Chapter 14
Emergent Bilinguals in Rural Schools:
Reframing Teacher Perceptions Through Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores rural teacher attitudes towards emergent bilinguals at the secondary level before, during, and after translanguaging professional development. Within the current political climate, accountability measures and assessment training affect teacher perceptions of second language acquisition and add to the deficit perspective. Juxtaposed with the accountability climate are the benefits of rurality and teachers who value the funds of knowledge these linguistically and culturally diverse students possess. Through a mixed methods study using qualitative and quantitative survey data, the authors examined the effects of translanguaging pedagogy on an English-only school district. The translanguaging strategies used in English language arts and reading classrooms showed potential to improve standardized English assessment scores by shifting the monolingual ideology of the teacher participants to a multilingual stance. The results of this study could revise current perceptions and pedagogy for emergent bilinguals.

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INTRODUCTION

Across the U.S., English Learner (EL) populations are lower in rural than in urban areas, and average 3.6% nationwide (McFarland, Hussar, Wang, Zhang, Wang, Rathbun, Barmer, Cataldi, & Bullock Mann, 2018). While the English Learner, also called EB (Emergent Bilingual[1]) population in many rural areas is small, it is growing exponentially. Long term English Learners, or L-TELs, whose families have become rooted in local communities, represent a large and steadily growing group of EBs in public schools in the U.S. Long term English Learners are EBs who continue to be labeled English learners after seven or more years in U. S. schools (Kim & García, 2014). This chapter presents data from a small rural district in the southwest in which one half of the community consists of rapidly-growing suburban neighborhoods, while the other consists of horse ranches where many students and their families are employed. Anya Independent School District (pseudonym) (AISD) is a fringe rural district near a large conurbation in Texas (see Appendix 1 for rural designations).

As a Texas public school district, AISD must follow federal and state accountability guidelines including administering annual assessments in Reading and Math for all students. In AISD, 3.7 percent of all students are coded as English Learners (predominantly Spanish speakers), which is comparable to EL populations in rural districts nationwide. These students must take additional standardized assessments for language proficiency that also affect the district's accountability score. The combination of small EL populations and additional accountability assessments creates a difficult scenario for rural districts. These districts often struggle to divert resources for such a small percentage of students, yet a small population means individual students' scores have a greater effect on accountability ratings, resulting in less support despite higher stakes for these students. Within this context are new ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015) regulations mandating that schools either create a separate English Language Arts course for only EBs (effectively isolating all EBs from the general student population), or require all content teachers to become certified to teach English as a Second Language (ESL). The district chose the second option, despite the small EL population and the lack of buy in from their teachers.

This chapter spotlights rural teachers' attitudes regarding L-TELs in light of the current political and educational context, and reveals how they may play a role in student success. As a corollary to the English as a Second Language (ESL) certification, a professional development (PD) program was implemented to support the teachers' work with the EBs. The PD program was designed to cultivate and value EBs' home language and culture in the classroom through the use of translanguaging pedagogy (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017) and was developed and presented by a campus colleague (Author 1) who is also an ESL and English Language Arts

teacher. Author 2 worked collaboratively with Author 1 to frame and situate the PD and analyze results. The goal of this chapter is not to create a one-size-fits-all professional development template, but instead is to share how we developed a customizable framework for PD that meets the day-to-day needs of real teachers working in assessment-driven contexts of limited time and resources. This chapter shines a light on the district's teachers' attitudes, before, during, and after the PD, juxtaposed with their L-TELs' high stakes test scores.

BACKGROUND

The Deficit Perspective

In today's political climate, an assumption exists that there is one single correct variation of English, as seen through the adherence to the "native speaker" standard on language assessments used for accountability (Bunch, 2013; García & Torres-Guevara, 2010; Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). Van Lier and Walqui argue that a monolingual ideology (the belief that there should be one language) is not "feasible, realistic, [nor] effective" due to the vast number of English dialects used throughout the world (p. 6). Assuming the existence of a single "native speaker" dialect is problematic, yet students who are not monolingual must prove that they can fluently wield the linguistic skills of such a dialect. Moreover, "standard dialects are not linguistically better by any objective measures; they are socially preferred simply because they are the language varieties used by those who are most powerful and affluent in a society" (Godley et al., 2006, p. 30). By tying school funding to content assessments that treat "standard English as if it were a single dialect," current educational policies devalue and stigmatize linguistic diversity, calling into question the validity and reliability of what has been termed the "achievement gap" on accountability assessments between emergent bilinguals and monolingual students (p. 30).

In recent years, there has been a movement to "close the achievement gap," between students that have been termed English Learners (ELs) and their monolingual peers due to accountability measures under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Koyama & Menken, 2013; Olsen, 2014). Even though the term "EL" is "an important demographic category, the designation is problematic as a reference point for teaching practice among teachers and teacher educators" (Galguera, 2011, p. 85). The label erroneously suggests a homogeneity amongst all emergent bilinguals, and is problematic when viewed as such according to accountability measures that dismiss the diversity of students under this category.

Whereas the increasingly diverse U.S. school population poses legitimate barriers to addressing each language group as distinct...being mindful of the likely differences within the larger [EL] group is necessary, whether related to English proficiency within a single language group or to differences across primary language groups (Roberts, Mohammed & Vaughn, 2010, p. 684).

