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Connecting Languages, Growing Voices: Using Translanguaging to Support Spanish Oracy in a Bilingual Third Grade Classroom

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Abstract

This teacher action research study examines how translanguaging practices support Spanish oracy competence, confidence, and emerging bilingual identity among third-grade students in a dual-language program. Over seven weeks, students participated in structured activities, including role play, cognate analysis, journaling, and creating short presentations that encouraged them to draw on their full linguistic repertoires while learning in Spanish. Data from audio recordings, journals, work samples, surveys, observations, and teacher interviews were analyzed using qualitative thematic coding. Findings show that students developed greater confidence speaking Spanish, used flexible cross-linguistic strategies to negotiate meaning, and demonstrated growth in oracy, with non-heritage Spanish speakers showing the most notable gains. The activities also supported identity affirmation by validating students' home languages and linguistic resources. These results highlight the potential of intentional translanguaging design to strengthen Spanish oracy within bilingual programs. Future research should explore long-term implementation to further understand translanguaging's role in bilingual development.

Keywords: translanguaging pedagogy, bilingual education, Spanish oral language development, multilingual learners, linguistic identity

Introduction

Linguistic diversity in U.S. K–12 schools has increased significantly, with English language learners (ELLs) now representing more than one in ten public school students (Gardner, 2024, para. 1). These students collectively speak over 400 home languages (Bialik et al., 2018, para. 6), creating classroom environments where multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception. To support this diversity, schools employ a range of instructional models, including dual-language

bilingual programs, English as a Second Language (ESL) services, and sheltered English instruction. Yet, outside of dedicated bilingual settings, many ELLs continue to receive instruction predominantly in English, limiting opportunities to use their home languages for academic purposes (American Federation of Teachers, 2016). Such English-dominant approaches can exacerbate shortages of bilingual resources and restrict students' ability to draw on their full linguistic repertoires. In response, scholars and educators increasingly advocate for translanguaging—an approach that intentionally invites students to use their full linguistic repertoires as learning tools. Translanguaging enables students to access content, negotiate meaning, and participate more fully by flexibly integrating features from named languages, such as English, Spanish, and other languages spoken at home (García & Kleyn, 2016, p.5). Valuing multiple languages in instruction not only supports comprehension but also aligns with culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. For these reasons, translanguaging serves as a critical foundation for equitable teaching practice and anchors the present action research conducted in a third-grade bilingual classroom.

These dynamics are not neutral; they are rooted in broader sociopolitical forces that reflect the legacy of colonialism in language policy. From a postcolonial perspective, the privileging of English in U.S. schools reproduces the dominance of European languages and reinforces linguistic hierarchies that marginalize other ways of knowing and speaking. Freire's (1970) critique of the "banking model" of education, where knowledge is deposited into passive learners, mirrors how language instruction can impose conformity and suppress students' lived linguistic experiences. Ramirez and Boli (1987) argue that schooling contributes to the preservation of dominant power relations, particularly through language policies that regulate how and whose language is used in academic spaces. Even multilingual or bilingual models can perpetuate these hierarchies when they treat languages as separate, bounded systems with one set as the norm. Understanding how these dynamics surface in real classrooms is essential to situating the present study.

In the focal classroom, English and Spanish carry unequal power and are treated as distinct languages. Although the program is labeled bilingual, English was the dominant social and academic language, shaping students' perceptions of which languages "count." Instruction did not follow a strict language-by-subject divide; instead, the program rotated the instructional language every few weeks, with subjects shifting between Spanish and English depending on the unit. Many non-heritage Spanish speakers view Spanish as a school subject rather than a community language, while heritage speakers associate Spanish with home and family contexts. This dynamic reflects both global colonial histories of Spanish and local U.S. language hierarchies privileging English. This context provides an essential background for understanding how translanguaging practices took shape during the study and how students navigated their linguistic repertoires. These inequities highlight the limitations of rigid language separation and set the stage for approaches that more accurately reflect how multilingual students use language in practice.

In contrast, translanguaging challenges these assumptions by recognizing that language use is fluid, dynamic, and shaped by context. It emphasizes that speakers access a unified set of linguistic resources, rather than switching back and forth between isolated language systems. Cognitively, the brain does not compartmentalize languages; socially, each individual's language practice is uniquely adaptive and relational. Formal instruction, however, often imposes artificial

boundaries between languages that do not reflect how people actually communicate. Translanguaging embraces the full range of students' linguistic resources and affirms their identities as multilingual individuals. While bilingual programs are generally supportive of linguistic diversity and thus theoretically aligned with translanguaging, their implementation often prioritizes the target language, leaving the practical role of students' full linguistic repertoires underdeveloped. This study seeks to examine how translanguaging can be intentionally leveraged within such a context to promote Spanish oracy development in a third-grade bilingual classroom.

The purpose of this teacher action research is to examine how translanguaging practices can support the development of Spanish oracy among third-grade students in a bilingual classroom by leveraging their full linguistic repertoires. The study aims to understand how intentional, interactive instructional strategies can enhance students' confidence, participation, and verbal proficiency in Spanish. This work holds significance for educators working in bilingual and dual language settings by challenging traditional language separation models and embracing a more holistic view of language use. Translanguaging not only validates students' identities but also creates more equitable learning environments where all students, regardless of their language backgrounds, can thrive. By demonstrating the positive impact of translanguaging on Spanish oracy development, especially for non-heritage speakers, this study offers practical insights for educators seeking to cultivate meaningful, authentic, and inclusive language learning experiences.

