intertwined. We can neither teach literacy, nor act as fully literate citizens without all of these pieces of literacy at once. A genuinely participatory democracy could function with no less from its citizenry and should expect no less from its school. (p. 2)

From the extract above, one can realize that print literacy, otherwise known as traditional literacy, is the one that is always emphasized as literacy. However, in modern times, there is also critical literacy, which involves the ability of the reader to see how various texts represent certain viewpoints and agendas, and to understand how such texts might seek to influence ideas, behavior, assumptions, or cultural perspectives. It implies that to be literate, we must bring our understandings of the world to the understanding of the text, because understanding the world is a process of conscious critical work. We are actually rewriting or transforming the world as we transform our understandings of the world and the text in relation to it (Hornstein, 2005, p. 4).

Multicultural literacy refers to “the skills and ability to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests, to uncover the assumptions of knowledge, to view knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives and to use knowledge that will create a just and humane world” (Hornstein, 2005, p. 5). Technological literacy refers to how best to manipulate various machines in order to enjoy maximum benefits from them and also possibly avoiding the dangers inherent in using them. Mathematical and statistical literacy is one’s ability to use and perform operations with numbers involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. It involves various complex calculations needed to solve scientific problems of various kinds. To be mathematically and statistically literate, one must be able to communicate by sending and receiving information in this realm, and be able to show they understand it by giving the proper required response. Internet literacy involves one’s knowledge of information and communication technology, and their ability to use it and acuity in understanding its language.

Media literacy involves critical utilization of mass media such as the radio, television, newspapers, magazines, journals, and books. In handling these mass media, citizens in a democracy should be able to sieve fact from fiction, and also to recognize opinions and agendas of individuals and certain political parties or other groups of people who are trying to influence us or make us come to their sides, even if their ideology is not popular. The question that arises from the foregoing is whether the child’s mother tongue (MT) or language of immediate environment (LIE) is enough for him or her to attain all the aforementioned types of literacy in the 21st century. The answer is certainly no, but nevertheless, the MT or LIE of the child should not be neglected in his or her education, because it is the language of cognition and thought for the African child.

Language of Instruction in Nigerian Primary Schools

The issue of language of instruction in the primary school has been a dicey one in Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education statement, the language of instruction in the nursery school and the first two years of primary school should be the MT or LIE, and beyond that, English (see National Policy on Education [NPE] 1969, 1971, 1980, 2004 and 2013). But we have to note that there is no one-to-one correspondence to this language policy when it comes to implementation. What can be said is that it is the socioeconomic setting of the child's education that dictates the language of instruction for the child. For example, in an elitist setting, where the education and socioeconomic status of the parents are high, the language of instruction is English. But in a multilingual, poor socioeconomic setting, the language of instruction is either the MT or the LIE. The investigation of this social phenomenon is one of the objectives of the present paper.

In this light, many linguists and literacy scholars have investigated various languages of instruction—in particular, their efficiency—as prevalent in Nigerian primary schools (see Adefila, 2008; Jegede, 2009; Onwuka and Ohia, 2008; Okebukola 2008; Salami, 2008; Ugwanyi, 2008). It is not a surprise that we have many articles on language of instruction cited for 2008, as most of the papers were presented in the midterm conference of the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN) held in Ibadan in 2007. This conference, organized by the International Development in Africa Committee (IDAC) of the International Reading Association (IRA) was a milestone in about thirty years of the existence of RAN as an organization. The conference witnessed, as it were, a crop of articles on the significance of the MT as a language of instruction in English as second language (ESL) situations. This event was after the RAN's biennial conference held in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria in October 2006. It was then that literacy practitioners began to see the importance of the hitherto neglected MT or LIE in the education of the African child, who up till then had been subjected to unnecessary linguistic colonialism.

In addition, people's attitudes towards the learning and use of different types of languages have also been investigated (see Adekunle, 1995; Asiyabola, 2009; Bamgbose, 1971, 1995, 2009; Bilewumo, 2008; Jowitt, 1995). According to Bamgbose (2009), on the language of instruction in Nigerian primary schools:

In a multilingual situation in which English is not the first language but is the medium of learning and teaching in schools, it has been repeatedly observed that a significant percentage of pupils repeat classes, drop out before the end of the elementary education cycle, or fail to obtain the required school leaving certification. Although several factors, including teachers' incompetence, learning environment, teaching materials and other facilities, financial capabilities of parents, and community support may affect success or failure in schools, the fact is that the medium of instruction is a significant factor. (p. 651)

The extract above emphasizes the importance of the lack of the MT or LIE, if they are neglected for English (L2) in the education of the child. It is not uncommon, however, if the teacher sometimes makes recourse to the MT when he/she realizes that the learner cannot quickly grasp the subject matter in English; this is more frequent when the discipline imparted is not English as a subject.

Halliday (1973) hinted at the importance of language instruction even earlier:

[E]ducational failure is often, in a very general and rather deep sense, language failure. The child who does not succeed in the school system may be one who is not using language in the ways required by the school. In its simplest interpretation, this might seem to mean merely that the child cannot read or write or express him/herself adequately in speech. But these are externals of linguistic success, and it is likely that underlying the failure to master these skills is a deeper and more general problem, a fundamental mismatch between the child's linguistic capabilities and the demands that are made upon them. (p. 8)

With the above quotations, teachers, educational curriculum planners and the government should rethink the language aspect of instructional delivery in schools. While we have been using English-only as a medium of instruction, we need to look at the MT or LIE (e.g., Yoruba, Igbo, Igala, Ibibio, Ijaw, Hausa, Itshekiri, Urhobo, etc.), or at least a combination of MT and English, which Jegede (2008) and Salami (2008) referred to as a code-switching communicative strategy for imparting disseminating instruction.