Many scholars in the field argue for a shift away from this nomenclature, as it also implies that none of the students with the label are proficient in English, and conversely, that students without the EL label are all proficient in English for academic purposes (Flores, Kleyn, & Menken; 2015; García & Torres-Guevara, 2010; Koyama & Menken, 2013). These implications reinforce the deficit perspective; the idea that because of their multilingualism, EBs are inherently deficient in their English language development. Moreover, the deficit perspective frames their multilingualism as a problem in English academic settings (García et al., 2017; García & Torres-Guevara, 2010; Koyama & Menken; 2013). Adding to the deficit perspective, current EBs who are in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, bilingual education, dual language, and other such linguistic support programs are coded as Limited English Proficient (LEP), a label that also implies homogeneity in proficiency levels and frames their English language proficiency as "limited" at best. The Texas Education Code defines LEP as: "a student whose primary language is other than English and whose English language skills are such that the student has difficulty performing ordinary classwork in English" (Texas Education Agency, 1995). Regardless of these students' performance on classwork during normal daily activities, program exit requirements rely on standardized assessment scores to determine whether or not a student is considered proficient in English. For the purpose of this chapter, the term "emergent bilinguals" will be used for students who are still growing into their multiliteracy and multilingualism, unless referring to the specific subpopulation coding of "LEP" on national and state accountability and testing measures.

Instead of teaching to "close the achievement gap" for EBs, educators should revise perceptions so the goal is to teach "the use of language for academic purposes" (Galguera, 2011, p. 85). This pedagogical language knowledge approach includes utilizing all dialects and languages available to the students regardless of whether or not they are labeled as LEP. Many students without the label have been redesignated as "former-LEP" (which means teachers are no longer required to scaffold instruction for linguistic purposes) and many other students are speakers of stigmatized dialects of English. Furthermore, the pedagogical language approach helps teachers utilize EBs' funds of knowledge through the use of all their known languages regardless of the official language of instruction, and uses language diversity in its entirety for formal, academic outputs (Bunch, 2013; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; van Lier

& Walqui, 2012). In this chapter we adopt the stance that all students are learners of English for academic purposes, and by misnaming EBs as LEP, current educational practices are limiting all students' development of English for academic purposes while also dismissing the value of EBs' linguistic abilities.

Currently, many school districts in the nation including AISD continuously attempt to improve the standardized testing scores for students coded as LEP through the use of pull-out remedial tutorials. EBs struggle "to compete with monolinguals in assessments that ignore linguistic diversity. This poor performance...in turn leads to remediation and placement in compensatory programs. The cycle never ends" (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010, p. 190). For the students designated Long-term English Learners (LTELs), as well as other students designated "at risk," closing the achievement gap has resulted in year after year of remediation instead of courses like music, art, and other electives. Rural school districts, in particular, have fewer scheduling options for tutorials due to the smaller faculty and student populations when compared to urban settings (McFarland et al., 2018). However, research shows that when other factors like socioeconomic status are taken into account, the "achievement gap" is tightly interwoven into the differences in performance on standardized assessments between social classes. When looking for predictors of growth in reading skills, Roberts et al. (2010) found "important interrelationships among language, poverty, and learning to read in English" (p. 683). These researchers suggest that, instead of attributing lower test scores to perceived deficiencies of students coded LEP, educators should instead seek to draw connections to the incredibly varied background knowledge these linguistically and economically diverse students bring with them when they enter U.S. schools. These students need access to academically enriching electives that will value and utilize the non-standard funds of knowledge these students often possess (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Instead, "at risk" students have spent most of their academic careers missing electives for small group tutorials that focus on strategies for reading passages and multiple-choice questions, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of marginalization.

Theories of Language Development

Additionally, formal language theories that adhere to rigid grammar, structure and other static linguistic characteristics prescribe an ESL curriculum in an attempt for EBs to become more native-like (Bunch, 2013; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). This "curricularization" of ESL courses has given power to the idea of an "intermediate plateau," a term used to describe EBs' seeming lack of progress towards the monolingual English standard (Bunch, 2013; Olsen, 2014). The assumption of such a feature devalues the fluency many EBs have achieved because it implies a lack of fluency and ability to interact meaningfully with rigorous academic content

(García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). Van Lier and Walqui (2012) question the validity of the "intermediate plateau" by asserting the "multilingual reality of the world is not adequately served by a monolingual ideology that assumes the existence of a 'native speaker,' whose perfections all learners should strive to attain" (van Lier & Walqui, 2012, p. 6). Evaluating EBs' fluency based on monolingual ideology, instead of looking at how effectively they can communicate complex concepts using their full linguistic repertoires, skews educators' perceptions of the current proficiency levels of the students (García et al., 2017).

According to Burke's research (2015), most EBs progress through the intermediate level without plateauing, but then their progress slows down once they reach the proficient level (students must reach the advanced proficient level to exit the ESL program). The teachers Burke interviewed attribute this non-linear progress to all available resources being spent on students until they become proficient because the teachers believe proficient is the minimum level needed to succeed in content area classes without extensive linguistic scaffolding and support. However, once students reach this level of fluency, limited funding and insufficient staffing (particularly in rural districts) mean less support for these students as they advance into more rigorous content. These students have few opportunities to use their multilingualism "for the development of language and literacy in and through...challenging and meaningful academic tasks" (Bunch, 2013, p. 298; Burke, 2015). Since EBs tend to maintain progress beyond the intermediate stage, and slowed progress could be due to factors outside the students' control, the "intermediate plateau" is a misconception. Even the metaphor of a plateau contains connotations that the progress of EBs falls flat because of structural issues within the students themselves, rather than the systemic issues they face. This idea would be more appropriately called the "proficient ceiling," a barrier imposed systemically through the lack of rigorous opportunities to develop language (in all its diversity) for academic purposes in content classes. This lack of rigor is caused by many factors addressed thus far in the chapter, including: standardized assessments measuring fluency through monolingual ideology of a "native speaker," marginalization practices of pull-out remediation tutorials in an attempt to close the "achievement gap," and dismissal of students' multilingualism as a resource.