Literature Review

Language and education researchers have used translanguaging to describe "the flexible, dynamic ways multilingual speakers draw on their entire linguistic repertoires to make meaning, communicate, and learn" (García & Kleyn, 2016, p.4). It is distinct from code-switching, which treats languages as separate systems and emphasizes external language shifts. Rather than treating languages as fixed, separate systems, translanguaging recognizes that speakers naturally blend linguistic resources based on context, audience, and purpose. In classroom settings, this perspective challenges monoglossic instructional models that restrict when and how students may use their languages, even though research consistently shows that bilingual learners leverage all their linguistic knowledge to support comprehension, problem-solving, and participation.

In the academic studies, Lau (2020), for example, documented how students deployed a mix of language between English, French, and other home languages using visuals and gestures to discuss complex topics such as migration and refugee experiences. Their collaboration across languages and semiotic tools deepened content understanding and personal engagement. Similarly, Suárez (2020) found that bilingual science students used English and Spanish, alongside models and gestures, to explain scientific phenomena, reinforcing the role of translanguaging in enhancing both comprehension and expression. Palmer et al. (2014) explored how teachers in Texas modeled dynamic bilingual practices to affirm students' linguistic identities. Strategies included encouraging spontaneous language shifts, positioning

students as bilinguals, and celebrating moments when students made cross-linguistic connections. These pedagogical moves not only supported content learning but also helped construct affirming bilingual identities. Gort and Sembiante (2015) added that modeling diverse linguistic strategies such as bilingual recasting, code-switching, and translation in preschool classrooms nurtures early bilingual development and metalinguistic awareness. Salmerón (2022) highlighted how translanguaging in a writing workshop allowed fourth-grade students to fluidly integrate Spanish and English to build meaningful texts. Teachers scaffolded this process by validating home language use, leading students to produce sentences that reflected both linguistic competence and cultural identity.

While these studies show how translanguaging facilitates oracy, literacy, and academic growth, it is equally important to acknowledge the broader sociopolitical implications that were mentioned in the introduction paragraph. The prioritizing of European languages like English in global and local education systems reflects colonial legacies that continue to shape language policy today. As Bustos-Orosa and Symaco (2025) note, "English remains a dominant language of instruction in the Philippines due to language-in-education policies established during American colonial rule" (paras. 2-3). As a result, today's instruction in these countries is often at the expense of students' home languages. This hegemony is mirrored in U.S. classrooms, where bilingual programs can still prioritize English acquisition over genuine multilingualism.

Despite the growing body of research on translanguaging, important gaps remain. The current research focuses on implementing different strategies that can affect how students interact with language to create a foundational translanguaging skill. Teaching translanguaging strategies extends this research by leveraging cognate recognition to support language development. To examine how varied instructional approaches and classroom activities impact third-grade learners' Spanish-speaking skills, with an emphasis on identifying their individual linguistic repertoires and personal relationships with the Spanish language, acknowledging the diverse proficiency levels present in the classroom is crucial. Although current research demonstrates the benefits of translanguaging across content areas, including science (Suárez, 2020), writing (Salmerón, 2022), and bilingual identity construction (Palmer et al., 2014), fewer studies examine how intentionally designed translanguaging activities can support Spanish oracy in elementary dual-language classrooms, and even fewer explore how these practices benefit non-heritage Spanish speakers within mixed-proficiency groups. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how varied instructional routines, such as cognate recognition, role play, and journaling, support third-grade pupils' Spanish-speaking skills, confidence, and emerging bilingual identity. The guiding research question asks: How does centering translanguaging practices influence Spanish oracy competence, students' confidence, and the development of bilingual identity in a third-grade classroom? This work is significant because it affirms students' linguistic repertoires and supports the development of personal, meaningful relationships with the Spanish language. As no two learners share identical language histories, translanguaging must be understood not only as an instructional approach, but also as a form of resistance that challenges linguistic hierarchies and structural inequalities within schools.

Methodology

This teacher action research project employed focused ethnographic methods to investigate how translanguaging pedagogy influences Spanish oracy among third-grade learners in a bilingual elementary setting. Over a seven-week period, the researcher implemented oracy-based activities that encouraged students to draw from their full linguistic repertoires, which include English, Spanish, and other home languages, while systematically documenting their responses, progress, and reflections. Data was collected through surveys, classroom observations, audio recordings, a collection of students' work, student journals, and interviews with the cooperating teacher.

Participants

Participants include 16 third-grade students (ages 8–9) from a bilingual elementary school in an affluent suburb in the Midwest of the U.S. Of these, five were heritage Spanish speakers, and eleven, non-heritage speakers. Informed consent was obtained from parents/guardians, and student assent was secured. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Classroom and Program Context

The program follows a 50/50 dual-language model. Rather than assigning subjects permanently to one language, the instructional language rotates every few weeks based on the unit, meaning any subject may be taught monolingually in either Spanish or English during different cycles. This rotational design shaped the linguistic environment in which the translanguaging activities were implemented and created the instructional backdrop against which pupils engaged with their linguistic repertoires.

Data Collection

The core of the study centered on six instructional activities, each designed to support Spanish oral language development while promoting natural use of students' linguistic repertoires. These six activities were selected because they offered varied opportunities for both structured and spontaneous oral language production. They also progressively scaffolded students' use of Spanish from low-stakes SeeSaw recordings to high-engagement role-play scenarios. Together, the activities created a coherent sequence that supported language experimentation, metalinguistic reflection, and increased oracy demands over time. These activities were implemented during Morning Work and Language Arts instruction.