Jegede's (2008) study investigates code-switching as a communicative strategy in multilingual mathematics classrooms in selected primary schools in Ile-Ife. It focuses specifically on the extent and effect of the use and role of languages in a multilingual mathematics classroom. Data were collected from five selected primary schools through ethnographic observation and structured interviews. The study, which used a matrix language framework (MLF), was able to identify Yoruba (MT) as the main or matrix language of instruction and English as the other embedded language of instruction in the code-switching (CS) communicative strategy proposed; it further found that the languages employed are effective. In addition, it challenges the view of CS as a sign of communicative incompetence.

The Nature of Integrated Science as a School Subject

Integrated Science comprises biology, physics and chemistry combined together for pupils in the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. The same discipline may be referred to as General Science or Elementary Science or simply science. But the terms mean the same thing and have similar content.

Just like mathematics, the subject demands a lot of attention from pupils and teachers. The teachers need to devise an appropriate and effective method, such as using practical lessons, involving showing of real objects, dissection of animals to show various parts of its body, demonstration of several types of experiments, and the use of metalanguage always coined in Latin, Greek or English. As a result of the

metalinguage, strict observation, formulation of hypotheses, experimentation to test the hypotheses, and formulation of law, some pupils find the subject very difficult to internalize, especially when all these processes are not carried out using the MT and LIE.

General Science or Integrated Science is the study of living and nonliving things. Biology, one of its branches, is the study of two types of living things: animals and plants. The study of plants is called botany, while the study of animals (higher and lower) is called zoology. Physics, on the other hand, is the study of matter in relation to energies and forces in the environment. The branches of physics are instrumental, measurement, biophysics, and industrial. Chemistry is the study of matter, anything that has mass and occupies a space. It is mainly the study of nonliving things.

Science is equally intertwined with mathematics and Higher Mathematics. Any pupil who wants to study any science discipline in the university is expected to be well versed in mathematics. It is a prerequisite to the study of any science-based course in the university or any higher institution. Similarly, in primary schools, we expect the pupil who is interested in science to have an affinity for mathematics or arithmetic. Learners are always categorized, especially in secondary schools, according to their mental capabilities in three areas: science-based, social science-based, and art/humanity-based. The bedrock of all these classifications is in the primary school, where pupils are normally exposed to all disciplines at this level for them to choose from when they get to secondary and tertiary institutions.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Our data analysis and discussion focus on the responses from the pupil-subjects and teacher-subjects in the six schools under study. The findings, however, can be extrapolated to teaching and learning situations in various parts of Nigeria, Africa and the world, especially in places where we have bilingual, bicultural, multilingual and multicultural speech communities.

Pupil-Respondents' Data

Five tables were generated from the responses of the pupil-subjects in line with the number of the questions in the pupils' interview guide. We will treat the data according to the order of the questions in the interview guide, as follows:

(a) *What language do you and your teacher use during Integrated Science (IS)?*

None of the pupils from the six schools under study indicated that they use Yoruba as a language of instruction. In School A (CAC Primary School, Edunabon), five pupils indicated that it was English that was most often used as the language of instruction during Integrated Science. That is about 33.3% of the whole population sample used for the study in that school. In Saint Paul's Ayegbaju, Ile-Ife (School B), ten out of 28 respondents, that is, 36% of the sample, indicated that English was most often used as the language of IS instruction. In the last two schools, Schools E and F (LA Primary School, Orugun and Saint Philip's Ayetoro respectively), none of

the pupils indicated English as the language of IS instruction. However, it was a different story with regard to the use of Yoruba and English combined as languages of instruction in the IS classroom in most of the schools used for the study. For example, 10 pupils, about 67% of the sample taken from School A, indicated that they and their teachers used a combination of Yoruba and English as languages of instruction. Similarly, 18 (64%) indicated that their teacher taught them using English and Yoruba simultaneously during IS lessons.

The story was not the same in School C (Faith Standard Nursery and Primary School, Iloro), which is a private highbrow school. None of the pupils indicated that they code-switched between English and Yoruba during IS lessons. In Paramount Nursery and Primary School (School D), however, in spite of being a private school, a huge percentage of the population sample, 25 (86.4%), said their teacher code-switched between English and Yoruba for them to understand IS lessons. In School E, the entire population sample (100 %) indicated that they and their teacher often code-switched between English and Yoruba during IS lessons. Also, at Saint Philip’s Ayetoro, which is a public school, all 28 pupils (100%) that responded said both languages were being used as languages of IS instruction. The table below shows that the pupils that wanted the teaching and learning of IS to be in code-switched Yoruba and English outnumber those that wanted the teaching and learning of IS to be in monolingual English. For example, the total number of pupils that wanted the IS to be taught in code-switched English and Yoruba was 101 out of 130, while those who wanted English-only was 29 out of 130. The ratio of pupils that wanted instruction in Integrated Science to be presented to them in a code-switch of Yoruba and English to those pupils that preferred English-only instruction is 78 to 22. This implies that the classroom teacher should exploit the MT or LIE in the dissemination of IS instruction in primary schools. It may, however, be combined with English, which is the official and examination language.

Language of Instruction / School	Yoruba-only	English-only	Yoruba/English Combination	Total
A	NIL	5	10	15
%	NIL	33%	67%	100%
B	NIL	10	18	28
%	NIL	36%	64%	100%
C	NIL	10	NIL	10
%	NIL	100%	NIL	100%
D	NIL	4	25	29
%	NIL	14%	86%	100%
E	NIL	NIL	20	20
%	NIL	NIL	100%	100%
F	NIL	NIL	28	28
%	NIL	NIL	100%	100%
TOTAL	NIL	29	101	130
%	NIL	22%	78%	100%

Table 1. Language of Instruction Preferred by Teachers and Pupils

(a) *Do you understand IS better when taught in English than when taught in Yoruba?*

In School A, 15 (100%) of the pupils said they understood IS better when taught in English than when taught in Yoruba. Only 5 (20%) indicated YES to the question in School B, 10 (100%) in School C, 25 (83.3%) in School D, 4 (20%) in School E and 28(100%) in School F, all claimed that they understood IS better when taught in English than when taught in Yoruba. No pupil claimed they understood IS better when taught in Yoruba than when taught in English in School A. Twenty pupils (80%), however, said NO to the above question, while 5 pupils said NO to the question in School D. Sixteen (80%) said NO to the above question in School E while none said NO in School F. In all, 87 (68%) out of 128 (100%) claimed that they preferred IS to be taught in English only, against 41 (32%) that preferred it to be taught in the Yoruba mother tongue. This is just an issue of preference rather than efficiency. The pupils were apparently aware of the importance of English as the official and significant language of education, and as the power language in general in Nigeria. This, however, is not an index of a greater proficiency in English than in their MT.

