

Developing Translanguaging Stances in ESOL-Focused Teacher Education Courses: Teacher Candidates' Beliefs about and Knowledge of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

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Ryan W. Pontier

Florida International University, USA

<rponnier@fiu.edu>

Abstract

The population of emergent bilingual students in the United States is growing rapidly, requiring that teachers be prepared to provide them an effective education. Inadequate preparation of teachers to work with these students indicates the need to revise the ways that teacher education programs address this issue (Palmer & Martínez, 2013), including investigation of teacher candidates' (TCs) beliefs and experiences. Drawing on translanguaging theory, this qualitative study used written responses to two key questions at two time points to investigate TCs' beliefs about and knowledge of bilingualism and bilingual education. Even after experiencing a semester in a teacher education course focused on dynamic bilingualism, findings highlight TCs' general maintenance of monolingual beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education with some expansion into a dynamic, strengths-based perspective. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: bilingual, translanguaging, teacher education, teacher beliefs

As the population of emergent bilingual (EB) students continues to rise in the U.S. (García & Kleifgen, 2018; OELA, 2018), it is imperative that teacher candidates (TCs) be prepared to provide an effective and appropriate education for these students (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Valdés et al., 2005). This process involves several steps, including challenging popular assumptions about language, bilingualism, and bilingual education; developing a strong understanding and awareness of bilingualism and its associated behaviors in the classroom; and, often, adopting an ideological shift in the way(s) that bilingual language practices have been conceptualized (Palmer & Martínez, 2013). This study investigated TCs' beliefs about and knowledge of bilingualism and bilingual education, or their "stance" (García et al., 2017), during one of two ESOL-focused courses designed to address the steps Palmer & Martínez (2013) laid out. I begin with the theoretical framework that guided my approach to the focal classes and my

data analysis and interpretation of findings. I follow with a historical overview of educating EB students in the U.S. generally—and Florida specifically—to situate the study within its ecological context. I then provide a literature review that highlights the importance of language ideologies and their often-conflicting nature.

Theoretical Framework

A challenge in teacher education is that knowledge of bilinguals' languaging practices is not commonplace, but it may be necessary for TCs to work effectively and respectfully with EB students (Palmer & Martínez, 2013). Thus, in teaching the ESOL-focused teacher education courses as part of a teacher education program, I drew on García et al. (2017) and Henderson's (2017, 2020) notion of stance. A philosophical, ideological, or belief system that guides teachers' pedagogy, a translanguaging stance posits that (a) "bilingual students' many different language practices work juntos/together, not separately, as if they belonged to different realms" and (b) "the bilingual child's complex language repertoire [is] a resource, never...a deficit" (García et al., 2017, pp. xii-xiii). This stance reflects a flexible understanding of bilingualism, or translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014). It differs from a second language acquisition orientation in that it is believed that bi/multilinguals engage in a creative and critical process in which they "use language and other resources in dynamic, flexible, multimodal, semiotic, and purposeful ways" (Espinosa & Ascenzi-Moreno, 2021, p. 12). As such, it goes beyond traditional understandings of bilingualism "by bringing together different dimensions of [multilinguals'] personal histories, experiences, and environments; their attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies; and their cognitive and physical capacities into one coordinated and meaningful performance" (Li Wei, 2011, p. 1223). Teachers who embody a translanguaging stance can design effective and equitable instruction (García & Sánchez, 2018) by recognizing the ways their students blend, combine, and create new uses of language, encouraging them to use all of their language resources in school (Espinosa & Asenzi-Moreno, 2021).

Language education, including TESOL and ESOL-focused teacher education courses, has historically been a field that trained educators with monolingual bias (Ortega, 2019) propping up English in a hegemonic stronghold on a global scale (Pratt, 1999). However, translanguaging disrupts monolingual norms and pushes educators to work toward social justice through validating and humanizing their bilingual students' learning processes (García & Leiva, 2014). Translanguaging challenges the idea that "named" languages helped to construct nation-states. A translanguaging stance calls educators to transgress the superficial boundaries that these "languages" have imposed, to recognize bilingual students' strengths, and to leverage the constant corriente of bilingualism that is always present (España & Yadira Herrera, 2021; García et al., 2017). Tian et al. (2020) describe this practice "like an emerging perspective or lens that could provide new insights to understand and examine language and language (in) education" (p. 4). They therefore adopt the term "translanguaging lens" to show the descriptive, theoretical, and pedagogical facets of students' dynamic languaging practices. These always-evolving stances, or lenses, are the focus of this study.