Hablamos en Español (Let's Speak in Spanish):

Students responded to speaking prompts such as "What is your favorite food?" and "What is your favorite toy?" using SeeSaw to record short video responses (under 30 seconds). Sentence stems were provided to support expression. The objective was to help learners use Spanish in an informal, low-stakes way. Observation data indicated that students often asked how to say unfamiliar words, prompting mini-lessons on cognates and Spanish alternatives. When students couldn't identify a Spanish term, they were encouraged to try a cognate or use English strategically.

Iron Chef:

Adapted from a teaching protocol, this activity asked students to create short presentations based on an overarching theme (for example, providing key information about an animal or a historical person). Students had 15 minutes to prepare a slide with three sections: researching and answering questions about their topic, providing images, and sometimes providing a personal connection or a fact about their topic. A "secret ingredient" (a supplemental question) was revealed at the end to foster authentic interaction with the language. This activity provided rich data for evaluating students' verbal fluency and ability to use Spanish under time constraints. Pupils' interactions and presentations were analyzed based on observations.

Cognates Vocabulary Discussion:

Students examined pairs of cognates in English and Spanish (for example, *preparativos/preparations*, *concluyó/conclude*) and engaged in a whole-class conversation about word roots and language transfer. Students then had to identify cognates from a list of six Spanish words, supported by accompanying visual representations for help with defining each word. During this activity, students displayed increasing confidence identifying similarities between the two languages (Appendix II). This activity was documented through field notes.

Spot It:

In this visual matching game, students had to identify identical pictures within two circles and call out the cognate words in Spanish from images. The fast-paced nature encouraged rapid recall and peer reinforcement. The game was observed to be especially effective with non-heritage speakers, who relied on peer support and pattern recognition to learn the vocabulary words (Appendix III). Observational notes were taken throughout the activity.

Role-Playing Real-Life Scenarios:

Students were grouped and given everyday scenarios (for example, ordering food or talking with relatives) to act out in Spanish. Scriptwriting and rehearsal were included in the activity, and students were encouraged to ask peers and teachers for help with the language. Some groups incorporated additional linguistic repertoires associated with Polish or Japanese. Students showed higher focus and linguistic intentionality during the Spanish version of this activity. These sessions were analyzed for sentence structure and vocabulary use.

Reflective Journaling:

Three journal prompts asked students to reflect on language learning:

1. A time they learned something in Spanish.
2. A time they learned something in English.
3. A topic of their choice relating to their language experience (Appendix V).

Many students struggled with the first prompt, offering minimal detail. Subsequent entries revealed more insight, especially when students were invited to choose their own topic and language. Journals were analyzed to track metalinguistic awareness and language attitudes.

Student Survey

A survey administered at the start of the study gathered data on student comfort and attitudes toward learning in Spanish. Items included a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Sample items include "I feel comfortable speaking Spanish" and "I would enjoy learning math in Spanish" (Appendix VI). In addition to Likert Scale items, the survey also included true-or-false statements, such as "Spanish is my favorite language" and "I would rather speak Spanish than English," followed by open-ended prompts requiring students to explain their responses. These items provided further insight into students' language preferences and personal connections to Spanish. Finally, students responded to a statement reading, "I am taking Spanish class because…," selecting the option that best reflected their motivation for enrollment. Together, these varied question types offered a more comprehensive understanding of students' initial attitudes, motivations, and perceived challenges related to Spanish, which informed instructional planning and were later compared to classroom observations and student reflections.

Teacher Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the cooperating teacher at the beginning and end of the study. Initially, they described translanguaging as the practice of leveraging the full linguistic repertoire, both verbally and in writing. They supported using cognates as a regular (though unofficial) instructional strategy. In the post-study interview, they affirmed that the translanguaging-based activities visibly helped students embrace linguistic flexibility and recognize connections between languages. However, they also noted that some students still perceived languages as separate systems, a mindset that could be shifted further with sustained instruction and may be a result of their limited collected lifetime experiences (Appendix VII).

Data Analysis

All data were analyzed using a qualitative thematic approach. First, audio recordings were transcribed, and observational field notes, student journals, work samples, and survey responses were compiled and organized. Using open coding, the researcher reviewed each data source line by line to identify recurring patterns related to Spanish oracy, confidence, metalinguistic reflection, and students' use of their linguistic repertoires. Codes included behaviors such as cognate use, repair strategies, code-meshing, instances of hesitation, and moments of increased willingness to speak Spanish.

After initial coding, related codes were grouped into broader themes, including "increased confidence," "linguistic flexibility across activities," and "differences between heritage and non-heritage speakers." Representative student work samples, such as Andrew's "chemistria" and Brad's Spanish role-play performance, were selected because they clearly illustrated these themes. Triangulation across multiple data sources (audio, journals, observations, surveys, and teacher interviews) strengthened the credibility of the findings and ensured that the themes reflected consistent patterns rather than isolated events. This analytic process guided the organization of the thematic findings presented in the Findings section.

Findings

The implementation of translanguaging-based activities over seven weeks revealed several consistent patterns in how students engaged with their full linguistic repertoires to support Spanish oracy. Data from observations, audio recordings, student journals, surveys, and teacher interviews pointed to three central findings: (1) increased confidence in Spanish use, (2) linguistic flexibility across activities, and (3) differential impacts among heritage and non-heritage Spanish speakers.

Increased Confidence in Spanish Use

Across activities, students demonstrated noticeable increases in their willingness to speak Spanish, even when unsure of vocabulary or syntax. During the *Hablamos en Español* video prompt, students attempted Spanish equivalents by drawing on English patterns or known cognates. For instance, Andrew described his favorite toy as *"el labset de chemistria,"* applying inferred cognate knowledge rather than stopping or reverting entirely to English (Appendix I).