School	Yes	No	Total
A	15	NIL	15
%	100%	NIL	100%
B	5	20	25
%	20%	80%	100%
C	10	NIL	10
%	100%	NIL	100%
D	25	5	30
%	83%	17%	100%
E	4	16	20
%	20%	80%	100%
F	28	NIL	28
%	100%	NIL	100%
TOTAL	87	41	128
%	68%	32%	100%

Table 2. Pupils' Attitudes to English as a Language of Instruction

(b) *Do you understand IS better when taught in Yoruba than when taught in English?*

No pupil said YES to the above question in School A. In School B, however, 20 (77%) of the pupils said YES in response to it. Likewise, in School C, which is a highbrow nursery and primary school, none of the pupils indicated an affirmation. In School D, only 6 (21%) pupils said YES to the question, while in School E, 14 (70%) pupils indicated that they understood IS lessons better when taught in Yoruba than when taught in English. In School F, however, only one pupil said YES to the above question. In another vein, 14 (93.3%) said NO to the question in School A, while 6 (23%) said NO to the question in School B. In School C, 10 (100%) indicated NO to the question, implying that that they did not support the idea of being taught IS in their mother tongue, Yoruba. Twenty-three (79%) pupils indicated the answer NO

in School D. In School E, only 6 (30%) said NO to the question above, while 25 (96.1%) in School F indicated that they did not want to be taught IS in Yoruba, which is their mother tongue. In all, 41 (33%) out of 125 (100) preferred IS to be taught in Yoruba only, while 84 (67%) wanted it to be taught in English.

School	Yes	No	Total
A	NIL	14	14
%	NIL	100%	100%
B	20	6	26
%	77%	23%	100%
C	NIL	10	10
%	NIL	100%	100%
D	6	23	29
%	21%	79%	100%
E	14	6	20
%	70%	30%	100%
F	1	25	26
%	4%	96%	100%
TOTAL	41	84	125
%	33%	67%	100%

Table 3. Pupils' Attitude to Yoruba as Language of Instruction

(c) In what language do you write your answers during an examination?

Thirteen (100%) pupils in School A indicated English as the language of examination. In School B, 27 (96%) said English, and 10 (100%) indicated English to be the language of examination in School C. While 20 (77%) gave English as the language of examination in School D, all 18 pupils in School E (100%) and all 27 (100%) in School F reported using English. Only in School D) do we have 1 pupil (4%) that indicated Yoruba (mother tongue), and 5 (19.2%) who indicated a code-switch of English and Yoruba as the language(s) of examination. There is no gainsaying the fact that English is the language of examination, as summarized in the table below. The pupils that responded that English was most often used as the language of examination outnumber those that said otherwise. Educators are aware of this fact, but what we are saying is that there is a need for code combination or switch between English and the pupils' MT when teaching in the classroom in order to facilitate the use of pupils' use of English on the examinations.

Language of Instruction / School	English-only	Yoruba-only	Combination	Total
A	13	NIL	NIL	13
%	100%	NIL	NIL	100%
B	27	1	NIL	28
%	96%	4%	NIL	100%
C	10	NIL	NIL	10
%	100%	NIL	NIL	100%
D	20	1	5	26
%	77%	4%	19%	100%
E	18	NIL	NIL	18
%	100%	NIL	NIL	100%
F	27	NIL	NIL	27
%	100%	NIL	NIL	100%
TOTAL	115	2	5	122
%	94%	2%	4%	100%

Table 4: Pupils' Responses on Language of Examination

(d) Do you like a situation in which English is combined with Yoruba in teaching I.S?

Fourteen (100%) pupils said YES to the above question in School A, 27 (100%) pupils in School B, only 2 (20%) in School C, 24 (89%) in School D, 16 (94.1%) in School E, and 26 (100%) in School F. In three schools some pupils said NO to the question above: in School C, 8 (80%); in School D, 3 (11%); and in School E, 1 (6%). The majority (109, or 90%) of the pupil-respondents wanted a combination of Yoruba and English in the dissemination of IS lessons, despite the fact that they recognized the importance of English as a HIGH language in Nigeria. A minority (12 or 10%) of the pupils did not want the code-switch because of their better attitude to English rather than to Yoruba, even though they do not have much facility in it.

School	Yes	No	Total
A	14	NIL	14
%	100%	NIL	100%
B	27	NIL	27
%	100%	NIL	100%
C	2	8	10
%	20%	80%	100%
D	24	3	27
%	89%	11%	100%
E	16	1	17
%	94%	6%	100%
F	26	NIL	26
%	100%	NIL	100%
TOTAL	109	12	121
%	90%	10%	100%

Table 5. Pupils' Attitude to English/Yoruba Code-Switch as Medium of Instruction

Teachers' Responses

As in the previous section of the paper, we first present each of the questions on the questionnaire before we analyze the data of the teachers' responses collected for this study. The number of the teacher respondents varies from question to question as reflected in all of the tables presented below.

(a) What language do you use to teach IS?