When taking into account EBs' progress through the stages of fluency, these students should score well on measures of academic growth on content assessments that are given in standardized English. Combined with the constant cycle of newcomers entering into U.S. schools and fluent students exiting linguistic support programs, the academic growth of students coded as LEP should far exceed that of monolingual students. However, when compared to the growth of all students (non-LEP), that is not the case. According to the Texas Academic Progress Reports (Texas Education Agency, 2018), in AISD the academic growth score was 66% for

all students, but only 63% for students coded EL in 2018. Compared to scores for all districts across the state, the growth score was 69% for all students, and 68% for ELs. All ELs in the state, especially those in AISD, are not making the academic growth that they should be on the state's accountability tests, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness exams (STAAR). Even though research shows that EBs are progressing through the proficient level of fluency, the progress of these students does not continue through a more advanced level and is not apparent in standardized testing scores (Burke, 2015; García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). Students learn through language, and with an increase in rigor across content areas so should there be an increase in rigor of language development. (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). Therefore, teachers should learn how to combine pedagogical language knowledge with rigorous content to help EBs break through the proficient ceiling.

Juxtaposed with theories of formal language that adhere to fixed and rigid language structures are functional language theories. When language development is viewed from a functional perspective, the definition of fluency shifts away from the perfection in linguistic form of a 'native speaker' and instead focuses on effective communication of meaning (van Lier & Walqui, 2012). Effective communication and clarity of academic meanings happen when students engage in everyday activities in the classroom as they negotiate and express content ideas. Recent scholars have advocated for an action perspective of language development, which "recognizes that language form and function are 'subservient' to action" (Bunch, 2013, p. 330). This action-based perspective of language acquisition also means that the dichotomous distinction between academic language and social language is misleading because a mixture of both are utilized when students engage with the content and express meaning. "In most classrooms, it is expected and actually desirable...for students to use vernacular varieties or even their native language while collaborating in small groups" (Galguera, 2011, p. 89). Educators need to expand the varieties of language used for academic purposes, even in situations where standard English is the expected outcome. With respect to this, Galguera suggests that

Rather than ensuring that preservice teachers are able to distinguish between academic and non-academic varieties in order to teach the former, (the author proposes that) we concentrate our efforts in preparing teachers to consider the functions language plays in an academic setting (Galguera, 2011, p. 90).

Leveraging Language Practices through Professional Development

When looking at the language practices of students (how they naturally use language every day), scholars have noted that multilinguals fluidly pull from their full linguistic repertoires to meet the communicative needs of the moment, in both academic settings and social settings (García et al., 2017). These language practices have been termed "translanguaging", which "posits that bilinguals have one unitary language system that enables them to use all the language features fluidly" (García et al., 2017, p. 184). This theory is contrasted with a monoglossic ideology, or "a belief that languages are autonomous wholes, and thus bilingualism is just two separate languages" (García et al., 2017, p. 184). When translanguaging theory is applied to education, translanguaging pedagogy has the ability to support EBs as they simultaneously develop their content knowledge and identities as linguistically diverse students. Furthermore, translanguaging pedagogy has the potential to "support students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts," which would successfully strengthen students' linguistic diversity for academic purposes (García et al., 2017, p. ix). This could potentially increase the rigor of language use for academic purposes, thereby reducing the power of the proficient ceiling imposed by current educational practices.

Translanguaging applied to assessments is termed dynamic translanguaging progressions, "a flexible model that allows teachers to look holistically at bilingual students' language performances in specific classroom tasks from different perspectives at different times" (García et al., 2017, p. xi). When assessing language development in this way, scholars could disprove the intermediate plateau and could improve upon our current assessments of language proficiency. In fact, García et al. (2017) assert that the idea of linguistic proficiency itself is not an accurate way of measuring language acquisition, since within the current climate educators assume proficiency is developed "along a relatively linear path in more or less the same way" for all multilingual students (p. xii). Instead, measuring language acquisition through performance (which builds upon the action-based perspective) allows educators to adjust their analytical perspectives depending on the academic task at hand. Educators that are more versatile in the way they approach assessments can improve validity in the results.

Using dynamic translanguaging progressions also allows educators to distinguish between general and language-specific performance depending on the setting, specific content, and linguistic output expectations within the educational institution (García et al., 2017). Even in schools with bilingual programs, educators must help students perform in one language or the other in certain settings. For example, standardized tests, formal presentations and academic essays require students to expertly show knowledge in one language through the use of specialized vocabulary

and linguistic structures unique to the content. However, both general and language-specific performances help students interact with and make meaning of complex academic content, so during normal classroom activities both types of language practices are necessary (Galguera, 2011; García et al., 2017). Even when students are assessed in English-only outputs, learning objectives and instruction should start with "encouraging students to use all the features in their repertoires to perform linguistically, and then they are taught to perform linguistic tasks with only part of their language repertoires" (García et al., 2017, p. 40). As students learn to target one part of their repertoire, they are able to focus the output of language-specific performance using standard language features (i.e. vocabulary, syntax, etc.) specific for that content. For assessment purposes, the research from Godley et al. (2006) asserts that there is actually not a single standard dialect of English used by the "native speaker" on which to base evaluations of language output, even when considering the linguistics specific to certain content areas. Due to these factors, "general linguistic performance addresses the most important part of the standards." (p. 40). Using translanguaging pedagogy during complex academic tasks supports students as they learn these rigorous standards, and has the potential to improve output in language-specific performance on standardized assessments.

Menken and Sánchez (2019), as well as Godley et al. (2006), noticed that teachers who tried adjusting their pedagogy to value and encourage linguistic diversity during classroom activities ended up developing a change in attitude, which resulted in these teachers adopting a "translanguaging stance" (Menken & Sánchez, 2019, p. 5). The teachers didn't have to be linguistic experts to use the pedagogy, and through experience gleaned from students, developed a deeper understanding of translanguaging as pedagogy. But how can we help teachers develop a pedagogical language knowledge (to build on their pedagogical content knowledge) when most "mainstream teachers have received little or no preparation for working with ELs" to begin with? (Bunch, 2013, p. 302) With regard to PD, longstanding research has shown that when colleagues are given time to collaborate, their interactions are collegial and successful (Little, 1982; Warford, 2011; Zoshak, 2016). More recent literature corroborates this work, and highlights multiple key features for successful PD, including the creation of space for teachers to share and collaborate in order to create communities to effect positive change (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). When presented with PD that includes "relevant information anchored in practice," teachers are more likely to adjust their pedagogy in the classroom when compared to traditional PD opportunities that are led solely by administrators (Godley et al., 2006, p. 33). In order to provide equitable education to linguistically diverse classrooms, teachers need more authentic, organic PD opportunities. This chapter describes a context in which teacher leadership and translanguaging PD emerged internally and organically, with teacher collaboration at the heart of the PD.

