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"Mi conciencia habla inglés, aunque yo no quiera": Unearthing sociopolitical wisdom through translingual poetry

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we examine translingual identity poems written by three focal Latinx Teacher Candidates (TCs) in response to assignments in their Teacher Education Program (TEP). To interpret the focal TCs work, we bring together theories of raciolinguicized subjectivities, translingual literacies, and sociopolitical wisdom. Through thematic analysis, we argue that the use of translingual identity poems provided opportunities for TCs to draw on their *emotions as semiotic resources* and assert the connections of their identities to broader histories of marginalization and resistance. We also argue that when we, as teacher educators, engaged in the work of reflexively reading the poems while considering our own identities, it created a space for mutual learning and vulnerability. This article demonstrates the value of translingual identity work for both TCs and teacher educators, and counters trends towards "identity-neutral" and monolingual approaches in teacher education.

Introduction

> "For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams towards survival and change . . . The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives." (Lorde, 1984, p. 37)

In this study, we explore translingual—linguistically fluid and multiple—poems authored by three multilingual Latinx teacher candidates (TCs) of Mexican heritage in response to course assignments in an elementary teacher education program (TEP) that has been focused on decentering whiteness (Varghese et al., 2021). We argue that the use of translingual identity poems provided Latinx TCs with spaces to explore emotions and connect their lives with broader histories of marginalization and resistance. (Re)reading these poems, we collectively discovered that they speak to the past and future, to moments we relive and feel in our bodies, to moments of freedom we envision for our students and ourselves. They bring forward deeply felt experiences with racial and linguistic oppression, while simultaneously speaking to the teachers' ongoing survival and assertion of self in the face of this pain.

As we analyzed these poems, we asked: What are the affordances of translingual poetry for multilingual TCs of Color[1] engaging in identity work? As teacher educators, and as readers and interpreters of meaning, our understanding of the teachers' intended messages in these poems is limited and is dependent upon our own journeys (Dutro, 2019). We present these poems and our interpretations to argue that engaging teachers in translingual writing provides opportunities for candidates to surface their sociopolitical wisdom and to draw on their emotions as a semiotic resource—a tool for making meaning and sharing knowledge. We also explore how teacher educators engage in powerful mutual learning through reading and discussing such poems.

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Literature review: poetry & identity work in teacher education

This article builds on research exploring the importance of identity work in teacher education, as well as emergent research on the use of poetry within TEPs. We bring this literature together to push back on normative, "identity-neutral" methods and practice-based frequently centered in TEPs (Daniels & Varghese, 2020). This also is linked to our own work within a TEP as we initiated a bilingual endorsement program as part of larger efforts to center racial and linguistic justice (Varghese et al., 2021). We build on research that defines identity as contextual and relational, embedded in systems of power, and constantly shifting (Varghese & Snyder, 2018; Venegas-Weber, 2018). Also, we highlight the hybrid or "border-dwelling" nature of identity for raciolinguicized teachers who bring multiple ways of being to the TEP (Anzaldúa, 1987; Haddix, 2015).

Identity work in teacher education

Much work in teacher education has focused on identity work for White TCs to enhance acknowledgement of bias and privilege (Sleeter, 2017). Fewer studies have considered identity work that is supportive of multilingual TCs of Color. In the field of bilingual education, researchers have suggested that examinations of individual linguistic history are important for critical stances on classroom language use (Nuñez et al., 2020). For example, Nuñez et al. (2020) analyzed a TEP assignment entitled "biliteracy trajectory books" to explore how bilingual TCs gained critical awareness of power in relation to language and asserting their multilingual identities. Other studies suggest that attention to linguistic histories is tied to the formation of bilingual teacher identity and flexible linguistic practice in the classroom (Venegas-Weber, 2018).

Although previous research uncovers important purposes for identity work with linguistically and racially minoritized TCs, it does not necessarily consider the *emotional* and *embodied* nature of these reflections (Nuñez et al., 2020). Drawing on research in trauma, we acknowledge that personal history lives in the body and continues to provoke emotional responses relevant to individual self-understandings (Garcia & Dutro, 2018; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2021). Emotions themselves are tied to power dynamics, and how the self is situated within them (Benesch, 2018). Thus, felt experiences provide both deep insights into existing systems of oppression and strategies for navigating this oppression (Dutro, 2019; Sandoval, 2000). In inviting multilingual TCs of Color to reflect on their identities, we argue that it is critical to invite emotion.

Poetry in teacher education

Autobiographical poetry can be a powerful medium for investigating identity, voicing emotion, and acknowledging systemic oppression (Dutton & Rushton, 2021; Marlatt & Cibils, 2018). Marlatt and Cibils, (2018) suggested that multilingual autobiographical poetry supported bilingual, Latinx TCs to explore their identities using their whole linguistic repertories in ways that were culturally sustaining. Yet instructors in higher education may express resistance to reading multilingual work, citing a feared inability to understand or a lack of time to translate. This refusal causes harm to multilingual TCs of Color through explicitly marginalizing their linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge.