In response to this question, 23 teachers out of 40 indicated that they teach IS in English. This is 58% of the teacher population sample used for this study. None of them indicated that they usually teach IS using their mother tongue, Yoruba, as the language of instruction. However, 17 (42%) indicated that they always teach IS using a combination of their mother tongue and English, which is the second language of the southwestern Nigerian speech community. This is to say that while English is the clear preference, as reflected in the table below, the mother tongue, Yoruba cannot be discarded for the dissemination of knowledge, other than English Language as a subject. This is clearly shown by the fact that only a little less than half of the teachers (42%) were interested in a code-switch of Yoruba and English during IS lessons.

Language of Instruction	Numbers of Teachers	Percentage
English	23	58%
Yoruba	NIL	0
Combination	17	42%
Total	40	100%

Table 6. Teachers' Responses on Preferred Language of Instruction for IS

(b) What language is stipulated in the NPE for teaching IS in Primary IV?

According to the findings presented in the table below, 2 (4.9%) out of 41 teacher-respondents left the column blank, implying that they did not know the answer to the question. In other words, it shows that they were not actually aware of the language of instruction for IS as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Thirty-six of the 41 (87.8%) indicated English as the answer. Two teachers (4.9%), however, indicated that the mother tongue was stipulated to teach IS in Primary IV in Nigeria. Lastly, one teacher (2.4%) indicated that it was a combination of mother tongue and English that was stipulated in the NPE for teaching IS in Primary IV.

Language of Instruction	Numbers of Teachers	Percentage
Blank	2	4.9%
English	36	87.8%
Yoruba (mother tongue)	2	4.9%
Combination	1	2.4%
Total	41	100%

Table 7. Teachers' Response on Language of Instruction Stipulated for IS in NPE

(c) Are you aware of the language of instruction in Primary IV?

Twenty-two (58%) of the teacher-respondents said they were aware of the language of instruction in Primary IV. On the other hand, 16 (42.1%) of the teachers under study picked the option NO. This question is intertwined with the previous one. They index the fact that some teachers need retraining with regard to what is actually in the National Policy on Education (NPE). It is not a good sign when teachers of whatever cadre indicate that they are not aware of the content of the NPE, the document that is the blueprint for education in a particular country.

	Numbers of Teachers	Percentage
YES	22	58%
NO	16	42%
Total	38	100%

Table 8. Teachers' Responses on Awareness of Language of Instruction for Primary IV as Stated in NPE

(d) Do your pupils comprehend your lessons in IS?

The majority of the teacher-respondents examined (34 or 89.4%) indicated that their pupils comprehended their lessons in whichever language medium was used for teaching IS. Only 4 (11%) said their pupils did not comprehend their lessons.

	Numbers of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	34	89%
No	4	11%
Total	38	100%

Table 9. Teachers’ Responses to Pupils’ Performance and Adopted Language of Instruction

(e) *What language do you recommend for the teaching of IS in primary schools?*

According to the findings presented in the table below, none of the teachers indicated the pupils’ mother tongue, Yoruba, as the medium of instruction per se. Nine (22%) indicated English only as the medium of instruction for IS in primary schools in Nigeria. However, the majority of the teacher-respondents (32, or 78%) said they preferred MT and English code-switching as a medium of instruction in primary schools, most especially for IS.

Language of Instruction	Numbers of Teachers	Percentage
Mother Tongue (Yoruba)	NIL	0
English	9	22%
Mother Tongue and English	32	78%
Total	41	100%

Table 10. Teachers’ Recommendation for IS Language of Instruction in Primary Schools

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper attempts, first, to argue for the recognition of the mother tongue in the education of the African child generally, and particularly in Nigeria. To support the argument, six primary schools were purposively selected, using teachers and pupils of Integrated Science in Primary IV in two of the four local government areas of Ife: Ife North, Ife Central, Ife East, and Ife South. Considering the time constraint of the “call for paper”, we limited the study to six schools (three private and three public primary schools) from Ife East and Ife North LGAs. These schools are representative of the primary schools in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. As a result, the results obtained from the study can be extrapolated to other schools outside the locales of the study, particularly in bilingual and multilingual speech communities.

From the findings obtained from the study, we are able to recognize the value of the mother tongue in the education of the child in primary schools in Africa. If English cannot be eliminated as the principal language of instruction in primary schools, let it be combined in a code-switching paradigm with the child’s mother tongue in the dissemination of knowledge other than English as a subject, such as in Integrated Science and Mathematics. The study recognizes the role that English has been playing as the official language, and the language of instruction, examination, accommodation and social advancement; however, it should be combined with the

mother tongue so that the child can fully comprehend the concepts in General Science, which is the bedrock of modern technology, national development, and globalization.

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Book Reviews

Moving Critical Literacies Forward: A New Look at Praxis across Contexts. Edited by Jessica Zacher Pandya and JuliAnna Ávila. New York: Routledge, 2014. 206 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-81814-8. (Reviewed by Jennifer K. Shah).

Introduction and Purpose

The word *critical* stems from the Greek word meaning “to argue or judge” (Luke, 2014, p. 22). Approaching any text critically is key lest the reader be easily duped or manipulated. According to McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004), critical literacy “views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text’s message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between reader and authors” (p. 14). Four common dimensions of critical literacy are (1) disrupting the commonplace, (2) interrogating multiple perspectives, (3) focusing on sociopolitical issues, and (4) taking action and promoting social justice (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 382). I will utilize these dimensions as a lens to critically review the book *Moving Critical Literacies Forward: A New Look at Praxis across Contexts* (2014), edited by Jessica Zacher Pandya and JuliAnna Ávila. What follows is a summary of content interwoven with the text’s strengths and limitations.

At first glance the text seems innovative. The title and images imply that new themes, theories, and ideas around the topic of critical literacy, including an interactive Web 2.0, will be discussed. The cover image (Figure 1) features two females engaged in dialogue: one holds a book while her peer holds a hand-held device resembling a smartphone. Surprisingly, the editors make no reference to the cover or explain the use of images that set the tone for their book, so it is up to the reader to decide whether new literacies are truly addressed.