Assessment Scores and Interventions

Despite concerns surrounding validity and reliability of current accountability assessments for EBs, the fact remains that these students must pass content exams to be promoted through the grade levels and to graduate from high school (Koyama & Menken, 2013). Adding to these high stakes, accountability ratings affect teacher retention and school district funding from year to year. When AISD received state standardized scores in spring of 2018, there were concerns: many English Learners in AISD struggled to meet minimum standards on the state tests. In the 2016-2017 school year, the district's ELs at the high school level performed lower than ELs statewide on the 2017 End of Course (EOC) English assessments. The majority of these students were L-TELs who, like many monolingual students in the district, have been enrolled in AISD or other nearby rural fringe districts their entire educational careers. These ELs had a passing rate of 11.8% as compared to a statewide EL passing rate of 25.5% (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Despite increased efforts to improve the scores of ELs through the use of extra remedial tutorials, in the spring of 2018 these students had a passing rate of 16.7% on the same assessments, compared to the statewide EL passing rate of 29.5% (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Low scores and a lack of progress on these assessments were undoubtedly concerning to the district and the school. The authors worked to develop an appropriate PD for ELAR teachers in the district that could address these concerns, to be implemented during the 2018-2019 school year.

When developing the PD, the authors took into account the rural setting of the school district. Due to the small EL population in AISD, the state does not provide funding for the district to have a bilingual education program. Since there is no bilingual program in AISD, teachers are not expected to be bilingual nor hold a bilingual teaching certificate. Many rural schools face similar circumstances with limited funding for native language instruction. However, translanguaging pedagogy is gaining momentum in the field of education, and recent research shows it has been used successfully in English-only schools. Menken and Sánchez (2019) found success in translanguaging PD with teachers who were monolingual English speakers, and over time the monolingual ideology of the participating schools shifted in "theoretical and practical ways" towards a more equitable system (p. 1). To establish the groundwork for a shift in pedagogy from monoglossic to multilingual through translanguaging pedagogy, the authors pulled from the positive characteristics of the rural district. This study combines internally-led PD (a benefit of a small, rural district) with the experience of classroom teachers (who have autonomy as teacher-leaders) to build pedagogy using the zone of proximal teacher development (ZPTD). Based on the Vygotskyan framework for the zone of proximal development, the ZPTD blends "the scientific discourse of the college classroom with the experiential discourse

of local classrooms (Warford, 2011, p. 253). Due to the experience of the teachers involved in the study, the authors developed the PD to begin with a one-hour training founded in the teachers' experiential knowledge (as discerned through the attitudes survey), and to provide support to the teachers throughout the school year in the form of "tiny talks" (Zoshak, 2016). These quick, informal chats occur during the moments between classes, on the way to the office, in the teachers lounge, during duty, via email, etc. Zoshak (2016) found great value in tiny talks as PD, as these small moments provided ongoing and authentic opportunities to collaborate and reflect with colleagues.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER: TRANSLANGUAGING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Methodology: Recruitment and Attitudes Survey

A central component to the mixed methods study in AISD was ensuring voluntary participation amongst teachers. A potentially serious risk of internally-led PD, especially in smaller districts full of teacher-leaders, is coercion to participate. In rural communities where teaching positions are limited and reputations are vital to employment, anonymity of participants must be taken seriously. To minimize these risks, the authors designed the study to recruit participants in a way that reduced face to face commitment to the study while limiting all responses and data to anonymous surveys. The resulting data investigates English Language Arts teachers' attitudes before and during the PD using both quantitative and qualitative survey data.

To recruit English Language Arts teachers, the primary author provided a short introduction to the study at the end of an English department collaboration session during an inservice work day (these staff work days are conducted prior to the school year starting). Once the school year started, interested participants emailed the author of their intention to participate in the study. After receiving the emails, the primary author placed a consent letter in the office mailboxes of the teachers who were interested. The consent letter explained the study in detail, including possible risks, the time commitment required for the study, and safeguards for protecting participants' anonymity. These recruitment procedures ensured that teachers were able to review the details privately without pressure to commit to the study. Ten English Language Arts teachers from AISD volunteered for this study, and participated throughout the school year.

The teacher participants were surveyed in advance of the PD training session, to assess their background knowledge and attitudes towards the ELs in their classes. The validated Likert scale survey asked teachers questions about their needs, experiences

with ELs, and training expectations. This survey was based on a validated survey used by Hansen-Thomas and Cavagnetto (2010) in their work with middle school teachers of ELs; it was adjusted to remove any potential identifying information (due to the small number of participants), and was revised to include teacher reactions to recent ESSA mandates. To further protect anonymity, the attitudes survey was distributed to teachers' office mailboxes, and returned directly to the primary author's mailbox. The results of the survey were compiled into a word processing document so the authors could analyze all ten responses of each question to look for qualitative themes and run descriptive statistics on the quantitative data. Qualitative data were coded for broad themes. Inferential statistics were not used due to the limited sample size.