Literature Review

Teachers' attitudes toward EB students and what they believe about bilingualism and bilingual education influence their expectations of EBs as well as the quality of instruction provided to them (Brisk, 1998; Karabenick & Clemons Noda, 2004). This is good news if teachers exhibit positive beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education. For example, Karabenick and Clemons Noda

(2004) found that teachers who were more accepting of EBs in their classes believed in a strengths-based approach including non-target language use in the classroom, saw bilingualism and bilingual education as beneficial, thought EBs should have the opportunity to be tested in languages other than English, and believed that knowledge was spread across all of a student's languages. However, the opposite may also hold true. The role of teacher education programs, then, becomes especially important in supporting TCs in learning about EBs and facilitating experiences with EB students (de Jong & Harper, 2005; García & Kleifgen, 2018; Harper & de Jong, 2004) so that TCs develop positive beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education. Naturally, though, this process is more complicated due to multiple factors influencing TCs' beliefs.

Vacillating Support for Bilingual Education in the U.S.

Support for, attitudes toward, and beliefs about bilingual education in the U.S. have been inconsistent. In considering legislation, court cases, and policies, Ovando (2003) identified four periods that show a pendulum swing between favoritism and prohibition: permissive, restrictive, opportunist, and dismissive. During the permissive period, stretching from the 1700s to the 1880s, "a fair amount of tolerance or benign neglect existed toward the many languages represented in the new society" (Ovando, 2003, p. 4). The restrictive period, from the 1880s to the 1960s, saw the continued cultural genocide of Native Americans, the Spanish-American War, and two World Wars. White, English-speaking ethnocentricity reigned, and an English-only submersion approach was used to "Americanize" students. The opportunist period, from the 1960s to the 1980s, housed a nationalized call for learning foreign languages, the Civil Rights Movement, and a large influx of Cubans due to political strife. Support for EB students and bilingual programs arose, building on students' home cultures and languages, thus precluding the need to first learn and use English. It was during this period that landmark Supreme Court cases like *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) required that schools and districts focus on equity, not equality. Policies called for research-based programs, available and appropriate resources, and regular audits of those programs. However, in the dismissive period, from the 1980s to the present, policies have never been published as official regulations. Rather, movements to homogenize learning, ban bilingual education, and force high-stakes standardized testing have curtailed the efforts from the opportunist period. Although language ideologies have shifted over time with historical events, these periods are characterized by changing political, social, and economic forces and not by one unifying language ideology. The result has been a lack of equitable treatment for EB students (Ovando, 2003).

Influences on Beliefs about Bilingualism and Bilingual Education in Florida

Although EBs gained attention in Florida in 1990 when the Florida League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) sued the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) for not providing equitable support for students learning English to successfully navigate public school academic content, that attention has eroded in the past three decades. Through the Florida Consent Decree (Florida Department of Education, 1990), teachers were initially required to take five stand-alone ESOL-focused courses to prepare them to work with EBs (Artecona-Peláez, 2018). Courses included training across five domains: applied linguistics, cross-cultural studies, methods of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), curriculum development, and assessment (Florida Department of Education, 2017). As a result, both universities and school districts designed courses in an effort to assist in-service and TCs in achieving the required endorsement. However, in the early 2000s, a provision was made such that the Department of Education allowed for teacher education programs to offer an *ESOL infused* approach, thus allowing for alternative delivery methods of ESOL instruction in teacher education programs

(Florida Department of Education, 2015). As such, only two stand-alone ESOL-focused courses taught by those with degrees in a TESOL-related field were—and are still—required, while all other Florida’s ESOL Standards and competencies may be taught in other courses by other instructors who demonstrate at least 60 hours of ESOL professional development. Since there is no metric for determining when instructors of these core classes experienced their ESOL professional development, what their views of bilingual development and bilingual education are, or whether the infused competencies are actually included in syllabi, taught, and learned. This move deprioritized teacher education specifically geared at serving EBs and may have reinforced an already-present belief that effective teaching for EBs was just good teaching (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