Figure 1. Book

The first chapter gives the reader good insight into the purpose and intent of the work. Teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers who want to pursue critical literacy instruction are identified as the intended audience. The editors discuss their aims, literacy identities, issues they struggle with as teacher educators, and examples of their current scholarship around critical literacy, giving the reader a good idea of each editor’s background and stance before moving on to the rest of the work. The main message to readers is that “critical literacy is alive, well, and needed, at all age levels, and in all (educational) contexts” (p. 11), which has been proven repeatedly in the last ten years (e.g., McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004; Morrell, 2008; Stevens & Bean, 2007; Vasquez, 2004). Perhaps in lieu of the current implementation of Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) the editors

believed a new text on critical literacy was timely and chose to expand on original work previously published in journals and books. Readers should note that seven of the fourteen chapters are expanded versions of articles originally found in the journal *Theory into Practice* (2012) 5(11). Other chapters, such as the ones written by Janks (Chapter 3) and Vasquez (Chapter 13), regurgitate information found in previously published books (Janks, 2014; Vasquez, 2004). The biggest strength of the compilation of these works is that each individual chapter falls into one or more dimensions of critical literacy as defined by Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002).

Disrupting the Commonplace

Disrupting the commonplace requires critically literate readers to “see their ‘everyday’ through new lenses” (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383) which is well addressed by a variety of authors in *Moving Critical Literacies Forward*. Luke (Chapter 2) sets the political tone of this work by describing critical literacy as “the use of technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of institutions and everyday life” (p. 21). Luke’s definition disrupted the commonplace by deviating from the traditional view of education, which perpetuates current societal structures. Finn (Chapter 4) disrupted the commonplace by critiquing meritocracy and identifying it as the culprit for educational opportunity gaps. Instead of moving working class students up to the middle class individually, he argued for a more collective approach through education for empowerment. Moore, Zancanella, and Ávila (Chapter 10) deconstructed policy reform in the United States in the 21st century by taking a closer political look at Common Core State Standards.

By interrogating who was involved and who benefits from these new standards, the authors problematize federal standardization, which is often not done with teachers and teacher candidates (Picower, 2013). Teacher educators must help teacher candidates learn not only how to critique the status quo but also how to achieve their goals, including those related to embedding critical literacy within the current educational context. Previously published work elaborates on how critical literacy—including digital literacy and Common Core State Standards—can work together, which offers teachers some hope instead of simply eliciting anger and frustration with the current climate (Ávila & Moore, 2012).

Interrogating Multiple Perspectives

Several of the chapters in *Moving Critical Literacies Forward* interrogate multiple perspectives, which require teachers to evaluate several points of view (Lewison, Leland, Harste, & Christensen, 2008). Exley, Woods, and Dooley (Chapter 5) discussed the use of fairy tales in an Australian school with a newly implemented curricular framework. Researchers and the teacher each took turns at implementing critical literacy units and demonstrated various approaches to critical literacy instruction with the same class. Unfortunately, only printed texts were included in this research, leaving a very narrow picture of what can be done with the genre of fairy tales, especially using multimedia. Comber and Nixon (Chapter 7) asked the reader to view their environment with a critical lens, and introduced a new aspect of

critical literacy called *place-based pedagogy*, which sees context as something to be analyzed. Through the use of film creation, students and teachers were able to view their school, neighborhood, and community as non-neutral entities. Finally, Takekawa (Chapter 11) described the Japanese context in a neoliberal sense, which paralleled policy reform faced by teachers in the United States. This chapter demonstrated that educators across the world face similar issues in regard to critical literacy implementation in an era of accountability and standardization.

Questioning multiple perspectives also requires asking about whose voices are missing from the dialogue (Luke & Freebody, 1997). In most chapters, teachers' experiences are shared by researchers, rather than by the teachers themselves. Although the featured authors do much to bring light to various perspectives, the absence of teachers' voices in the discussion to move critical literacy forward is disheartening.

Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues

Focusing on sociopolitical issues requires examining daily politics that affect our lives (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Flint and Laman (Chapter 6) used the Writer's Workshop approach with elementary school teachers to implement a critical literacy unit on students' lived experiences with social justice through poetry. Students viewed this experience as transformative, and shared their narratives with the community. Johnson and Vasudevan (Chapter 8) also focused on "critical literacy performances" (p. 99), but focused on those that are unrehearsed and related to everyday texts valued by high school students, including clothing and accessories. Through three student vignettes, authors told teachers to put on a critical lens when evaluating certain behaviors normally considered taboo in classrooms. Although the theme of consumerism emerges in this chapter, no reference to what Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) call *kinderculture* or the corporatization of schools is discussed. Another example of the sociopolitical dimension is described by Pandya (Chapter 12) as an unsuccessful attempt in the US to standardize critical literacy instruction. Pandya described the pitfalls of a standardized design and warned against using such measures for critical literacy implementation in schools. Of the four dimensions, focusing on sociopolitical issues is the best addressed in *Moving Critical Literacies Forward*.