Results: Attitudes Survey

Teacher attitudes, discerned from Likert-scaled surveys, revealed that while they generally did not consider students' funds of knowledge in planning and development of curriculum, the rural students' backgrounds were in fact valued and recognized by the teachers. One common theme that emerged was that the teachers generally recognized and respected their learners' funds of knowledge, but 60% noted that they did not have enough time to adapt regular assignments for ELs. The teachers felt they needed more time to appropriately tailor work for their diverse learners. When asked about the role of content area teachers regarding teaching English to ELs, one teacher responded with "*Teachers are overwhelmed to the highest degree with district demands for ALL students. Honestly, time does not permit us to do what we should be doing.*"

The attitudes survey also prompted teachers to determine which of the following factors contribute the most to ESL students' success in mainstream classes:

- English proficiency.
- Adjusting to a new culture.
- Socioeconomic status of the family.
- Individual motivation.
- Previous education/level of schooling.
- Language background.

Teachers rated each factor on a scale of 1 (*important*) through 6 (*not important*), and overall the most important factor was individual motivation with a sum of 17 total combined points. Interestingly, the teachers rated the least important factor as socioeconomic status of the family with a sum of 31 total combined points. Considering the current research showing correlations between language and poverty

on reading development (Roberts et al., 2010), and the efforts of NCLB and ESSA to increase focus on the low-socioeconomic population (and subsequent attention to this subpopulation during assessment training), teachers should have ranked this factor as more important. To better understand the reasoning behind this ranking, we should also consider that the teachers ranked motivation as the most important factor. On one hand, this ranking supports the findings that the teachers viewed all students' backgrounds as an asset, yet on the other hand this could potentially mean that the teachers underestimate the systemic barriers imposed on linguistically diverse students by assuming that if the students work hard enough with proper motivation, these barriers are no longer an issue.

When asked about their thoughts regarding the new ESSA mandates for ESL certification, teachers generally responded with mixed emotions. Overall, they expressed that it was important and a professionally useful certificate to have; however, they felt that it was not very applicable to the daily demands of content teachers. One teacher wrote "*Ideally, the ESSA mandates when followed effectively, are good for all; teachers, students, campus. Realistically, it is a lot to expect from the classroom teacher*." Regarding exiting the program and shedding the EL label, there were two common themes. The first one was that the fluency of ESL students should be comparable to monolingual peers before they exit: "*I feel they should be able to perform as well as the average non-esl student*." Another common theme from this question was that students are ready to exit once they acquire basic skills such as writing using complete sentences and an "*understanding as well as application of the foundational reading & writing skills*." This theme reflects the misconception that most EBs are stuck at the intermediate stage and in need of remediation for these basic academic skills, instead of being proficient in English and in need of advanced, rigorous and challenging content (alongside their monolingual peers).

Overall, the survey revealed that the teachers lacked PD opportunities that "are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused" (Department of Education 2016, p. 22). Many of the teachers (70%) expressed that they needed more techniques on teaching content to ESL students; none of the teachers reported having fluency in a language other than English, and only 10 percent of teachers reported training in sheltered instruction. The rest of the teachers reported annual state mandated accountability training for an English proficiency assessment. This assessment is called the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and is administered during the spring semester to all students coded as LEP. The exam measures English proficiency across the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing; and rates the student proficiencies at Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced and Advanced High (Texas Education Agency, 2019). The first three domains are measured through the use of a standardized assessment, but the writing

domain is assessed through a portfolio collection of writing samples from all content areas during the span of five weeks in February/March. Through the use of authentic classroom writing samples, the writing assessment improves upon the one-and-done mentality of most standardized assessments used for accountability. However, the basic parameters of these classroom writing assignments include strictly English-only outputs, with no linguistic supports or bilingual glossaries (even for students who are new to the country and have very little English). Teachers are allowed to translate the writing prompt for beginner students, but any native-language support beyond that would invalidate the writing sample. According to the TELPAS rubric, students who no longer need native language support to engage with the content are generally at the Advanced or Advanced High level, yet the rubric becomes even more problematic for these students. At these levels, fluency is framed in a monoglossic definition of language and measured based on the ability of EBs to write as if they were monolingual, as the phrasing for students to reach the Advanced High level is "native-like" and "comparable to native peers" (Texas Education Agency, 2019, p. 74).

The authors' goal of including the TELPAS information is not to show how one state is meeting ESSA, but instead the reasons are twofold: 1) To show the background knowledge of content teachers in TX, so as to better understand how the authors used the Zone of Proximal Teacher Development in the exemplar PD, and 2) to better understand how the perspective of current teachers is rooted in an assessment and accountability climate that prioritizes the "native speaker." Even though every state has their own way of meeting ESSA and AYP mandates, what is happening in Texas shows the power that accountability and assessments have over teacher perceptions of linguistically diverse students.

Methodology: Professional Development and Progress Surveys

In September, after the attitudes surveys were all submitted, the teachers met for one hour in a face to face training to begin the professional development piece of this study. To begin the training, the teachers were provided with background information and basic research on translanguaging, and given the opportunity to ask questions and connect to what they had already been doing in their classrooms. Then, they were provided with four translanguaging strategies to focus on during the school year (see Appendix 2 for the handout used during the training). These strategies are based on the four language domains (speaking, writing, reading and listening) that the teachers learn about each year during their TELPAS training. To use the four strategies, teachers would allow/encourage students to:

- Speak in Spanish during cooperative learning.
- Write in both languages on assignments.
- Read independent material in either language (including novels, websites, etc.).
- Take notes in Spanish or English (or a combination of both languages).