Compounding such little attention to preparing TCs to work with EBs is the state’s insistence on English learning. For example, there are no teaching certificates for bilingual education; rather, all focus is on ESOL. Moreover, all high-stakes standardized tests are only offered in English (Florida Department of Education ESSA Waiver Request), students in dual language programs have their language other than English (LOTE) monitored only if the school/program chooses to do so, and the awarding of the Seal of Bilingualism inequitably favors English speakers proving proficiency in another language (Subtirelu et al., 2019). As such, students, teachers, and TCs in Florida are likely to be exposed to—and adopt—an English monolingual mindset (Dwyer & O’Gorman-Fazzolari, forthcoming).

Even beyond academic contexts, despite being known as multilingual and multicultural, there are deep-seeded linguistic and cultural hierarchies in South Florida (Carter & Lynch, 2015). These hierarchies, which skew toward English and monolingual varieties of individually conceived languages and are represented both in the community and the research that highlights the community, reveal a deficit perspective related to semilingualism (MacSwan, 2000) and a monolingual perspective of bilingualism (Grosjean, 1989). Specifically, it has been reported that among Cuban Americans the “intergenerational maintenance of productive ability in Spanish, especially of full Spanish literacy, is difficult to achieve” (Otheguy et al., 2000, p. 184), and there has been a “clear pattern of transitional bilingualism in Miami Cubans” (Porcel, 2006, p. 107). As such, Carter and Lynch (2015) observed a:

highly complex ideological and sociological configuration of variables related to intergenerational language transmission (i.e., language shift to English by the third generation), Spanish language as an imagined criterion for considering oneself ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’ in Miami, and prevailing language ideologies which fully favor English in the U.S. national context and, at the same time, construct both Spanish and English as economically and culturally vital languages at the local level (South Florida) and in the more macro-level discourse of globalization. (p. 373)

This focus on monolingualism has been historically compounded in the TESOL context by drawing on theories of second language acquisition (SLA) as a way to understand bilingualism and bilingual development (Kleyn & García, 2019). SLA views languages as static sets of discrete features to be mastered and expects that a speaker acquire a high level of proficiency in each language that rivals that of a monolingual speaker (García & Wei, 2014). As a result, several studies have documented teachers’ articulation of deficit perspectives based on their reliance on the tenets of SLA (Deroo & Ponzio, 2019; Pontier & Ortega, 2021; Pontier & Tian, in press). Moreover, students, having been educated in contexts of monolingual domination, often become

the very teachers that then reproduce both the deficit perspectives they experienced as well as the promulgation of oppressive linguistic contexts for their own students (Pontier & Ortega, 2021).

In summary, on multiple levels, students have been exposed to and educated in a context that favors monolingualism.

Language Ideological Multiplicity in the Education of Emergent Bilingual Students

Still, even though there is some agreement about negative attitudes toward specific ways of languaging, as Kroskrity (2004) and Henderson (2020) noted, language ideologies are often not dichotomous (e.g., positive or negative). Rather, language ideological multiplicity, or the notion that an individual could express multiple language ideologies simultaneously, is typically observed. This especially makes sense in the learning context of teacher education, which brings together experiences and knowledges from societal, community, and individual levels. Moreover, development of beliefs is not usually lockstep (Menken & Sánchez, 2019), and language ideologies can be multiple and often contradictory both within and across levels (Henderson, 2017, 2020). This could include one stance not aligned with a community-level ideology but other stances that do align with known community ideologies (Henderson, 2017, 2020). For example, in a forthcoming study of graduate students in a TESOL program, Pontier & Deroo found that although general favoritism for bilingualism was expressed in responsive journals throughout a semester-long multilingual approach to TESOL methods, a monolingual mindset dominated students' developing understanding of dynamic bilingualism. Pontier & Tian (in press) found that a different set of graduate students in the same TESOL program who all identified as bi/multilingual had difficulty understanding translanguaging as a form of social justice despite listing several advantages of bilingualism. Pontier & Ortega (2021) found that two groups of dual language teachers who identified as bilingual and Latinx shared numerous experiences of students successfully becoming bilingual, but that the expectation was to be "fully bilingual," or able to perform the same tasks equally in each target language. Finally, educators who have experience working in dual language bilingual education/two-way immersion contexts are now being pushed to exercise an additional programmatic goal: critical consciousness (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017), which may be at odds with messages about bilingualism at the individual, community, and societal levels (Henderson, 2017, 2020; Martínez et al., 2015). Because language "ideology creates and acts in a social world while it masquerades as a description of that world" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 19), and teachers' often multiple and conflicting beliefs make up the institutional and social building blocks of culture (Kroskrity, 2010), even most bilingual educators, or those working toward equitable education conditions, still create spaces that devalue minoritized students' languaging practices (Palmer et al., 2019).