Student journal reflections echoed this growing confidence. Brad wrote that the activities "helped [him] gain confidence," (Figure 1) while Andrew noted learning "a few more Spanish words," which made the language "easier to understand" (Figure 2). During the Spanish-only role play, both Brad and Rachel delivered their lines with correct structure and without hesitation (Figures 3 and 4). Observations confirmed that students who rarely spoke Spanish aloud earlier in the year participated more frequently in Spanish during class activities (Appendix IV).

Figure 1

Journal Responses from Brad

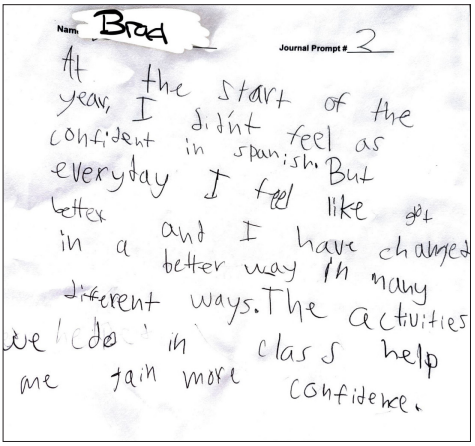


Figure 2

Journal Responses from Andrew

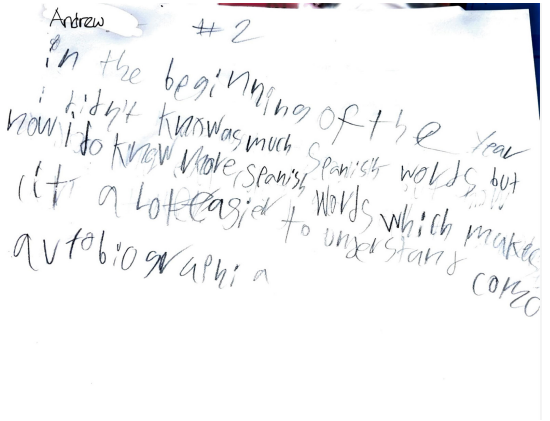


Figure 3

Brad's "Role-Play Activity Part 2" Work Sample (Spanish Only)

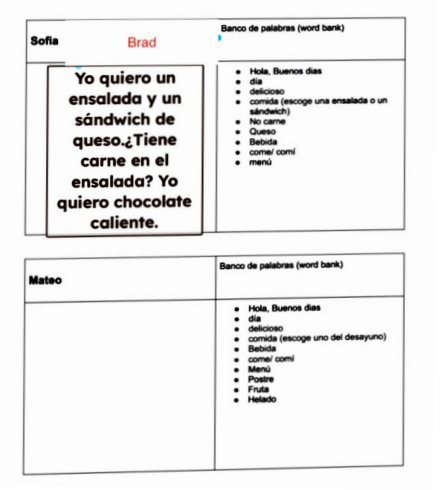
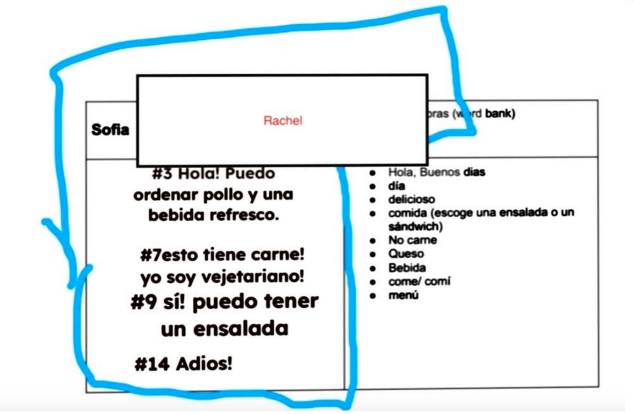


Figure 4

Rachel's "Role-Play Activity Part 2" Work Sample (Spanish Only)



Linguistic Flexibility Across Activities

Students frequently blended languages and modalities to complete academic tasks. In the *Iron Chef* presentations, a few students wrote notes in English but delivered oral explanations in Spanish (Fig. 5 and 6). During the first role-play round, students created scripts in English, Spanish, Polish, and Japanese, based on their comfort and communication needs (Fig. 7 and 8).

Figure 5

Andrew's "Iron Chef" Work Sample (Leopardo Slide)

Note: Andrew composed his written content in English but presented it orally in Spanish. This reflects flexible cross-linguistic meaning-making, as he drew on English for writing and Spanish for oral communication.

Figure 6

Xylon's "Iron Chef" Work Sample (Araña Trampilla Slide)

Note. Xylon, too, produced written text in English but switched to Spanish when orally presenting his findings. This illustrates the students' ability to strategically select languages based on task demands and communicative comfort.

Figure 7

Andrew's "Role Playing Part 1 Activity" Work Sample (Use any language):

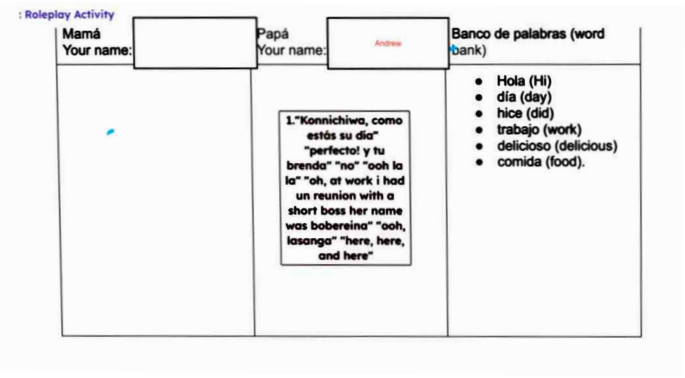
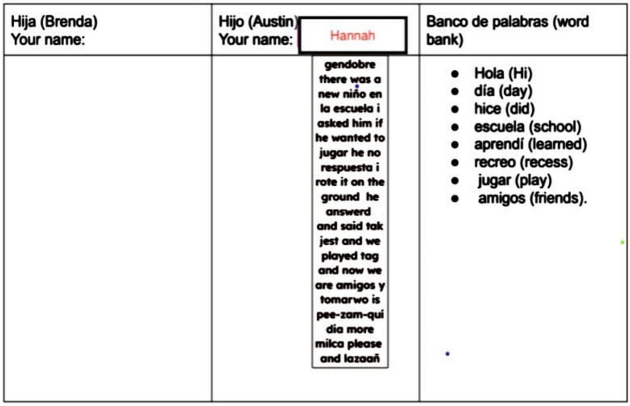