Then, the teachers were provided with examples of each strategy. For the reading, listening and speaking strategy, the author/teacher provided verbal examples of activities that the teachers were already using and could be adjusted to include translanguaging. For the writing strategy, the author/teacher included a student sample of translanguaging that was written during ESL class the previous year at the end of a lesson cycle on suspense features in storytelling (see Appendix 3 for the writing sample). The purpose of using a student sample was to build upon what teachers already noticed and used in their classrooms to leverage the Zone of Proximal Teacher Development. The teachers responded positively to the sample, since the student who wrote "Revenge of La Chancla [sandal]" normally struggled with motivation in his writing, but he was very excited about this piece. He even brought a hand-drawn picture of his protagonist (Poncho) and asked for assistance scanning the image to include in his draft. As the teachers read the sample during the PD training, they verified the picture was a manifestation of increased motivation due to translanguaging strategies. Another point of the training was that during the writing process, the author/teacher and the student experienced initial confusion in how to spell *Popeye*, as the student was adamant that the correct pronunciation was the way his father pronounced it and the author/teacher was unfamiliar with the Spanish pronunciation. After ongoing verbal negotiation, the author/teacher realized the student meant the cartoon character. The student was also able to clearly and successfully defend the use of *espinacas* instead of spinach, since the student's father insisted he eat *espinacas* to become as strong as Popeye. His choice in language was purposeful, and the classroom negotiations exemplified a key point in the professional development training: EBs are experts in translanguaging, and teachers only need to open the flow of communication to learn how to apply translanguaging to pedagogy. Translanguaging is already happening; other districts can also bridge students' language practices with the ways teachers are already using classroom negotiations, and use the information in their own professional development sessions.

At the end of the initial PD session, the teachers were given time to chat with each other about their ideas for using the strategies in their classroom, and connected the strategies to things they had already done in their classrooms. There was limited time for continued PD throughout the year due to the focus on assessment data disaggregation and tutorial preparations during the district's normally scheduled Wednesday afternoon professional development. Out of necessity, follow-ups were

conducted through email and tiny talks. The responsibilities of the primary author as ESL teacher included short, informal support meetings every 3 weeks with content teachers (after 3-week progress reports were sent home to students), and tiny talks about translanguaging became part of these meetings. The responses from the teachers during these tiny talks were kept confidential (to reduce potential risks to participants), however any common concerns or questions were addressed using email to the whole group. To protect confidentiality, the primary author used a blind carbon copy on the emails, so the participants were unable to see each other's names.

Throughout the school year, the teacher participants responded to progress surveys a total of four times. The surveys were distributed via Google Forms at the end of each grading period of 9-weeks. Google Forms automatically sorted the results by survey item, allowing for the authors to analyze all responses per item and identify themes within items. Descriptive statistics were also completed using Google Forms to analyze the quantitative scaled items and compare growth across all the progress surveys. None of the teachers withdrew from the study, and all 10 teachers responded to the surveys each time.

Results: Translanguaging Pedagogy

In the first three surveys, teachers scored the frequency the translanguaging strategies were used in each of the language domains, from 0 (*never*) through 5 (*during every opportunity*), and the scores within each domain were averaged. When the scores in the four domains were averaged together, the frequency of students using translanguaging was the strongest during the first grading cycle at an average score of 1.3 on the Likert scale. The frequency diminished slightly from there at an average of 1 after the second grading cycle in January, and at a 0.9 at the end of the third grading cycle in March. Note-taking was the weakest out of the four strategies, consistently staying between 0.6 and 0.8. The domains of speaking, reading and writing averaged between 0.8 and 1.6, with speaking at the strongest during the first grading cycle (1.6), reading and writing the strongest during the second grading cycle (both at 1.1), and reading the strongest during the third grading cycle at (1.2).

Overall, teachers noted low frequencies, especially in the spring. Low frequencies in the third grading cycle were likely due to the TELPAS writing portfolios being collected during that time, since the writing samples for this assessment are strictly English-only. Regardless of how infrequently the students were able to use the strategies, the fact that the students were encouraged to use them at all is central to the success of the PD. Menken and Sánchez (2019) found similar "baby steps" in some of their participating schools. In one school, "the principal observed several teachers' 'baby steps' when they first began to implement translanguaging pedagogy and predicted how over time these efforts would spread" (Menken & Sánchez, 2019,

p. 14). These authors explain that in many of their participating schools, "changes like this became more widespread after teachers observed others' successes from implementing translanguaging pedagogy" (p. 14-15). Even though many of the teachers in their schools and all of the teachers involved in this study were monolingual speakers of English, they were able to use translanguaging as a tool and started to shift from a monoglossic to multilingual perspective of language.

Overall, teacher responses revealed that EBs' use of the home language(s) was viewed by teachers and classmates as a positive resource. When responding to a survey question about the benefits of translanguaging, one teacher wrote: "*I feel like they appreciate their first language being recognized at school in the classroom. They seem proud when they are able to share something others have little knowledge about*", while another teacher responded:

EL students are usually the hardest working students of all. It is inspiring to myself and other students to witness a child coming to a new country and earnestly putting forth so much effort. It also gives students a chance to be empathetic, when the classroom environment allows.

While these comments represent only a few teachers' perspectives, they nevertheless captured a theme characterized by positive attitudes of teachers and students towards EBs' bilingualism and cultural diversity.

At the end of the school year, the teachers responded to the final reflection survey. When asked "How effectively did the translanguaging strategies foster students' awareness of language choice?" the teachers responded on a scale of 0 (*not effective*) through 5 (*very effective*), and the scores averaged at 3.1. After implementing the strategies, the teachers started to adopt a broader translanguaging stance. One teacher wrote that translanguaging "*Increased their critical thinking skills, especially knowing I would ask for them to share their thinking, in both languages*." This reflects the common theme that students felt more comfortable in class while being held accountable for language choice, which prompted students to increase critical thinking skills in their writing. One teacher even increased her interactions with students about their writing because of the PD: *"It allowed the teacher to help the student with phrasing and word choice when it came to conferencing after writing assignment [sic], therefore the student gain [sic] more English vocabulary."* Given time, the increased communication about language choice between teachers and students would likely result in linguistic, cognitive and socioemotional benefits for EBs.