The research demonstrates that teacher education programs often devote only a marginalized focus to growing TCs' knowledge around bilingualism and pedagogies for supporting EBs. The contextual nature of South Florida bi/multilingual communities also points to little attention to understanding bilingualism dynamically. What effect then—if any—does a stand-alone ESOL-focused course have on TCs' beliefs about and knowledge of bilingualism and bilingual education? This interest grew since teacher educators who work with TCs can more effectively support the preparation of future teachers if they are aware of TCs' beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education. Moreover, although research for *in-service* teachers exists (Coady et al., 2011), there is a dearth of research that has investigated whether *TCs* experience any changes in beliefs or knowledge related to bilingualism and bilingual education.

The current study, therefore, investigated the following research question:

- What do TCs believe and know about bilingualism and bilingual education before and after experiencing an ESOL-focused teacher education course taught from a multilingual perspective at a large urban state college in a multilingual and multicultural setting?

Method

To increase transferability and trustworthiness of the study, below I provide a detailed description of the research setting, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Gall et al., 2007).

Setting

The study took place over the course of three academic years as part of a teacher education program in the School of Education (SOE) at a large urban state college in the Southeastern United States. The surrounding community is linguistically and culturally diverse, which is represented within the SOE. Although the College has historically functioned as a community college, the SOE is part of a 4-year baccalaureate degree program in which students earn a number of teaching endorsements, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Most students first complete either an Associates of Arts (AA) or Associates of Science (AS) degree before enrolling in the Bachelor of Science (BS) as part of either Early Childhood Education (ECE; birth-8 years) or the Teacher Education Program (TEP; K-12 focus). Both programs offer two stand-alone courses dedicated to issues in ESOL/bilingual education (i.e., ESOL 1: Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, Culture and Communication; ESOL 2: Curriculum, Methods, and Assessment) and focus on similar state-mandated competencies, but were designed by different professors in each program.

Focal ESOL-Focused Classes and Assignments

The focal courses focused heavily on TCs' experiences with language and language education. Since the overarching goal of the two-course sequence was to prepare TCs to work effectively with EB students, this first and primary step was important because actions are affected by beliefs and attitudes (Richardson, 1996). In revising the two-course sequence that TCs are required to take as part of their ESOL endorsement, I purposefully presented both courses from a dynamic bilingual perspective (i.e., bilingual as normal, not two monolinguals in one, with a focus on the typical languaging practices of bilinguals), a departure from what many students were accustomed to hearing in their daily interactions with both monolingual and bilingual acquaintances (Carter & Lynch, 2015). In particular, the two classes in the ECE program were designed with assignments that asked students to critically reflect on the practices that they observed in real K-3^[1] classrooms. Classes in the TEP program were taught from a bilingual perspective, but students still completed predetermined assignments (that did not align with a critical perspective of types of instructional strategies used when working with classes that included EBs). Although professors were expected to follow a designated syllabus, the instructor of record had the academic freedom to teach each topic as they saw most appropriate. For me, this meant adopting a bilingual perspective, thus constantly challenging the monolingual mindset from which these courses are typically taught.