In this article, we build on this literature to show that translingual poetry written in response to TEP assignments created a platform for TCs to connect their identities to histories of marginalization and resistance (Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015) and express emotions as a form of agency, exposing and resisting dominant narratives (Benesch, 2018).

Theoretical framework: sociopolitical wisdom expressed in and through translingual poetry

We frame this article by bringing together theories of raciolinguicized subjectivity (Daniels & Varghese, 2020), sociopolitical wisdom (Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015), and translingualism (Canagarajah, 2013).

Drawing on theories of raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015), Daniels and Varghese (2020) argued that race and language are mutually constitutive in the formation of teacher identity. Within the United States, raciolinguistic ideologies bind Whiteness to monolingualism and "standardized English" and delegitimize races and languages outside this norm. Thus both race and language are central to how teachers' identities are constructed by the larger society, and in their own self-understandings (Daniels & Varghese, 2020). This intersection is particularly salient for bilingual Latinx TCs because of the complex history of linguistic marginalization and racism toward Latinx communities in the United States (Nuñez et al., 2020). Adding to this complexity is the fact that Latinx identities are multiple and should not be conflated with racial identity, as this has the potential to erase anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity (Sánchez-Martín & Gonzalez, 2022).

Following the work of Women of Color feminists, we contend that the Latinx TCs in this study came to our program with a wealth of existing knowledge, particularly around what it feels like to navigate through systems of oppression (Anzaldúa, 1987; Sandoval, 2000). Sánchez Carmen et al. (2015) referred to these understandings as *sociopolitical wisdom*, an intergenerational and collective form of knowledge related to making sense of self within social systems. Sánchez Carmen et al. (2015) suggested that this wisdom is connected to experiences of oppression "experienced and known beyond words and cognition," (p. 7). This knowledge of oppression lives in the body and is often manifested through emotions (Garcia & Dutro, 2018). Though similar to critical consciousness, sociopolitical wisdom specifically describes the critical awareness of communities of Color, acknowledging felt and shared knowledge built through personal experience. This conceptualization allowed us to analyze emotions in the poems as indicative of teachers' experiential knowledge.

Linking these theories with translingualism, we broadened our understanding of what counts as meaning-making. A translingual view of writing expands the conceptualization of semiotic resources, or meaning-making tools, to include diverse linguistic repertoires as well as "colors, images and symbols'" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 41). Acknowledging the potential for a translingual approach to equate all multilingual experiences and obscure racial and linguistic oppression (Gilyard, 2016), we intentionally combine translingualism with an anti-racist stance, acknowledging that raciolinguistic ideologies impact how racialized speakers are "heard" and treated. We also extend the theory of translingualism, introducing the conceptualization of *emotions as semiotic resources* used by the TCs within the poems and in our negotiation of the poems' meanings as readers. Because emotions are connected to systems of power, they support meaning making regarding raciolinguistic power dynamics (Benesch, 2018) and surface sociopolitical wisdom. The translingual lens embeds the reader into the meaning-making process, highlighting that the process of interpreting text is a collective, ongoing and negotiated process (Canagarajah, 2013).

Context

The three authors of this article are a former doctoral student, a current doctoral student, and a research scientist at a large University in the Pacific Northwest. We came to this study after working together for four years in a research team centered on the experiences of Bilingual TCs in the TEP. Rachel gathered the data as a part of her dissertation research and we co-analyzed the data presented in this article. Each of our experiences shape the stance from which we "feel alongside" these poems (da Silva Iddings & Leander, 2019).

Rachel

I come to this study as a multilingual White woman who learned Spanish as a second language in school. I grew up in a poor family in a predominately White rural town in Washington. Although Spanish was a language of our community, in school I was taught to see Spanish as a language of far-away countries and academic success. The Latinx students in my bilingual classroom in Chicago later taught me that Spanish has deep roots as a community language in the US, and I was privileged to learn their languages alongside them during my five years as an elementary school teacher. I also come to this study as a woman who experienced trauma and violence because of my gender identity, and this lived experience informed my understanding of these poems and solidarity with the Latinx women in this study. During the time of the study I was taking hesitant steps towards my first role as an instructor in higher education, and I learned much through my work with these three TCs. We engaged in research during their first year in the classroom, shared deeply vulnerable moments, cried together in classrooms, and raged in frustration at the system.