Figure 8

Hannah's "Role Playing Part 1 Activity" Work Sample (Use any language):



Activities such as *Spot It* and the cognate discussion provided space for students to identify linguistic patterns across languages. Observation notes indicate that heritage speakers led discussions about roots and endings, while non-heritage speakers engaged through pattern recognition and peer support. Students routinely shifted languages to negotiate meaning, clarify vocabulary, and help their group members (Appendix II; Appendix III).

Differential Impacts for Heritage vs. Non-Heritage Speakers

Both groups participated actively, but non-heritage Spanish speakers demonstrated especially notable growth in oral production. Rachel, who is not a heritage Spanish speaker, spoke in a confident projective voice with no mistakes or hesitations during the Spanish-only role-play (Appendix IV). Brad similarly delivered his scripted lines fluently. Heritage Spanish speakers tended to take leadership roles in unpacking vocabulary or explaining cognates.

Survey data provided additional context regarding students' language preferences and attitudes toward Spanish at the outset of the study. Although the class consisted of 16 students, the survey yielded 17 responses, which may be attributed to a duplicate submission. When asked whether Spanish was their favorite language, 29.4% of students responded "true," while 70.6% responded "false" (Figure 9). Open-ended responses revealed a range of perspectives. Several students associated Spanish with difficulty or lack of proficiency, noting, for example, "I cannot understand it as easily" and "I am not good at it." Others expressed a preference for English or another language, explaining that English was their first language or the primary language spoken at home. At the same time, some students connected Spanish to personal or familial experiences, such as one student who shared that it "reminds me of my grandma." These responses highlight varied linguistic identities and relationships to Spanish among students at

the outset of the study. Together, these differences in familiarity and connection to the language help contextualize the varying levels of participation and the greater observable growth in Spanish use among some students, particularly non-heritage speakers, during the study.

In the post-study interview, the cooperating teacher observed that several students who typically defaulted to English began incorporating more Spanish spontaneously, even outside structured activities. They attributed this shift to students' increased flexibility between languages, which they saw as evidence of students building their linguistic repertoires (Appendix VII).

Across data sources, learners demonstrated greater confidence, increased linguistic flexibility, and enhanced Spanish oracy. These gains were most pronounced among non-heritage speakers, who moved from hesitancy to active spoken participation in Spanish. These findings provide a foundation for interpreting how translanguaging shaped students' Spanish oracy development and how they align with existing scholarship.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that translanguaging can meaningfully support Spanish oracy development in a third-grade bilingual classroom. When students were encouraged to draw on their full linguistic repertoires, they engaged more confidently and authentically in Spanish-speaking tasks. These results reinforce existing scholarship while extending it into a less studied area: structured Spanish oracy activities in elementary bilingual settings.

Translanguaging as a Catalyst for Confidence and Agency

Students' increased willingness to speak Spanish even when unsure of precise vocabulary aligns with García and Kleyn's (2016) argument that translanguaging affirms bilingual identity by valuing pupils' full linguistic resources. Andrew's attempt at *"chemistria"* and other student-led language approximations reflect Suárez's (2020) finding that bilingual learners naturally use cross-linguistic reasoning to construct meaning. The low-stakes environment of these activities appears to have supported students' risk-taking and sense of agency, echoing Palmer et al.'s (2014) conclusions that validating bilingualism contributes to confidence and participation.

Linguistic Flexibility and Meaning-Making Across Modalities

The data demonstrated that students engaged in cross-linguistic meaning-making consistent with Lau's (2020) work on translanguaging as transmediation. Students productively blended written English notes with spoken Spanish explanations, used cognates as bridges between languages, and supplemented oral communication with gestures and peer interactions. These behaviors reaffirm translanguaging's core premise: multilingual learners access a unified linguistic repertoire rather than switching between isolated language systems. Importantly, non-heritage Spanish speakers used these strategies not simply as scaffolds but as pathways toward increased participation and oral fluency.

Differential Impacts and Linguistic Equity

The differential gains among non-heritage speakers highlight translanguaging's potential to disrupt linguistic hierarchies within bilingual classrooms. While heritage speakers contributed expert vocabulary knowledge, non-heritage speakers showed the greatest growth in Spanish oracy, suggesting that translanguaging practices democratize access to linguistic participation. This aligns with Salmerón's (2022) findings that translanguaging promotes equitable engagement by allowing learners to use their full linguistic resources. The cooperating teacher's observations of increased spontaneous Spanish use further suggest that translanguaging helped shift students' mindsets about when and how Spanish could be used.

Implications for Bilingual Education

Together, these findings suggest several implications:

- Strict language separation policies may limit bilingual learners' opportunities to engage authentically with the target language.
- Intentional translanguaging creates opportunities for risk-taking, identity affirmation, and oral fluency.
- Structured speaking activities that permit linguistic flexibility can support both heritage and non-heritage speakers in expanding their Spanish oracy.