My teaching approach was based on Latinx Critical (LatCrit) Theory, “a scholarly movement responding to the long historical presence and enduring invisibility of Latinas/os in the lands now known as the United States” (Valdes, 2005, p. 148). Most recently, LatCrit theory and praxis are

recognized for moving beyond the United States to investigate the bonded ways that comparative and transnational patterns of subordination are reflected in local and global contexts (Valdes, 2005). Conversations in class were constantly framed by asking, “What does this mean for children who are bilingual?” For example, when engaged in an applied linguistics unit with a focus on phonology, questions did not center solely on phonemes in English, but also intentionally included typical strengths and challenges producing various phonemes in English and other languages based on the developing bi/multilingual phonemic repertoire of all students. Assignments in the ECE sections asked TCs to enter in dialogue with in-service teachers, asking about their experiences working with EBs, their views on how to best learn and use language, the type of program that served EBs in the school, the type and amount of professional development that teachers received regarding their work with EB students; analyze a student writing sample for morphological, syntactic, and semantic strengths and “errors,” with a research-based analysis of the most probable linguistic reason for those “errors;” provide a contextualized description of the language(s) and dialect(s) present in the school with a critique of the privilege of each language and dialect; and authentically assess EBs’ oral and written language using observation-based rubrics designed for bilingual children (see O’Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996); and create lesson plans that demonstrated a bilingual approach to working with and appropriately supporting EBs. Classes typically met once per week for 2.5 hours over the course of a 16-week semester and included 20 hours of required observation in public school classrooms.

Participants

After I presented the details of the study, allowed for questions and comments, and collected the informed consent of teacher candidates, the 156 participants (see Table 1) came from 14 different classes over the course of three years. They were enrolled in one of two required courses (for which I served as the instructor) as part of the requirement for becoming ESOL-endorsed. In addition to signing an informed consent, for their responses to be considered in this study, participants had to complete the set of questions at both pre- and post- time points, which is why only approximately 50% of all TCs’ responses became part of the data corpus. TCs reported speaking two languages ($n=134$), three languages ($n=7$), or only English ($n=15$), although only 80% ($n=129$) identified as bilingual (5 students who reported speaking English and Spanish or English and Jamaican Patois did not report being bilingual). They included both U.S.-born ($n=90$, 58%) and foreign-born ($n=67$) residents, experienced a range of 0-17 years in the field of education (any education experience = 104, 67%), aged from 20-49 (76% were 34 or under; 61 were 18-24, 58 were 25-34), and were all in the equivalent of their junior or senior year of undergraduate education.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Percentage
Language use	
Speak 2 languages	86%
Speak 3 languages	4%
Speak only English	10%
Bilingual status	
Identify as bilingual	80%
Country of origin	
Born in U.S.	58%
Age	
Aged 18-24	39%

Aged 25-34	37%
Aged 35+	24%

Data Sources and Analysis

The study drew on TCs' written responses to a set of open-ended questions about bilingualism and bilingual education (Appendix A). The open-ended questions allowed TCs to express their own frame of reference in their own words, rather than respond to predetermined, fixed-response categories of motivations. TCs had the option of responding via paper copy or online, initially on the first day of class and finally on the last day of class. Although these data sources did not allow me to generalize findings or to dig deeper into participants' experiences as might have been the case with the addition of interviews, TCs' written responses provided rich information regarding their beliefs about and knowledge of bilingualism and bilingual education.

Both pre- and post-responses were explored at the conclusion of the three years of study and initially analyzed using grounded theory and the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To engage in this work, I created two primary documents, one a compilation of students' responses at the beginning of the semester and another with responses at the conclusion of the semester. The process was iterative, involving the steps of coding, categorization, concept mapping, and theme generation (Miles & Huberman, 1994), first using Strauss & Corbin's (1990) open coding ("the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" [p. 61) and followed by axial coding (the reconstruction of data in new ways after coding and categorizing). Following this process, several themes emerged, including *monolingual v. bilingual perspective* and *good teaching in general v. teaching with the unique learning needs of EB students in mind*. Finally, those themes were juxtaposed with the notion of translanguaging stance (García et al., 2017; Henderson, 2017, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

TCs' responses to the set of open-ended questions revealed beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education at two different time points, one at the beginning of the semester and once at the conclusion of the semester. Findings show TCs' language ideologies as multiple and often contradictory both within and across levels of influence (Henderson, 2017, 2020) and that their development of beliefs was not lockstep (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Their stances toward bilingualism and bilingual education sometimes aligned with a community-level ideology but other times pushed back on other known community ideologies (Henderson, 2017, 2020). Throughout their time with me, several TCs reported the conflicting messages they received between family/school experiences and new knowledge gained in their teacher education class(es). When questioned about their prior experiences, they reported that the prevailing paradigm regarding bilingualism was deficit-based, focusing on supposed confusion, lack of proficiency, and inability. They shared stories of familial admonitions based on fears of semilingual development (MacSwan, 2000), bullying at school, and negative posts on social media. These experiences manifested as deeply engrained beliefs and are detailed below.