Grace

I am a White woman who grew up in a large West Coast city, in a low-income family that experienced economic and other types of instability. However, I attended affluent private schools on needs-based scholarships and became acutely aware of both the educational inequities I was witnessing and how my racial and linguistic privileges allowed me to “pass” as belonging in those spaces. This fueled my commitment to public education and to anti-racist pedagogies. I learned Spanish through living in Latin America as a young adult and through engaging in immigrant rights work in the United States, then worked as a bilingual/dual-language elementary teacher for nine years in California and Guatemala City. I am raising two children in a bilingual household with my husband, who identifies as mixed race, Chicano, Indigenous, and White. I came to know the TCs in this study through my role as a coach and teaching assistant (TA) in the TEP.

Patricia

I came to this study as a Latinx multilingual literacy professor and a Chilean national with over 20 years in the , after experiencing a traumatic military dictatorship in Chile for 18 years. I thus lived similar traumatic sociopolitical experiences to those expressed by these three Latinx TCs in their poems. I also am aware of the diversity of experiences and positionings of Latinx immigrant communities in the US, including my own.

I learned English in Chile, as part of my school’s commitment to creating students capable of developing more holistically through learning different trades and skills to become a community servant. This also was a strong value in my family. I came to the US in college, which allowed me to witness how, in some contexts, I was positioned as a celebrated international student, while in others—for example, when volunteering in a local elementary school—I was subjected to constant microaggressions and deficit thinking because of my accent and/or skin color. My research centers on the bilingualism and biliteracy of dual-language teachers.

Rooting our collaboration in an analysis of our different positionalities, the three of us worked to create a sense-making space through which we could speak from our own experiences, share vulnerability, and push each other to deepen our thinking. This collaboration emerged organically from our affective experiences with the TCs’ poetry, and was centered on our collective desire to honor their wisdom.

Teacher candidates

The three TC collaborators were part of the first cohort of the TEP’s new Bilingual Endorsement Program. In the year of this study, 50% of the students were students of Color and 50% were White,

with a large percentage of the cohort also being multilingual. The three focal TCs in this study were all Spanish/English candidates of Mexican heritage. Two were born in the US and educated through English as a Second Language (ESL) programs on the eastside of Washington state. Both of their families engaged in agricultural labor. The third focal TC was born in Mexico and moved to California prior to elementary school and during the period when Prop 227 prohibited bilingual education.

TEP assignment

The first quarter of the TEP included several courses that took an intersectional approach to race and language. The poems presented in this article were created through a three-part assignment in a course that Rachel taught entitled *Identity and Equity*, meant to build students' awareness of racial and linguistic oppression in schools through connections to their own identities. As a White woman leading a class on identity, Rachel's goal was not to teach students about their identities, but rather support them towards self-discovery. Rachel created a central assignment entitled *Noticing the Self*, meant to disrupt the supremacy of English and White supremacy culture's tendency to value rational thought over personal experience and emotion. Through a series of reflective questions, TCs were asked to consider aspects of self and compose outside the bounds of a typical essay. The focal TCs in this article chose to compose poems for parts of this assignment.

Methods

Data was collected as part of a larger ongoing study of bilingual TCs' experiences in our TEP (Varghese et al., 2021). We focus here on three translingual poems written for the *Identity and Equity* class taught by Rachel; we selected these poems because of their use of sociopolitical wisdom and emotions.

Analysis process

We began by reading the poems and coding them using a set of codes derived from the larger study (e.g., emotional knowledge, consciousness of one's own privilege/oppression, raciolinguistic awareness). After our first round of coding, we discussed emerging themes and began to recognize the roles that our different positionalities contributed to the analysis. Recognizing that, as readers, we also were co-constructors of meaning (Canagarajah, 2013), we shifted away from line-by-line coding and towards a holistic, collective analysis of the poems. This allowed us to explore how our raciolinguicized subjectivies did and did not match with those of the TCs who authored the poems. Rachel and Grace named and explored how Whiteness shaped their reading of the poems, and Patricia considered how her identity as a Latina was similar to and divergent from the participants. We read each poem together, audio-recording our conversations. We allowed these conversations to take place naturally, surfacing what stood out to us about the poems as we read them. Simultaneously, we used our emerging theoretical framework to understand the conversations. Grace took notes during the conversations, using the theories of sociopolitical wisdom, translingualism, raciolinguicized subjectivities, and emotions as semiotic resources as a rough organizational structure for the notes documents. Each of us listened back to the recorded conversations and collaboratively added to these notes documents, constructing memos which we used to compose the findings sections.

We took up a translingual lens (Canagarajah, 2013) as we discussed our analysis of the poems, recognizing that interpreting the poems together entailed a process of collective co-construction of meaning, from the sites of our own raciolinguicized subjectivities and positionalities. Our emotions became part of the analysis process, and we took the stance of feeling alongside (da Silva Iddings & Leander, 2019) the data and each other. Our memories and relationships were also a part of this analysis process. Both Rachel and Grace knew the three TCs who authored the poems, and our personal interactions with them became part of the text that we analyzed while constructing our collective interpretations.