Scores on L-TELs' ELA portion of their high stakes tests are used to indicate trends showing student success. From 2016-2018, the high school EBs showed minimal progress on the state English Language Arts standardized assessments;

11.8% of the EBs passed the exams during the 2016-2017 school year, and 16.7% passed in the 2017-2018 school year. Moreover, the average statewide passing rate for EBs on these exams improved by 4% during this time, which means the 4.9% improvement in AISD could be attributed to reliability issues within the test itself. In the spring of 2019, at the end of the PD study, the preliminary assessment results for these students resulted in a 55.6% passing rate. Even considering slight variations in the reliability of the exam from year to year, the EBs' passing rate in AISD showed a significant improvement of 38.9%. While the official academic reports were not released from the state for the 2018-2019 school year at the time of this writing (they are usually released in February of the following school year), the preliminary results show a potentially significant improvement. Moreover, the teachers that participated in the translanguaging PD revealed that they began to think critically about the function of language in academic settings, and started the shift towards a more linguistically inclusive pedagogy that would support students as they interact with rigorous academic content.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When it comes to allocating resources for professional development, rural districts face difficult decisions. EBs are a small percentage of the student population, yet these students must take extra standardized assessments (that lack foundations in accepted theories of Second Language Acquisition) for the district to meet accountability measures. Often, rural school districts decide to spend extremely limited time and money training teachers to work with EBs, while still holding teachers accountable for these students' high stakes scores. While many rural school districts face similar situations, urban districts also face their own challenges regarding PD resource allocation. To combat the limitations specific to AISD, we identified and then leveraged the district's strengths to develop the PD. To customize this exemplar PD and optimize the strengths of individual districts, we suggest the following framework.

Leaders in the field of educational research should work with local teacher-leaders to:

1. Consider how regional accountability assessments affect district and teacher perspectives, and identify the ways these perspectives are manifested as systemic barriers.
2. Determine the ways local educators are currently teaching language for academic purposes, and analyze language development growth of EBs using an action-based perspective to identify areas for improvement.

3. Develop feasible translanguaging strategies rooted in the four language domains that local educators can use to leverage students' daily language use for academic purposes.
4. Communicate with district leaders to carefully identify any potential risks to PD participants, and develop a plan that consistently reduces risks throughout the PD.
5. Communicate with district and campus administration to schedule as many ongoing PD training sessions as possible, while being mindful of district and teacher resources.

Even though the exemplar PD described in this chapter was restricted due to limited time for ongoing sessions, the authors utilized opportunities built into the everyday duties of the teachers through the use of tiny talks. Recording these tiny talks, as well as conducting classroom observations, would greatly benefit the growing field of translanguaging pedagogical studies. However, the anonymity of the teachers who volunteered for this study was respected and protected. As teachers become more comfortable using the translanguaging strategies, and as it becomes a more widely accepted pedagogy, hopefully teacher anonymity will no longer need to be protected in future studies. As future educators adapt this PD framework, they should think creatively how to leverage opportunities for collaboration that exist in everyday routines, particularly in districts with limited resources. Moreover, there is a great need for resources to be diverted to teacher training in rural settings. State data suggest that there is a correlation between the amount the district spends per student on curriculum and staff development and student success (Karnes, 2019). This correlation is evident in AISD; the district spent $110.00 per student on curriculum and staff development during the 2017-2018 school year, as compared to the state average of $209.00 (Texas Education Agency, 2019). Limited resources for professional development in AISD meant that most of the district-led PD opportunities during 2017-2018 were directly connected to assessment preparation, and did little to develop teacher pedagogical knowledge for working with EBs. Implications of the current work include the need for tailored PD in teachers' work with L-TELs, and appropriate funding levels in order to carry out such work. Small rural districts have the ability to offset insufficient funding by using teacher-leaders for internally led PD opportunities.

When rural teachers take into account L-TELs' diverse home languages and cultures, students perceive that their backgrounds are valued. Understanding the relationship between student success and teacher attitudes in rural settings provides support for developing appropriate PD for teachers in their work with L-TELs. All linguistically diverse students can benefit from educators adopting a multilingual stance. Currently, EBs are seen as language deficient when viewed from a monolingual

ideology. Educators who work with EBs (and all linguistically diverse students) can benefit from a better understanding of how these students use their full linguistic repertoires as resources in their daily lives.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research on translanguaging as a pedagogy is called for, especially in schools that have English-only education and monolingual policies in place. As more research develops around the notion of translanguaging pedagogy, multiple benefits can be brought to students, teachers and the educational institution as a whole. Accountability policies could potentially shift towards more equitable assessments of language fluency based on linguistic performance and action. Educators and researchers in the field need to find a way to bridge between the complex ways linguistically diverse students use translanguaging and the static expectations of standard English in academic settings and on high stakes assessments.

A future study investigating the differences in academic growth scores between proficiency levels could prove beneficial in understanding why the academic growth score for EBs is not greater than all students. Assessing fluency based on dynamic translanguaging progressions could also shed light onto the issue and provide a framework for revising fluency accountability assessments. More research is needed to determine if there is a causal relationship between resources diverted to assessment preparation (instead of authentic, practice-based professional development opportunities) and the achievement gap between EBs and monolingual students. Likewise, there is a need to research further into the legitimacy of the achievement gap, or whether it is misunderstood and is actually a social justice issue. As for the future of the teachers and students in AISD, the authors encourage the district to continue with developing the translanguaging pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explores literature about EBs in an educational climate that assumes a monolingual ideology, with a particular emphasis on how monolingual standardized assessments affect teacher perceptions of these students. The research conducted through qualitative and quantitative data gleaned from teacher surveys showed the potential for translanguaging pedagogy to counteract the systemic barriers in place that affect the academic achievement of EBs. Teachers involved in the professional development noted positive results associated with the pedagogy, and the preliminary results from the state accountability assessments showed improvement in academic

growth for emergent bilinguals. Hopefully, this chapter will guide educators and scholars as they work to increase pedagogical language knowledge across all content areas, eventually redefining language fluency and improving perceptions of linguistically diverse students.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Deficit Perspective: The belief that emergent bilinguals have characteristics due to language development that cause them to be deficient in their academic skills.