Taking a Stand and Promoting Social Justice

Taking a stand and promoting social justice requires teachers and students to take action, and sets critical literacy apart from critical thinking (Mulcahy, 2011). Comber and Simpson (2001) defined this aspect as using what we know, including our use of language and power, to question the status quo, especially in circumstances related to injustice. It comes as no surprise that examples of taking social action are found in Comber's contribution with Helen Nixon (Chapter 7), which describes how students were able to play a role in taking social action regarding the architecture of their new school. Rosario-Ramos and Johnson (Chapter 9) elaborated on the importance of community-based organizations as institutions where students gain access to critical discourses. By studying a cultural center located in a low-income

Puerto Rican neighborhood, the authors learned about resilience, textual resources outside of schools, and the potential to working with such organizations. Tips for teachers on how to go about integrating community-based organizations are included here. The authors could have gone further to discuss how these examples demonstrate critical service-learning, which includes issues of inequity, power, and language and weaves “awareness with action” (Hart, 2006, p. 28).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Critically analyzing a text requires the reader to appreciate as well as critique. Strengths of this work include establishing a balance of theory and practice by providing enough conceptual and empirical argument and evidence. By formatting the information in a story-like fashion, the editors have also made the content easily accessible for stakeholders who are more concerned with what happened rather than details of the research design. Evaluating *Moving Critical Literacies Forward* through the four dimensions of critical literacy demonstrates that the text does meet the criteria of critical literacy instruction, but the envelope could be pushed further. The editors were successful in their aims of bringing critical literacy to light and proving that critical literacy instruction is important, possible, and happening at various levels in education in various ways in the 21st century. Certain chapters expanded on what critical literacy could include, including place and space, but new literacies were not appropriately addressed. The biggest contention with this text is the promise made with the title. Truly moving critical literacy forward today includes focusing on media literacy, including social media (Lankshear & Knoble, 2011), participatory action research with teachers who implement critical literacy in their classrooms, and expanding on the barriers to critical literacy instruction as implementation of Common Core State Standards continues.

Overall, *Moving Critical Literacies Forward* is a good introduction for those just discovering critical literacy, but most of the information found in this text is just as easily located in previously published journal articles and books. Teachers, teacher educators, and researchers well read on the topic of critical literacy will not find much new information here and should keep moving forward.

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Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0: Teaching with Online Texts, Tools, and Resources, K-8, by Denise Johnson. New York: Teachers College Press, 2014. x + 180. ISBN: 978-0-8077-5529-7. (Reviewed by Crystal D. Howell).

Denise Johnson's *Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0: Teaching with Online Texts, Tools, and Resources, K-8*, just published in May 2014, is a valuable book for any elementary or middle grades practitioner, not only for the extensive resource links it includes but also for Johnson's empowering approach to technology integration. The author insists that new literacies (also known as literacies 2.0, 21st-century literacies, or digital literacies) are a vital part of students' lives and as such, must be integrated into classrooms by those who know classrooms best: teachers. Well-grounded in literacy and technology research, this text is academically sound without being too dense, making it accessible for practitioners, its target audience. Johnson, a professor of reading education and director of the Literacy Leadership program at the College of William and Mary, was an elementary school teacher, middle school reading specialist, and a Reading Recovery teacher before earning her EdD in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Memphis, so her ability to situate her text in praxis—the meeting place of theory and practice—is unsurprising. Her recent publications also point toward her growing expertise in using technology to enrich literacy education (Johnson 2005, 2009, 2010a, & 2010b). Although the book's accompanying blog (<http://www.literacytwopointzero.blogspot.com>) enables her to add to and update the online resources she provides in the text, I anticipate that the practical chapters of the book will quickly become dated, an obstacle for any book so pointedly focused on specific technology strategies. Nevertheless, *Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0* is a good resource for practitioners across content areas who desire a better, pedagogically sound way to approach technology and digital literacies in their classrooms.

Johnson's text is divided into ten chapters, of which the first two focus primarily on defining literacy 2.0 and establishing the foundational frameworks that the author will build on throughout the remainder of the book. In chapters three and four, she introduces ways to use technology to support traditional classroom concerns, including building a classroom culture and connecting with families (chapter three) and building students' vocabulary and fluency (chapter four). In chapters five through eight, she specifically addresses new literacies and explores the technology tools available to support the acquisition of these new literacies, and in chapter nine, she describes literacy 2.0 assessment techniques and provides sample checklists, rubrics, and surveys for this purpose. In her concluding chapter, Johnson contemplates what literacy 3.0 might look like, envisioning it as professional literacy for teachers. She briefly discusses the ways that professional learning communities (PLCs) or professional learning networks (PLNs) can be enhanced and broadened via social networking communities and other online resources such as professional organization websites, webinars, podcasts, and blogs.

One of Johnson's key contributions is her thorough explanation of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (typically abbreviated TPCK,

although Johnson confusingly uses TPACK in her text). This framework, developed by Koehler and Mishra (2008), flips the approach many school districts explicitly or implicitly encourage teachers to take regarding the integration of technology in their teaching. Rather than beginning with a specific technological tool or skill, the TPACK framework “asks teachers to begin with content or the curriculum goals,” the pedagogical strategies that best support those goals, and finally to ask “whether technology can support these goals and instructional strategies” (p. 15). TPACK requires practitioners to be mindful and “purposeful” (p. 15) in their technology integration, rather than simply using the newest tool available in their classrooms. However, the value of Johnson’s contribution is not the simple inclusion of TPACK, a relatively common concept in new discussions of pedagogy, but rather her explicit framing of it as an agentive force for practitioners. Teachers know best their content-related goals, and therefore they, rather than building or district administrators, are the most qualified to determine the technological tools they and their students should use to reach these goals.

For language and literacy teachers specifically, Johnson also relies on the National Council of Teachers of English’s (NCTE) *21st Century Literacies* (2008) framework. Rather than conceptualizing this framework as a set of standards or a checklist of what students and teachers ought to be doing, NCTE presents six basic elements (using technology tools, cross-cultural collaboration, information for global communities, synthesizing information from various sources, criticizing multimedia texts, and technological ethics), and then asks questions that teachers can apply to their practice. Like TPACK, NCTE’s *21st Century Literacies* underscores Johnson’s most foundational premise: technology should support language pedagogy, not shape it, and based on their intimate knowledge of their classroom and community resources, students, and learning goals, practitioners must determine how and when new technologies are most useful.