Findings

Just as we chose to analyze each poem holistically, we purposefully keep the poems whole to invite the reader to pause, listen to the poet (Chaparro, 2020), and experience their own felt reactions. We honor the linguistic choices of the poems' authors by explicitly refusing translation of the poems as a whole, and invite the reader to take on the responsibility of interpreting code-meshed text. We suggest that this responsibility is imperative for teacher educators serving multilingual students. After each poem we share our collectively-constructed analysis of the work.

Brenda's poem

Brenda's poem was written for her first assignment in the course. Her work centers on her exploration of her identity as a Latinx woman in the United States, and portrays her identity as hybrid, contextual, and historically constructed (Haddix, 2015). She writes:

soy mujer, hija, y esposa
una Mestiza de piel morena
creada en el corazón de la Tierra caliente
y nacida en el continente americano,
en la parada donde se juntan las encrucijadas de identidad

debo responder, quien soy y a dónde voy?

soy Mexicana
el producto de la colonización, la violación, y el asesinato
—o, del Destino manifesto europeo;
de algo inevitable: tus abuelos ganaron y los míos perdieron
así que aquí estoy, tío Cortez

soy inmigrante, érase una vez indocumentada
mi conciencia habla inglés, aunque yo no quiera
pero mi corazón y mi alma hablan español;
el lenguaje que he aprendido amar, pues ya qué?
dialecto no se hablar

soy una sonrisa y también una lagrima
contigo me río y te digo:
no te preocupes! estoy bien. de las duras penas saque la fortaleza.
pero mi almohada, mis lágrimas en la noche la saturan
y te escondo mi verdad, mi dolor, mi rabia y mi desesperación
hasta el punto de sentir mi esencia desvanecer

no soy Americana y mucho menos Estadounidense
aquí crecí, pero nadie me invitó
soy una colada, una mantenida,
mi piel morena natural (no el producto de un caro tan)
clasifica mi fenotipo e invalida mi capacidad mental
gracias, Sr. Norton

no soy Española, vale
por mis venas corre la sangre derramada esa noche de historia

pero ellos nunca me reconocerán
y ahí nunca tendré hogar
soy una bastarda

no soy Mexicana, no de verdad
agringada y con falsos aires de grandeza
soy una vendida

no soy ni de allá, ni de acá, dijo La india María
y no se total a donde voy

pero está bien, porque SI estoy bien
entre sonrisas y lágrimas y todo lo demás
mi identidad es todo esto y mucho más
algo que cada día crece, cambia, y permanece igual

son un café de olla con un toque de Splenda
y en la parada de las encrucijadas, algún camino tomaré
no mucho importa cuál ya que sea cual sea, perseveraré

soy Brenda
y no me arrepiento de lo que me ha hecho lo que hoy soy

In this poem, Brenda highlights her sense of in-betweenness—first stating, "soy ... " [I am] and pivoting to "no soy ... " [I am not]. She references historical figures (tío Cortez), figures from popular culture (la India María), and concepts (Manifest Destiny, Eugenics) that help her situate herself as both part and a product of histories of colonization and intergenerational violence.

Brenda demonstrates her awareness of her raciolinguicized subjectivity in her choices about which languages to use and how to talk about language itself. Writing in Spanish, indicating her work to reclaim her linguistic heritage, she also draws on translingual resources to indicate her belonging in a multilingual transnational community within the US (For example: "soy un café de olla con un toque de Splenda" [I am a *café de olla*, with a touch of Splenda]. She states, "mi conciencia habla inglés, aunque yo no quiera/pero mi corazón y mi alma hablan español /el lenguaje que he aprendido amar, pues ya qué?/dialecto no se hablar. [my consciousness speaks English, even if I don't want to/but my heart and my soul speak Spanish/the language I've learned to love, since what else is there to do?/I don't know how to speak an Indigenous language.]" Here, she connects her personal history growing up in English-only mandated schooling in California as an (im)migrant student with her critical awareness of the linguistic racism experienced by Spanish speakers subjected to subtractive schooling (Flores & Rosa, 2015). She speaks to the contradictions inherent in the fact that Spanish is also a colonial language, responsible for the erasure of the Indigenous languages (dialecto) spoken by her ancestors.

Brenda uses emotions as semiotic resources to evoke the racialized experiences of children of immigrants in the US. This is particularly salient when she describes showing a brave face to the world, but reveals, "te escondo mi verdad, mi dolor, mi rabia y mi desesperación hasta el punto de sentir mi esencia desvanecer [I hide my truth, my pain, my rage, and my despair from you to the point of feeling my essence vanish.]" In this powerful stanza, Brenda suggests that hiding emotion is a survival strategy, yet these emotions are so intense, and so interrelated to Brenda's self-understanding, that hiding them makes her feel that she is vanishing. This underlines the interconnection between Brenda's emotions and her knowledge of systems of oppression.