These implications reinforce calls for more flexible, culturally sustaining bilingual pedagogies that recognize students' dynamic linguistic realities. The following conclusion summarizes the broader significance of these findings and identifies opportunities for future translanguaging research and practice.

Conclusion

This teacher action research examined how translanguaging practices can support Spanish oracy development in a third-grade bilingual classroom. Across seven weeks, students engaged in structured, interactive activities that encouraged them to draw on their full linguistic repertoires, including English, Spanish, and other home languages, to negotiate meaning, construct ideas, and participate more actively in Spanish. Findings showed that students gained confidence as Spanish speakers, used flexible cross-linguistic strategies to support communication, and that non-heritage Spanish speakers demonstrated the most notable growth in oral production.

These outcomes highlight the ways translanguaging can counteract the linguistic hierarchies that shape bilingual classrooms, particularly in a dual-language program where Spanish and English carry unequal status. Even within a rotating-language instructional model, English often operates as the dominant academic language, influencing students' perceptions of which languages are valued. The translanguaging activities offered alternative linguistic spaces that validated students' home languages and identities, promoting equitable participation and risk-taking in Spanish.

This study's findings reinforce existing research demonstrating the power of

translanguaging to enhance multilingual learners' confidence, comprehension, and sense of belonging. They also extend the literature by focusing specifically on structured Spanish oracy activities and by examining translanguaging's impact on mixed-proficiency groups, including non-heritage Spanish speakers, an area that remains understudied in elementary bilingual settings. The results suggest that intentional translanguaging design can strengthen oracy while still maintaining bilingual program goals.

Importantly, the findings also offer practical implications for classroom instruction. For teachers working in programs with strict language-separation policies, translanguaging can be introduced through small, intentional routines such as cognate discussions, bilingual journals, or multilingual brainstorming. Teachers might begin with low-risk activities (for example, *Hablamos en Español*) before scaffolding toward more immersive tasks such as role play or presentations. In classrooms with varied proficiency levels, pairing students strategically and allowing flexible language use during planning can support equitable access while still promoting Spanish oracy. These approaches can be adapted across grade levels and language combinations, offering a practical path for educators seeking to affirm students' bilingual identities while strengthening oral proficiency

Future Directions

These promising findings suggest that extending studies like this beyond the seven-week duration, possibly with a larger sample size in more than one classroom, will provide even more substantive evidence and nuances to guide teachers' effort to support and sustain oracy development in their students. Such future research could examine translanguaging-based oracy instruction over a full academic year or across multiple classrooms to explore longer-term linguistic, academic, and identity impacts. It would also be valuable to investigate how translanguaging supports Spanish development in other grade levels or in emerging bilinguals entering dual-language programs later than kindergarten. Comparative research between strict language-separation approaches and flexible translanguaging frameworks could further illuminate how program structures shape students' oral language growth.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that when bilingual students' full linguistic repertoires are viewed as assets rather than constraints, Spanish oracy development can flourish. Translanguaging not only supports language learning, but it also cultivates confidence, belonging, and agency. For bilingual educators seeking to create equitable, culturally sustaining classrooms, translanguaging offers a pedagogical pathway that honors the diverse linguistic resources students bring and expands the possibilities for meaningful, authentic language use.

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Appendix I

Hablamos En Español Round 3

This is the third oracy activity called *Hablamos En Español*. Students were given a question. They had to put on their headphones and record themselves for no more than 30 seconds.

The question for activity: What is your favorite toy? Why?
Mi juguete favorito es_____. Este es mi juguete favorito porque_____. My favorite toy is_____. This is my favorite toy because_____.

Observations during activity:

- Once I had explained to students that they will record their answers and then they will grade themselves, students got into the activity.
- For this round, I had warned students that if they didn't know how to say a word in Spanish that they could not ask for me or the mentor teacher for help.
- Students were completing this activity during their morning work. It was the first assignment they did.
- No questions were asked during the activity.
- I noticed that it took about 3 minutes for the whole class to complete the activity as a whole.

Andrew's response:
"Mi juguete favorito es el labset de chemistria. Este es mi juguete favorito porque yo quiero la ciencia."

Appendix II

Cognate Discussion Observational Notes

Observation/Notes:

- This was a student driven conversation where I asked the questions, but the students were identifying the cognates and identifying how the word changes from Spanish to English.
- The words that students were able to identify as cognates were concluyó and apróxima.
    - They described that concluyó was concluded.
    - They were able to identify that it is a past tense word.
    - They were also able to identify that apróxima was approached in Spanish.
- The words students needed more support to unpack were preparativos and galante.
    - ¿A qué palabra se parece la palabra preparativos?