TCs' Initial Beliefs about Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

Similarities were observed across both the pre- and post-administrations when analyzing the responses to the question *What does it mean to be bilingual?* Being bilingual involved the use of two or more discrete languages. Although responses at both pre- and post-administration reflected

a preference for characterizing bilingualism as the ability to use/proficiency in listening/understanding, writing, and reading, speaking was regularly identified as a/the modality needed to be bilingual. At pre-administration, when asked about bilingualism, there was greater emphasis on bilingualism as a mostly linguistic phenomenon understood from a monolingual perspective, which is reflected in both the College's surrounding community generally and within many school contexts—including the College—specifically. However, at the beginning of their semesters, when asked about what teachers of EBs should know, TCs' responses extended beyond bounded systems of language and already incorporated social, cultural, political, or ideological aspects. This focus is documented in the following subsections.

Bilingualism as the sum of two languages. TCs consistently made salient their predisposition toward a monolingual perspective of bilingualism, viewing bilinguals as two monolingual speakers in one (Grosjean, 1989). Being bilingual was characterized by the presence of two or more languages, and more specifically, the categories of *balanced fluency/proficiency* and *use of multiple language skills*, including reading, writing, speaking, comprehending/listening, across both languages dominated responses.

Balanced fluency/proficiency. TCs believed bilingualism was achieved when users were fluent in two (or more) languages. That is, they expected bilinguals to operate equally across both languages. For example, TCs noted that:

- Bilingual means to know more than (sic) one language (sic). Speaking two or more languages.
- Being able to communicate right and understand two different languages.
- Bilingual means you speak and understand more than one language
- Bilingual means that you know two languages. If you don't have that fluency I everyday life then you will lose the language. Language (sic) is what you use on a daily basis.
- To be fluent in more than one language
- To be binigual (sic) is the have perfect knowledge of the language (spoken and written) and fluency.

Although not every response was as literal in its assertion of fluency to characterize bilingualism (e.g., “have perfect knowledge of the language...and fluency,” “If you don't have that fluency [in] everyday life then you will lose the language”), many responses showed an implicit bias towards using each language to the same (high) level of proficiency. This was often evidenced by the nebulous word “know” (e.g., “Bilingual means that you know two languages” from above). Other examples include:

- To be bilingual means to know two or more languages.
- Being bilingual means to know two languages completely.

Use of multiple language skills. Being bilingual focused on mode across languages, or the use of the four language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening/understanding. TCs made explicit mention not only of the language skills involved in using language, but also that proficiency in at least two of them was required to be bilingual. TCs modeled this belief through explicit and implicit use of the connector *and* in listing the language skills. Below are several examples, with emphasis added.

- To be able to speak, read, **and** write in more than one language (sic).
- The ability to speak, write, **[and]** read in more than one language.
- To be bilingual is to know, comprehend, **and** experience (sic) two or more languages.
- To read, write, **and** speak 2 or more languages.
- The ability to read, write, **and** speak fluent in two languages.
- Bilingual is to be able to speak, read, **and** write in two languages.
- I think being bilingual is being able to speak **and** understand two languages.
- To be bilingual means being able to read, write, **and** speak two languages proficiently.

In sum, TCs' initial responses to what it means to be bilingual pointed to the proficient use of two languages for the same purposes, a definition common in lay circles, but typically viewed as less accurate and inclusive in the research world (García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Their contributions align with a more traditional understanding of bilingualism—one that assumes a perfect balance of separate proficiencies. Moreover, the focus on proficiency across multiple modalities leaves little opportunity for seeing EBs as engaging in complex, multimodal communicative practices. Because a dynamic perspective of bilingualism views languaging practices as flexible, adaptive, and creative (García, 2009), these findings show that TCs have not yet taken up a strong translanguaging stance. What does translanguaging say about this?? Balanced is a myth. Language is part of one system. Linguistic repertoire.