The use of emotion as a semiotic resource extends beyond the text itself to the emotions evoked through Brenda's poem in the body of the reader. The tone at the beginning and the end of the poem is

defiant and clever, with an undertone of anger—displaying Brenda's intelligence, speaking back both to oppressive historical figures and also to the reader's own assumptions about who Brenda is and what she's capable of. Yet in the stanza quoted above, Brenda changes her tone, letting the reader see through her defenses to the deep sadness she experiences due to her marginalization.

Readers experience this stanza differently based on their positionalities. For readers who live similar forms of oppression, this stanza may evoke embodied feelings of sharing the emotions Brenda vividly describes. For readers who consider issues of oppression from a position of privilege, this stanza may function to remind them that oppression is not just a concept to be discussed and analyzed, but is viscerally experienced as deep pain, rage, and hopelessness that can be felt in the body. This became clear in our shared conversation about this stanza. For Rachel, Brenda's emotional expression in this stanza resonated deeply with her own experience with gender-based violence, and the deep pain of needing to hide emotion for the benefit of others. For Grace, this stanza made her consider how her White privilege has allowed her at times to consider issues of oppression through an intellectual or historical lens, without experiencing the deep emotional pain that people of color feel in their bodies when living through racism and oppression. For Patricia, this stanza connected her immediately with her own memories of suppressing home life and sense of despair due to the sociopolitical climate of Chile she experienced as a child.Yet the poem continues, showing how Brenda may fall apart at night in the privacy of her own room, yet wake up the next morning to continue moving through the world. At the end, Brenda takes the contradictions of her identities and knits them together into a dynamic, hybrid, unified whole (Haddix, 2015): "mi identidad es todo esto y - mucho más/algo que cada día crece, cambia, y permanece igual. [my identity is all of this and much more/something that each day grows, changes, and stays the same.]" Brenda exercises sociopolitical wisdom as she moves on with an intact and vibrant sense of self. She ends the poem with the phrase "y no me arrepiento de lo que me ha hecho lo que hoy soy [and I do not regret that which has made me what I am today]," exerting her own self-definition built on sociopolitical wisdom of survival.

Yaritzi's poem

Yaritzi wrote this poem for her final assignment. She composed the poem with pen and paper during our final class of the quarter, in the 45 minutes carved out for students to work on final projects:

> ***¿Por qué Maestra?***
> Las manzanas el fruto de mi vida
> El sol me hace sudar
> Mi lengua y voz murmuran el español.
> Miss Durán they say
> Spanglish lo llaman
> Sentada en clase, separada
> Separada como yo de mi familia
> Segregación, la unidad en serio?
> Hola! Y abrazo se transforma en "Hello!"
> Que hipocresia.
> Miss Durán they say
> Soy coco, o sea coconut
> Pero en realidad soy fruto
> Un fruto del esfuerzo de mi familia
> I reap the benefits they sow
> Miss Durán they say
> Maestra Durán dirán
> No somos de aquí, no somos de allá
> El lenguaje bilingüe es un fruto
> Un fruto del esfuerzo de nuestros papas
> El lenguaje fluye en sus venas
> Miss Durán dirán
> Ser maestra, saber importancia de ser bilingüe
> Entender el doble esfuerzo

Yaritzi's poem invites the reader to move with her, from her childhood as the daughter of farmworkers and as a student in an ESL program into her future as a bilingual educator. In reflecting on her childhood, she draws upon her sociopolitical wisdom, citing the "doble esfuerzo [double effort]" of being bilingual. In conversations with Rachel, Yaritzi shared how she was required to work twice as hard as the other students; she received some instruction in Spanish during her pull-out ESL classes, only to be thrust back into her English-only classroom to scramble to learn what she missed. These experiences segregated her both from her classmates and from her family and home language: "Sentada en clase, separada/Separada como yo de mi familia/Segregación, la unidad en serio? [Sitting in class, separated/Separated like I am from my family/Segregation, unity seriously?]" She cites the hypocrisy of this approach: Although from the outside it looks like she attends the same school as her classmates, her reality is one of racial and linguistic segregation due to school policies grounded in racio-linguistic deficit-based ideologies (Flores & Lewis, 2022; Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Yaritzi uses a translingual approach to show how her shifting identity is defined through language. She expresses the importance of Spanish to her identity but also recognizes how her Spanish was framed as deficient in the context of English-medium schooling: "Mi lengua y voz murmuran el español. Miss Durán they say. Spanglish lo llaman. [My tongue and voice murmur in Spanish. Miss Durán they say. They call it Spanglish.]" Here she also displays her raciolinguicized subjectivity, recognizing the potentially derogatory label of "Spanglish" to refer to the flexible translingual language practices of Latinx communities in the US., but also reclaiming the term as her own.