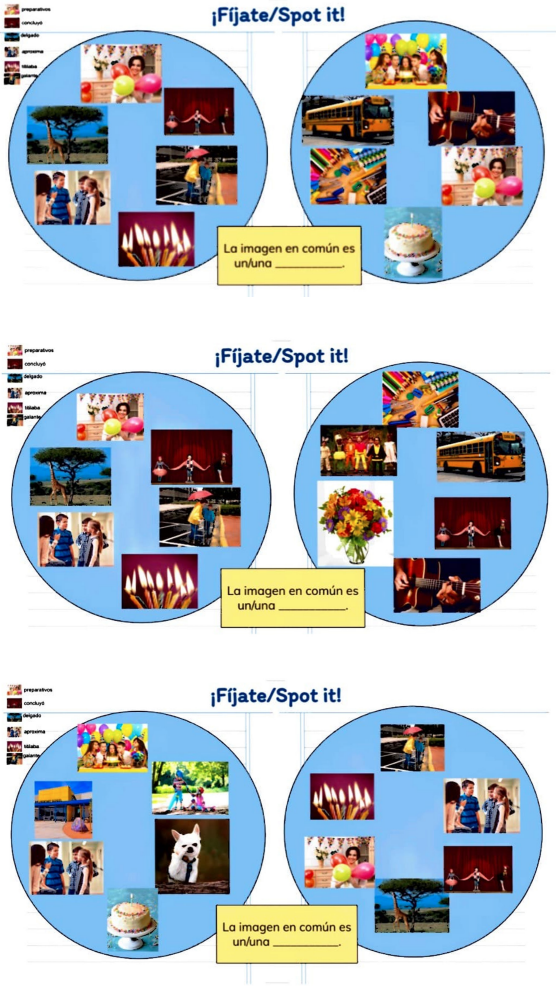
- Me: “Oh se parece preparar.
- Que significa preparar?
- It looks like the word “prepare.”
- ¿Preparar es un verbo o un substantivo? (noun)
- ¿Cómo sabes que es un verbo?
- Ahora mira la palabra preparativos.
- ¿Preparativos es un verbo o un sustantivo?
- ¿Cómo sabes?
- ¿Por qué no es la palabra “preparaciones?”
- ¿A qué palabra se parece la palabra galante?
- Me: “Oh se parece a galan.
- ¿Qué significa galán?
- It means boy.
- ¿Preparar es un verbo o un substantivo? (noun)
- ¿Cómo sabes que es un sustantivo?
- Ahora mira la palabra galante.
- Galante es un verbo o un sustantivo?
- ¿Cómo sabes?

“The conversation was student-driven where it was students that were unpacking the words. It was mostly heritage speakers that were driving the convo. Rachel got the correct ending of preparativos in English which is preparations. For galante, students were not getting the correct ending so I had to give it to them. The correct answers were revealed in the yellow box. Students were engaged and were responding to the student teacher’s questions.

The lesson also needed where students had to identify the correct cognate of the word. This was an exit ticket to see how much they paid attention. It was a movement activity where students had a question and there were four options to choose from. They were only allowed to choose one choice and had to choose a corner (each corner in the classroom was assigned with a corner). Most of the students were able to choose the correct choice. There was a student (Rachel) who got confused and didn’t know where to go. I believe they choose the answer based on seeing that their classmates were choosing the answer.”

Appendix III

Spot It Activity Observational Notes



Observations/ Notes:

I asked students to identify the correct image and then I asked a follow up question which is: How did you identify the cognate?

I would purposefully pick on students who are non heritage speakers.
For this activity, it was Andrew, Brad, and Xylon that answered.

I observed the students and they were looking at the pictures. Some students saw that there was a key on top of the slide, but it was purposefully really small. I could tell some students were looking at the pictures and their eyes would move towards the key. Other kids looked at the images. Brad responded that they knew it was the correct answer because he saw the picture and knew that the word was concluyó. He even mentioned that he didn't even notice that there was a key on top of the slide. Andrew and Brad responded that they knew it was the correct answer because they looked at the image, identified the image, and then looked at the key to confirm it.

Appendix IV

Role Playing with Spanish Only

Escenario: Un grupo de amigos van a comer juntos en un restaurante americano llamado "El Restaurante Fantástico." Están contentos por comer juntos. Uno de los estudiantes será el camarero o camarera, y los otros tres serán los clientes.

Scenario (Translation): A group of friends will dine at an American Restaurant called "The Fantastic Restaurant." They are happy to eat together. One of the students will be a waiter and the other three will be the clients.

Explanation of activity:

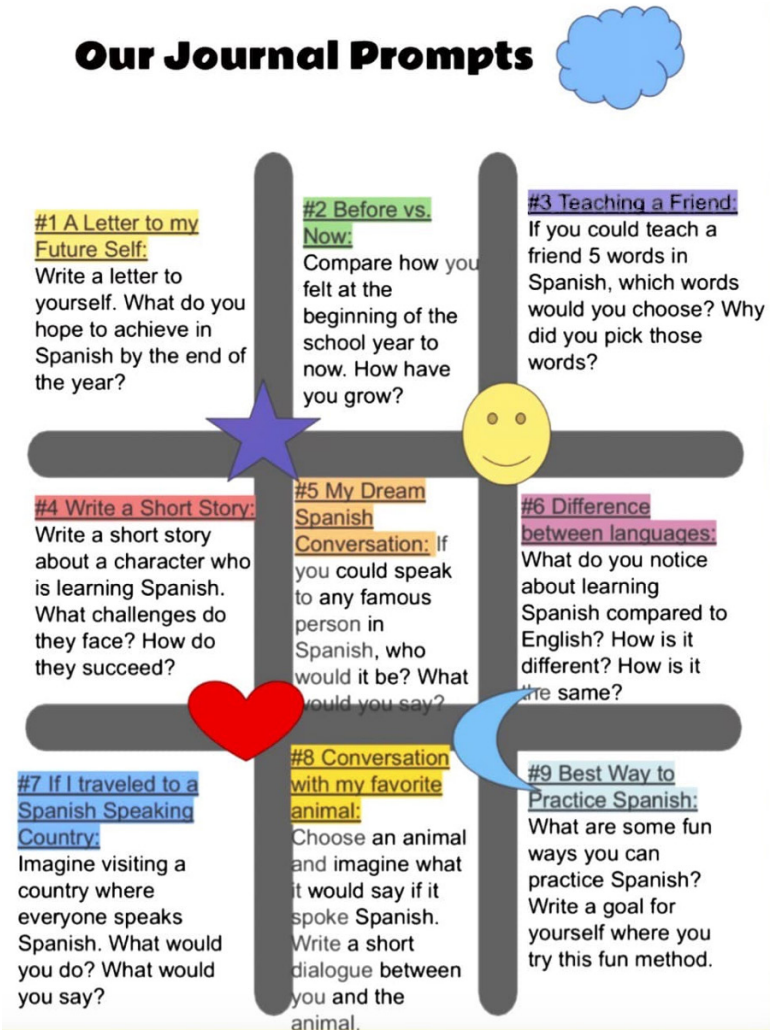
- Students were placed in groups of four.
- There was a captain (student who is a heritage speaker) to help their peers who are non heritage speakers.
- There were four characters in the role playing scenario (waiter/waitress, 3 friends who were ordering food. They must speak Spanish because the waiter only speaks Spanish.