Funds of Knowledge: The varied knowledge base and intellectual strengths students possess from diverse backgrounds.

L-TELs: Emergent bilingual students who are still coded as Limited English Proficient (LEP) after attending US schools for seven or more years.

Monolingual Ideology: The belief that there should be one single language in a society.

Pedagogical Language Knowledge: Pedagogical knowledge used to cultivate students' language development through content, as opposed to pedagogical knowledge about content.

Professional Development: Teacher education and training intended to expand skills related to the field of education.

Socioeconomic Status: A measure of social class combined with economic status when compared to others in a society.

Translanguaging: The fluid language practices of multilinguals that is based on a unitary language system, as opposed to the idea of two (or more) separate and encapsulated language systems.

ENDNOTE

[1] While there are multiple terms for this population, we choose to use 'EB' for its inclusiveness and additive perspective as often as appropriate. We use 'EL' as it would be used by a school district and or government document, and 'L-TEL' when specifically referring to those students who have been classified as ELs for longer than 7 years.

APPENDIX 1

Rural Designation Definitions

The following rural designation definitions can be found at the National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/definitions.asp

- **Fringe:** Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
- **Distant:** Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
- **Remote:** Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.
- Office of Management and Budget (2000). Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas; Notice. Federal Register (65) No. 249

APPENDIX 2

Figure 1.

ESL Survey Anya* ISD

Highest education completed: __AA __BA/BS __BA/BS+certification __MA/MS __PhD
How long have you been teaching? __0–4 years __5–8 years __9–12 years __13+ years
What content areas are you certified to teach?_____
What content areas are you teaching now?_____
What grade level cluster do you teach? 5 – 8 9 –12
What is your first language?_____
What other languages do you know?_____
Please indicate your fluency in that (those) language(s) according to the following scale:

*First language:_____

Beginner	intermediate	advanced	native or native-like
1	2	3	4

*Other languages: _____ Age you began learning the language___

Beginner	intermediate	advanced	native or native-like
1	2	3	4

*Other languages: _____ Age you began learning the language___

Beginner	intermediate	advanced	native or native-like
1	2	3	4

Do you have training in ESL methods? Yes No (If yes, describe in terms of hours and/or courses)_____
_____
How much experience have you had with ESL students in your classes?
__This is my first year with ESL students
__I have had ESL students in my classes before (indicate how many years)
For: __1–4 years __5–8 years __9–12 years __13+ years
How many ESL students do you have on average per year?_____
Do you think some subjects are easier than others to teach ESL students? __Yes __No
If yes, which one do you think is easiest? __English __History __Math __Reading __Science
Explain_____
_____
And which subject do you think is hardest? __English __History __Math __Reading __Science
Explain_____
_____

When ESL students have difficulty doing well in your classes, what are some of the problems they have? _____

Figure 2.

_____

When ESL students do very well in your classes, what are some of the strategies/abilities that facilitate success?_____

_____

How important are the following factors for ESL students' success in mainstream classes?

	Important——Not important					
• English proficiency	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Adjusting to a new culture	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Socioeconomic status of the family	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Individual motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Previous education/level of schooling	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Language background	1	2	3	4	5	6
• Other_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

What is the role of the ESL teacher as you see it?_____

_____

What is the role of content area teachers regarding teaching English to ELs?_____

_____

Which of the following would help you most in dealing more effectively with ESL students?

__Better communication between ESL and mainstream teachers

__More time to adapt regular assignments

__Techniques on how to teach content to ESL students

__Information about cultures and/or languages represented by ESL students

__Other_____

How applicable do you feel is the content of the TExES ESL Supplemental exam to your daily classroom teaching? Applicable——Not Applicable

1 2 3 4 5 6

How useful do you feel having an ESL certification is? Useful——Not Useful

1 2 3 4 5 6

What are your thoughts regarding ESSA mandates for ESL certification?_____

_____

In your opinion, what characteristics should ELs have in their English language before exiting the ESL program?_____

_____

In your opinion, what are the positive qualities ELs bring from their home and backgrounds into your classroom? _____

_____

APPENDIX 3

Translanguaging Strategies

Please incorporate the following four translanguaging strategies into your current pedagogy by allowing/encouraging students to:

- Take notes in Spanish or English (or a combination of the two).
- Read independent material, including novels, websites, etc. in either language.
- To converse in Spanish during cooperative learning.
- Use both languages on written assignments while holding them accountable for language choice.

APPENDIX 4

Figure 3.

Revenge Of La Chancla

One Rainy day Pancho was walking down a abandoned street that had a abandoned High School he went inside so he would not get even more wet then he already is and he does not what to get his new sombrero wet because his compadre gave him. When Poncho entered the scary forgotten High School he saw a red balloon in one of the doors his first reaction was to get his chancla his last reaction was to get his chancla vest out of his sombrero and put it on. Poncho starts walking around to see if there were any clues that led to the balloon. Then out of know were poncho gets hit from the back and he falls to the ground his first reaction was to get his chancla out. He also gets his Iphone ties out and calls reinforcements his compadre popeye. “Ola compadre where are you donde estas” “ I need your help I need you to bring your espinacas F.Y.I that means spinach” “why

““because I need more energy” “why” because estoy fighting con Pennywise! Come on muy rapido right now. As fast as Papeye could he got Lamborghini. Lamborghini is the name he gave to him donkey. Before you knew it poncho was already winning. poncho had the clown on his feet the technique was to call someone are something that person was the V.S.L.G,then something knocked on the door poncho and. Pennywise ran to hide but it was only popeye at the door. All the sudden the the ogley one there started to laugh. “ **ha ha ha** we’s the V.S.L.G” “ what only ones that should be laughing should be me because your the clown not me. Then all sudden the doors swung open and Lamborghini runs down the hallway, it’ss the V.S.L.G **AHHHH** to be contained.