The use of the repeated line "Miss Durán they say" creates a linguistic trajectory for the poem. The line appears twice in English at the beginning, framed by discussion of how Spanish was regarded through a deficit lens. Then, in the middle of the poem, the line is repeated once in English and immediately afterwards in Spanish ("Miss Durán they say/Maestra Durán dirán"). This shift to Spanish and to the future tense brings us into Yaritzi's future bilingual classroom, where she teaches in her languages in a way that respects her hybrid identity as a bilingual Latina teacher (Haddix, 2015). Finally, near the end, the line appears again as "Miss Durán dirán," completing the transition into Yartizi's future classroom but also hinting, through the use of "Miss" instead of "Maestra," at the continued presence of linguistic hybridity and flexibility that Yaritzi brings into her teaching.

Beginning with its powerful metaphor "Las manzanas el fruto de mi vida [Apples, the fruit of my life]," Yaritzi uses emotion as a semiotic resource, revealing both pride and pain in her deep connection to her family, their work on the land, and her home language. She exposes a hurtful label applied to her in school when she says, "Soy coco o sea coconut. [I'm a *coco*, or rather a coconut.]" This highlights "coconut" as a derogatory term used to stamp racialized individuals as "brown on the outside, white on the inside" (Singh & Sitwell Peccei, 1999). The coconut label is one way she surfaces her in-betweenness, stating elsewhere: "No somos de aquí, no somos de allá. [We aren't from here or from there.]" Like Brenda, Yaritzi explores the emotional complexity of liminality, recognizing that her position between worlds and between languages as a person of color in the US can result in painful labels and assimilationist pressures. For Rachel, this is a deep emotional reminder of the racial privilege she experienced as a White woman in the bilingual teaching role; for Patricia, this moment unearthed experiences of being a racialized faculty member in a predominantly White academic institution. Yaritzi speaks back to this label, referencing the apples from the beginning of the poem, and says, "Pero en realidad soy fruto, un fruto del esfuerzo de mi familia. [But in reality I am fruit, fruit of the effort of my family.]" She invokes a deep emotional connection to her family and their work, explaining "I reap the benefits they sow." She carries this metaphor through to the end of the poem, when she says "El lenguaje bilingüe es un fruto/Un fruto del esfuerzo de nuestros papás/El lenguaje fluye en sus venas. [The bilingual language is a fruit/A fruit of the effort of our parents/The language flows in their veins.]" She acknowledges the joy of her

bilingual identity, while recognizing the intense labor it requires to reap this harvest within the oppressive context of the US. She finishes the poem having completed her transition into the role of bilingual teacher, sharing the fruits of her family's labor and her own with future students. She concludes saying, "Ser maestra, saber importancia de ser bilingüe/Entender el doble esfuerzo [To be a teacher, to know the importance of being bilingual/To understand the double effort]," acknowledging that as a teacher in her own classroom she will bring her cultural identity, her language histories, and her larger sense of self to her work.

Silvia's poem

Silvia wrote this poem for her second assignment, after ongoing discussions regarding the relationship between identity and power:

"Wait what are you?
"What do you mean?"
"Like, where are you from? Are you . . . Mexican?"
Oh! I'm Mexican. Well, I was born here but both my parents are from Mexico

"You're short"
Yeah . . .
"You're so cute!"
. . . thanks

"Wow you're a good dancer!"
Si, si lo soy porque mi papá también lo es. El me enseño a bailar, me enseñó el dolor y el valor del sacrificio.
De él aprendí lo que es tratar y fallar, tratar y fallar. De el aprendí que detrás de un mascara de fuerza hay un humano.
Los inmigrantes son humanos.
Tienen el derecho a demostrar debilidad.
Lo sabias?

"Te gusta mucho leer verdad?"
Si! Me encanta leer. Reading is a pleasure and an escape. This is where I learned most of my words. This is why I say words in English that don't sound like they're supposed to. I look up the pronunciation quickly on my phone so I can sound smarter than I really am. I mean I know the word I just need to know how to say it.
Me entiendes?

"But teacher, I'm not White."
"Mexican is NOT a race it's a nationality"
"But what do I put for my race?"
"Just put White"
Check.

"Why are you so quiet"
I used to hear it all the time
my thoughts were restless on the inside.
I think a lot about what you think and why you think it.
I think a lot about what I think and why I think it.
Maybe too much benefit of the doubt is given in my head.