Observations during activity:

- Students were a lot more focused and concentrated during the activity.
- Students wanted to get all the words correctly because they knew they would be acting out in front of everyone. Students were asking their peers for help whenever they didn't know how to say a word.
- I saw a lot more teamwork within students helping each other with how to say certain words in Spanish, helping each other during the lines and taking turns practicing everyone's role.
- When students were roleplaying, they were a lot more shy to speak.
- However, for students who are non-heritage speakers they were able to say a few more words than they usually would.
    - Example: Summer, Archie, Hannah, Sammuel.
- There were other non-heritage speakers such as Rachel and Andrew who felt a lot more comfortable to speak.

Appendix V

Reflective Journaling: Topic of Choice



Journal Prompts Correction to #2: Compare how you felt at the beginning of the year to now with your Spanish. How have you grown in the language?

Appendix VI

Student Language Use and Confidence Survey

Item #	Survey Question/ Statement	Response Type	Response Scale
1	How often do you speak Spanish at home?	Likert (Frequency)	Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never
2	How often do you speak English at home?	Likert (Frequency)	Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never
3	I can follow a direction or instruction given to me in Spanish.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
4	I feel confident about writing answers in Spanish on my assignments for different subjects.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
5	I understand stories and texts in Spanish during Language Arts.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
6	I can speak Spanish fluently.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
7	I learn best when Social Studies and Science are taught in Spanish.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
8	I feel confident reading a question and answering it in Spanish.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
9	I can speak English comfortably.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
10	I learn best when math is taught in English.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)

11	I can read a text or book in English fluently.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
12	I can follow a direction or instruction given to me in English.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
13	I feel confident about writing answers in English on my assignments for different subjects	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
14	I understand stories and texts in English during Language Arts.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
15	I can speak English fluently.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
16	I feel confident reading a question and answering it in English.	Likert (Agreement)	1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree)
17	Spanish is my favorite language.	True/False	True – False
18	Why is this statement true or false for you?	Open Response	Text
19	I would rather speak Spanish than English.	True/False	True – False
20	Why is this statement true or false for you?	Open Response	Text
21	I am taking Spanish class because…	Multiple Choice	3 options (required/not required, or enjoyment)

Note: The survey was originally administered in Week 1 through Google Forms and has been adapted here into table format for clarity.

Appendix VII

Pre and Post Interviews Protocol with Cooperating Teacher

Pre Interview:

Before action research project was implemented:

I collected data before the project was implemented where I observed the classroom and I had an interview with my CT on his view of translanguaging. As a bilingual teacher, he shared that he implements translanguaging from time to time in his instruction. Translanguaging isn't a method that is implemented into the curriculum, but it is a strategy that he firmly believes in.

Based on the interview with my CT:

- My definition of Translanguaging and CT's definition matched.
  Our definition of Translanguaging:
    - Students should use their linguistic repertoire to create dialogue (verbally and written)
    - Idea that languages are not separate from one another
    - Apply strategies that will suite across all content areas
    - Must be equitable for everyone

Before student teaching began, I made an observation in the classroom and I noticed that students did not want to participate in speaking in Spanish.

Post Interview: Interview with CT (Circling back to beginning)

What is the definition of Translanguaging in your own words?

Translanguaging rather than looking at students in a separate linguistic repertoire. Look into similarities, looking for words that have in common. Switch between back and forth. We could do this in a dual language setting. It has to be very intentional.

What were the activities you as the observer noticed that helped build that translanguaging?

Activities:

- Journaling
- Iron Chef
- Role Playing
    - Used the domains of language -speaking, listening, and writing in these 3 activities were noticed.
    - Building on their own Linguistic repertoire.
    - In the beginning, they were hesitant with breaking the barrier,

they believed we had to keep a wall in between them and now they know that flexibility.

What were some of the things you noticed that helped build on their linguistic repertoire?

- Flexibility on language
- Identify Cognates
- Some of the mindsets are leading up to that change.
- Some students used more Spanish phrases even when English was their preferred language to speak.
- Some of the same mindset that languages in the mindset.
- Couldn't do that before because they weren't there developmentally. Now that would be the next of having that conversation of seeing their linguistic repertoire.

What would you do differently, if this were your project?

- If he were to do this project as his own, he would add that application.
- It could be a presentation to explore their cultural identity of celebrating both cultures.
- How can I apply it to something that is passionate?
- Be an activist through art, speaking, and writing.
- Changing the perspective of bilingual programs.
    - Translanguaging is a Vehicle of change
    - As a teacher seeing the limitations that they can do.
        - He knows that he would need more time.
        - Social-cultural importance.
        - Needing to be a participant and have a social justice
        - He would want to know what: What translanguaging looks like in a monolingual setting.

Other notes that came up during the short interview:

- Looking past schooling where people and communication understand that languages are more important than learning subjects because to get to understand languages in order to understand subjects. It is the verbal and written communication piece.