I suspect that chapters five through eight will be the meatiest chapters for teachers looking to integrate new literacies quickly and easily in their instruction. However, I also anticipate that these chapters will suffer most from the book’s biggest flaw: datedness. Each of these chapters addresses a particular new literacy topic (“Sites and Selection Criteria for Ebooks,” “Using E-tools to Scaffold Comprehension of E-literature,” “Writing Online,” and “Technology across the Curriculum,” respectively) and includes an upper grade and lower grade lesson based on Internet reciprocal teaching (IRT), an instructional method that “revolves around building the online reading comprehension strategies of questioning, locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and communicating” (Johnson, 2014, p. 25). Conceptually, the author uses these chapters to describe critical new literacy skills, such as fluency and comprehension when working with multimodal texts; self-regulation when reading online texts; issues of relevancy when creating multimodal, linked texts; and meaningful, critical inquiry online. But the sample lessons feature specific software tools, such as VoiceThread, EverNote, Survey Monkey, Diigo, and RubiStar. These specific tools are helpful, but in bounded ways. Johnson presupposes computer or tablet availability for every student, and reliable, fast Internet access, which simply is not the case in many American classrooms.

Moreover, she does not adequately anticipate that the software she recommends may also change in cost or features, or may simply go away. Johnson can attenuate this flaw somewhat via the book's companion blog; however, as of the time that I wrote this review, the blog had not been updated since June 2014, leading me to wonder how good a resource it will prove to be.

Chapter nine, on the other hand, is not grounded in specific online tools, but in examining and assessing the dispositions, skills, and knowledge associated with new literacies. Johnson includes tools to assess various steps in acquiring and practicing new literacies, including students' use of technology tools, online reading dispositions, collaboration skills, reading a webpage, and effective online inquiry strategies. Her analysis of what elements of new literacies ought to be assessed and sample rubrics, checklists, and surveys for doing so are clear, detailed, and comprehensive, making this chapter one of the strongest and most useful in the book.

I anticipate that Johnson's book will be a hit with elementary and middle school teachers, but I fear that it will be for the wrong reasons. In the short term, chapters five through eight will provide handy example lessons that teachers can easily adapt for their own classrooms. However, as technologies change, the usefulness of these chapters will become less immediately apparent. In the long term, the real value of *Reading, Writing, and Literacy 2.0* is in the foundational first and second chapters. In these chapters, Johnson demonstrates that teachers are the most important actors in the application of new technologies and the development of their students' new literacies. As more technologies are developed that weaken teachers' roles in education generally—for example, in online coursework designed to be completed without a teacher at all—practitioners should embrace Johnson's assertion that their expertise is vital.

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Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms, edited by A. Suresh Canagarajah. New York: Routledge, 2013, 247 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-52466-7. (Reviewed by Hajar Al Sultan).

Juggling written academic discourse and undertaking arduous attempts to reproduce the so-called Standard Written English (SWE) sometimes engages bi/multilingual writers in an endless circle of self-negotiation and self-conflict. Most bi/multilinguals find themselves puzzling about the choice of using their own languages as a “resource” and conforming to the norms of standard written English, considering their first languages (L1) a “barrier” (Horner, Lu, Royster & Trimbur, 2011, p. 303). This compelling conflict and self-negotiation bi/multilinguals encounter in their academic writing experience is the heart of an overarching paradigm for language and writing research and teaching proposed for US classrooms (Horner et al., 2011). Recently, a translingual approach or a translingual *orientation* for writing and literacy has sparked ongoing, vigorous debates surrounding language diversity and difference in writing and literacy.

In *Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms*, Suresh Canagarajah makes the argument for a translingual approach to writing and literacy as “situated, dynamic, and negotiated” rather than as “discrete entities” (p. 130). Canagarajah is an Edwin Sparks professor in the department of Applied Linguistics, English, and Asian Studies and Director of the Migration Studies Project at Pennsylvania State University. In this book, Canagarajah makes another contribution to the growing body of translingual research and pedagogy and further pushes the boundaries of traditional mono-, bi-, multi-, and plurilingual paradigms to writing and literacy. His previous book, *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*, highlights the prevailing confluence of globalization and power on the traditional monolingual orientation of English (which refers to the norms and conventions of written discourse) and on the emerging trend of *translingual orientation* (Horner et al., 2011, chapter three) to writing and literacy.

Following the traditional genre constraints of an edited book, Canagarajah organizes the twenty-two chapters under five main themes: premises, community practices, code-meshing orientation, research directions, and pedagogical applications. The applied linguist brings together leading interdisciplinary scholars to answer the questions of *what* and *how* the new emerging paradigm does for writing and literacy, with reflections on the translingual practices of local communities. The *whats* and *hows* presented in the scholars’ studies and perspectives are aimed at acknowledging the complexity of cross-language relations and “what it is like to live the multilingual reality” (p. 163), and at developing a more subtle understanding and knowledge of the translingual orientation. Each chapter attempts to expand the boundaries of the traditional linguistic monolithic approach to literacy and writing research and teaching for both multilinguals and self-identified monolinguals. This is an academically oriented text that is geared toward students, researchers, and practitioners across L1 and L2 composition, rhetoric and applied linguistics, education theory and classroom practice, and diverse ethnic rhetorics.

Drawing upon previous and current scholarly work, Canagarajah offers a comprehensive and informative introduction, in which he unpacks the major lines of the discussions undertaken in this volume and the ongoing trajectory of the translingual paradigm. Opening up the discussion in chapter two, Bazerman addresses the increasingly complex and dynamic multilingual and multicultural world and potential barriers to communication and shared knowledge that are forced by linguistic, social, and national variations at local, educational, and global levels. Given the complexity and diversity of communication and knowledge, Bazerman calls for literacy that goes beyond these barriers and that results in a more effective communication and integration within and across languages. In response, Wible in chapter four examines rhetorical practices of the World Social Forum and its international and regional meetings. The rhetorical practices of the World Social Forum appear to underscore the gains of developing “a border base of knowledge” about “cross-language practices” (p. 46) that help global participants to work with and across the borders of linguistic and cultural diversity.