But I like to see the good in others.
Qué hacemos lo que podemos con lo que tenemos.
I'm still learning how to use my voice.
Sometimes I am too loud to my own ears.
Sometimes I am too angry to my own ears.
Lead with love is what my mind says
My heart says lead with truth.

My mother is present in everything I do.
She taught me how to be.
Sometimes people like my lapse of self and sometimes they wish I was still the person they had imagined me to be.
All I know is, the people that let me breathe, the people que no tienen miedo de decirme mis verdades are the people I want to keep around me always.
My mom says I am good at making friends.
I like to think
Truth attracts truth.

Silvia's poem begins with two sets of racialized/gendered interactions, around "what" Silvia is in terms of racial/ethnic background, and around her small stature and "cute" appearance. Silvia shares brief, surface-level responses in English, indicating her discomfort but not allowing the reader to hear what is truly on her mind.

Then, Silvia begins to explore below the surface, drawing upon her translingual resources. In the third stanza, she switches into Spanish to show what she is actually thinking and feeling—how this seemingly simple question about why she is a good dancer prompts reflection on her father and the sacrifices that he has made, ending with the powerful statement: "Los inmigrantes son humanos./Tienen el derecho a demostrar debilidad./Lo sabias? [Immigrants are humans./They have the right to show weakness./Did you know that?]" The implication is that her interlocutor does not, and perhaps cannot, understand her family history and racialized experiences. In the fourth stanza, Silvia responds in English to a question posed in Spanish: "Te gusta leer, verdad? [You like to read, right?]" In her response, Silvia talks about her complex relationship with reading and "academic" language in English—the pleasure of escaping through reading, combined with the need to hide her unfamiliarity with the pronunciation of certain words in English and contest deficit perceptions of multilingual learners. By moving into English when responding to a question posed in Spanish, she highlights how her academic world is fractured along linguistic lines.

Silvia's raciolinguicized subjectivity continues to surface in the fifth stanza as she uses language to expose the contradictions of how race is discussed in the US. She recounts a painful experience with a teacher who took away her agency by telling her to check the "White" box on a form: "'But teacher, I'm not White.'/'Mexican is NOT a race it's a nationality'/'But what do I put for my race?'/'Just put White'/Check." Here the use of particular words ("Mexican," "White," "race," "nationality") distorts the reality of Silvia's lived experience. In conversations with Rachel, Silvia reflected multiple times on this experience, and discussed how being forced to misrepresent her own complex identity as a child prompted her to support her own students in talking about their racial identities.

An undercurrent of emotion runs through this poem, becoming more apparent as Silvia opens up to the reader. The poem traces a particular trajectory—initially showing us only Silvia's evasive, surface-level responses, then allowing the reader into her inner monologue, and finally ending with an open reflection about what it means for her to truly trust others. At the beginning of the poem, Silvia uses silence as a defense, erecting a wall between herself and others, one that protects but can also isolate. This "wall" became an important element of our conversation about this poem. Grace shared her own experiences of working with Silvia as her coach and often feeling that she was on the other side of this wall. For her, reading this poem was a powerful and humbling look inside Silvia's thinking

about who she trusts and who she doesn't and why. For Rachel, the wall is a familiar construction borne out of self-protection after experiences with violence, that can exist without conscious awareness. Patricia experiences the presence of a similar wall—offering at times both protection and isolation—in academia as a faculty member of Color within institutions not created for her.

Silvia's developing sociopolitical wisdom is apparent in the tensions she exposes between wanting to use her own voice and being unsure of what she can and cannot—or should and should not—say. When she talks about being too loud or too angry to her own ears, she surfaces the tension of developing critical consciousness and working against internalized racism/sexism, while also seeking to protect herself emotionally as a person who has experienced trauma. She discusses this openly, saying, "I'm still learning how to use my voice." Silvia suggests that silence sometimes gives her a chance to be quiet and responsive—more of a "chess player," in Patricia's words—deciding when to surface her racialized experiences and sociopolitical analysis.

At the end of the poem, Silvia highlights different versions of herself, saying "Sometimes people like my lapse of self and sometimes they wish I was still the person they had imagined me to be." Here she shares the painful recognition that some people would rather she not express her emotions and analysis, instead preferring the muted version of her from the beginning of the poem. Silvia highlights her growing awareness that giving people the benefit of the doubt is not always the right choice, affirming the importance of opting for honesty above all else: "Lead with love is what my mind says/ My heart says lead with truth." The theme of truth runs through the rest of the poem, as she explains to us what it takes for her to trust other people: "All I know is, the people that let me breathe, the people que no tienen miedo de decirme mis verdades [that are not afraid to tell me my truths] are the people I want to keep around me always." Silvia explains that she is willing to face the hard truths and trusts others who similarly draw on their life experiences to face those truths with her.

Discussion: emotions as semiotic resources in translingual poetry

In this article, we engaged in a holistic analysis of three poems written by female, Latinx TCs, highlighting our roles as readers with our own subjectivities and histories. We applied the theoretical frameworks of raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020), translingualism (Canagarajah, 2013), and sociopolitical wisdom (Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015). We found that the TCs engaged in purposeful translingual expressions in their poems, deeply tied to their raciolinguicized subjectivities and their work to (re)author their own identities as complex, hybrid, and linked to collective histories (Haddix, 2015).

Completing this work in the TEP classroom created space for the multilingual TCs of Color in this study to convey their sociopolitical wisdom, acknowledging experiences with harm and marginalization while speaking back to this marginalization. Thus, the TCs engaged in sustaining their identities and ways of being as well as considering how their experiences will impact their work as teachers.

We discovered that the poetic format, identity-inquiry focus, and invitation for translingual writing opened space for the TCs to use emotions as semiotic resources. This conceptualization adds to literature and theory on translingualism, bringing the meaning-making process into the body (Caldas, 2021; Canagarajah, 2013; Dutro, 2019). Emotions used as semiotic resources supported the TCs to convey how their identities related to felt experiences or poignant moments of joy and pain linked to their experiences with oppression. We argue that leveraging emotions as semiotic resources can support teachers to investigate and express their own identities and connections to fields of power. The emotions used to make meaning in these poems are powerful indicators of the TCs knowledge of (in)justice; critically listening to these emotions has the potential to alter educational practice and policy (Benesch, 2020; Zembylas, 2021).

In the following section we offer implications for teacher educators engaged with multilingual TCs of Color.

Implications: embracing vulnerability and mutual learning through translingual expression in teacher education

As our collective conversations and reflections made clear, the multilingual and sociopolitical nature of the poems are central to their power and emotional impact as representations of TCs' wholeness. We suggest that if the TCs had been asked to create their assignment solely in a single language, the poems would lack the deep connections they convey to teachers' raciolinguicized subjectivities and related sociopolitical wisdoms (Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015). This indicates the importance of opening space for translingual expression in TEPs that serve multilingual students, and the value of explicitly linking these expressions to explorations of identity, personal history, and emotion (Canagarajah, 2013). We suggest that teacher educators should read, listen, and respond to work in multiple languages, regardless of our own proficiency in those languages.

Through modeling translingual pedagogies in teacher education classes, teacher educators give TCs the opportunity to experience these pedagogies for themselves and to begin to take up translingual pedagogies in their own placement classrooms (Gonzales & Machado, 2022), thereby challenging in K-12 contexts the same monolingual and raciolinguistic ideologies that the participants in this study experienced in their own schooling and contested through their poetry. Through this stance, teacher educators also model vulnerability and willingness to step aside from the role of expert (hooks, 1990). Through this sociopolitically conscious move, teacher educators reduce the harm multilingual TCs of Color experience in their TEPs (Haddix, 2015), and make space to learn from their deep sociopolitical wisdom.

The process we used to analyze the poems also speaks to the value of engaging in ongoing dialogue as teacher educators. As we worked towards a stance of solidarity, seeking to understand while also acknowledging our lack of understanding, we made ourselves vulnerable and open to learning alongside students (Dutro, 2019) and colleagues. We suggest that teacher educators engage in shared discussion with colleagues of a variety of positionalities as they interpret TCs' work, learning more about how their own subjectivities shape their readings. Teacher educators also might engage in ongoing self-reflection that surfaces emotions such as poetry writing or journaling, using emotions as semiotic resources to make sense of their impact in the classroom. More research is needed regarding the impact of these instructional moves in teacher education classroom settings, and also into how teacher candidates can be supported in bringing similar types of inquiry into their work in K-12 classrooms, embracing translingualism, and uplifting racialized multilingual students' own sociopolitical wisdom.

We suggest that a stance of mutual vulnerability and solidarity is imperative to justice-oriented TEPs and we urge teacher educators to engage in the messy process of creating justice in everyday interactions rather than holding themselves outside of TCs' critical awakenings (Caldas & Heiman, 2021). For teacher educators, in a field permeated by Whiteness (Sleeter, 2017), such a stance opens up an invitation to present ourselves as vulnerable and never neutral, with the conscious ability to acknowledge privilege and marginalization and to *feel alongside* our students (da Silva Iddings & Leander, 2019).

Note

1. It is important to acknowledge that any racial categorization is necessarily incomplete and contextual, as racialization is a process that impacts individuals differently across space and time. Simultaneously, racial identities are relevant to (re)claiming pride and community belonging, particularly for historically marginalized communities We use the terms "multilingual TCs of Color" and "Latinx" in this article to align ourselves with the language that our participants used to describe themselves.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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