In keeping with the discussion about cross-cultural communication and cross-language relations, in chapter eight Cushman further argues that “our monolingualistic assumption about knowledge, meaning, and rhetoric” (p. 92) that entails “fluency with the letter” (p. 93) cannot be taken for granted in a discussion of rhetorical practices (e.g., the Cherokee syllabary) that demand going beyond an alphabetic bias. Arguing against a monolingualistic orientation to literacy or writing in US multilingual and multicultural education, Donahue, in chapter fourteen, does a comparative analysis of writings of French and US university students and suggests that using cross-cultural analysis (non-US standard models) offers new lenses through which to see different perspectives and insights to US writing discourse or research.

Not far from the Cherokee syllabary, Angle Island poems and *hole hole bushi* (Young, chapter six), Indigenous colonial experience (Reyhner, chapter seven), Kenyan hiphop (Milu, chapter ten), linguistic practices of Lebanese people (Ayash, chapter nine), and literacy practices and learning experiences found across international borders (Sceners-Zapico, chapter seventeen) present additionally nuanced manifestations of translingual practices and “hybrid forms of learning” (p. 193). They all illustrate how multiplicity and reconstruction of new or existing rhetoric or linguistic symbols (from their own or the colonizer’s language) reflect a sense of self-negotiation and resistance against linguistic hegemony and colonialism of English or monolinguals ideology (Milu, chapter ten, Lorimer, chapter fifteen).

Toward the second half of this volume, its main goal of connecting community practices to classroom activity becomes very clear. Milson-Whyte (chapter eleven), Matsuda (chapter twelve), Jerskey (chapter eighteen), Young (chapter thirteen), and Pandey (chapter twenty), for instance, discuss how translingual literacy practices of local communities can serve to push the boundaries of a monolingual orientation and to acknowledge literacy practices of multilingual writers who are also “drawing upon multiple, rich rhetorical resources” (p. 207). Milson-Whyte, in chapter eleven, examines code-meshing and translingual

orientation and outlines potential gains and pedagogical and sociopolitical implications related to the application of code-meshing in US writing classrooms and other multilingual contexts. Arguing for the proposal of code-meshing in US writing classrooms, Young (chapter thirteen) explains that the aim is to counteract linguistic injustice and racial prejudice exerted by the hegemony of English and its monolingual ideologies on multilingual societies. He explains that conformity to “standard English only,” as it is the only path for linguistic, academic, and professional success, seems very rigid in a nation that is aggressively characterized as (multi-) cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and regional, and with a language that is recognized as the language of liberty and democracy.

On the other hand, to speak to translingual research challenges and its pedagogical applications and implications, Matsuda (chapter twelve) indicates that a language movement that aims to valorize a translingual approach to writing opens up a myriad of possibilities to US writing and college composition research and scholarship. Albeit by highlighting other terms associated with a translingual approach to writing, which includes “hybrid discourses, alternative discourses, world Englishes, code-meshing, translingual writing” (p. 132), Matsuda underlines the need for more soundly, cross-globally designed research and rigorous efforts concerning knowledge and understanding of a translingual orientation to writing and literacy. Poe (chapter sixteen) further emphasizes the need for disciplinary knowledge and disciplinary participation or “social-professional collaborative networks” (p. 177). Pandey (chapter twenty), furthermore, calls for an “applicable, multidimensional, and comprehensive” framework (p. 219).

In conclusion, Canagarajah works hand-in-hand with other leading scholars in an attempt to untangle the complexity of the term *translingual* and to “re-envision... writing and literacy through the translingual lens” (p. 1). As the book starts with a question—“what does ‘trans’ do to the language?”—it ends with another notable question: What does “re” do to our understanding of writing and literacy from a translingual perspective? Indeed, a plethora of verbs are linked with *re-* to underscore the urgency to rethink, reconceptualize, reimagine, reforge, reconsider, reconstruct, reconnect, and renegotiate the reality and the future of “the ongoing trajectory of a translingual approach to literacy” (p. 235). The scholars repeatedly emphasize throughout this volume that language difference is not a barrier, but rather a resource. As translingual practices are an inseparable aspect of everyday interactions and literacy practices of Indigenous and multilingual communities, as illustrated earlier, there should be room for translingual practices in multilingual US classrooms and other multilingual contexts. Hansen (chapter nineteen) goes further, indicating that a multilinguistic orientation and a translingual approach must be promoted among self-identified monolinguals to help them move out from the monolingual comfort zone, where languages other than Standard English are devoid in the multilingual world. In another attempt to underscore the importance of developing multilingual (and monolingual as well) writers’ “awareness or sensibility” toward language differences, Lorimer (chapter fifteen) highlights the term “rhetorical attunement” as a way of “acting with

language that assumes linguistic multiplicity and invites the negotiation of meaning to accomplish communicative ends” (p. 163).

Taken as a whole, a translingual approach—the new emerging and multifaceted paradigm—is the heart of discussion in this volume. Though each chapter contributes to understanding the value of a translingual approach “as a rhetorical and research concept” (p. 238), apparently more work is needed at macro and micro levels to help broaden and refine our understanding about this term and other associated terms, including “hybrid discourses, alternative discourses, world Englishes, code-meshing, translingual writing” (p. 132). As well, more work is needed to investigate the value of a translingual paradigm as “an instructional approach” (p. 238). Indeed, this volume further illuminates an urgent need for thorough, cross-disciplinary and cross-globally-designed research that explores how multilingual writers’ attitudes, multiple resources, knowledge, and strategies evolve as they are engaged in translingual practices. Future research must take extra steps in investigating the possibilities as well as the complexities of translingulism as a pedagogical approach. Looked at together, one might wonder whether the aforementioned leading scholars in this volume, who are from cross-disciplinary fields and are from different L1 and L2 compositions, had a space to draw on their multiple rich linguistic, social, and cultural resources and experiences to negotiate and/or accommodate their needs, their identities, and their voices, as they all advocate for translingual orientation to writing and literacy.

References

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