A generic view of the specialized needs of emergent bilingual students. At both pre- and post-administration, TCs noted the importance of diverse knowledge and skills when looking through a pedagogical lens. However, explicit mention of EBs' languaging practices was rare, reflecting a typical teacher understanding of skills/knowledge needed to work with EBs (Harper & de Jong, 2004). Still, some TCs began to distinguish the unique learning needs of EBs from “just good teaching” (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

TCs initially focused on the need to understand EBs' backgrounds and their individualized learning differences. In thinking about all students in a holistic manner, TCs understood the importance of recognizing and working with students' strengths and supporting them in areas needing further development. However, TCs' tended to not directly address issues of language or bilingualism (e.g., varying experiences with language, enactments of bilingualism/translanguaging, differences between bilinguals and monolinguals), but rather focused on generally accepted indicators of quality instruction. These characteristics of “just good teaching” are documented below.

Seek knowledge of students' background. TCs' constant allusion to students as different was evident in the salient category of *background*. Although some TCs simply stated that knowing/understanding the EBs' background was important, others did so either in combination with another (related) aspect (e.g., background and culture), or only made explicit mention of another aspect (e.g., culture). Agreeing with the work of others (e.g., de Jong, 2011; de Oliveira, 2016; Echevarría et al., 2017), it was determined that *background* included language(s) used by EBs as well as their proficiency, place of origin or last residence (assuming it was outside of the United States), culture, and family structure. Responses included ability to identify EB students' native language(s); knowledge of EB students' culture, families, and beliefs; and awareness of EB students' academic achievement. These statements push back on the usual knowledge teachers of

EBs are told they need—how much English they speak and understand—and recommend more, but they do not yet call for an explicit look at EBs’ complex languaging practices.

Recognize learning differences (among emergent bilingual students). Another category that emerged from TCs’ responses was that EBs do not all learn the same way. As such, they identified differences in learning preference, speed, and capability. “Each student is different” was a constant refrain for TCs in stating what teachers should know about EB students. Still, what contributes to EBs’ differences was not expanded upon, leaving any key characteristics, such as language use, unidentified.

Use supportive teaching skills. TCs’ responses noted that teachers should teach to the individual differences among students, namely the language(s) students use, their cultural practices, family structure, learning preferences, current level of language proficiency, and developing abilities. Specific skills included maintaining high expectations for students (“teachers should not ‘lower the bar’ just because they’re emergent bilinguals”) and creating effective learning environments (“Teachers need to make sure all children feel safe in welcome to improve learning outcomes”). However, these supportive teaching skills did not address EBs’ dynamic languaging practices.

Engage in bilingual approaches. Although most TCs said that teachers of EBs should be aware of typical characteristics of “just good teaching,” there were some TCs that noted the importance of bilingual approaches, including the use of languages other than English. A category throughout responses for this second open-ended question was the use of bilingual approaches. TCs stated that teachers “should know that students may need additional strategies to learn a concept like translating words or the version of the assignment in the child’s native language,” “should research how to teach students by trying to learn their language as well,” “should know several words in the child’s first/second language (the one he/she does not know),” and “shouldn’t force emergent bilinguals to only speak in English at all expenses.” One salient statement included advice: “You don’t have to cut out their first language completely in order to teach them the second language.”

The responses to this second open-ended question add to existing evidence that adoption of a translanguaging stance is often comprised of small, non-linear steps (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). That is, despite generic suggestions (i.e., “just good teaching) for teachers of EBs, TCs embraced some aspects of bilingualism beyond the linguistic, including social, cultural, and ideological. This means that even before experiencing an ESOL-focused teacher education course taught from a dynamic bilingualism perspective, TCs were already developing their translanguaging stances in that they recognized EBs as developing repertoires comprised of more than linguistic features. In this way, they were willing to see EBs as students with complex ways of being whose voices need to be centered (España & Yadira Herrera, 2020).

Overall, these pre-administration findings suggest that the TCs in this study initially expressed translanguaging stances that were accepting of bilingualism, just like their surrounding community, but that were not yet willing to see bilingualism as dynamic. However, I argue that they also engaged in transgressional thinking by recommending that teachers know their students as complex beings with diverse histories. In this way, TCs’ beliefs both reified and pushed back on the community’s inequitable values (Carter & Lynch, 2015). Their collective views of bilingualism reflected the mono-mainstream assumptions held in most schools (Babino & Stewart, 2020), wherein bilingualism is understood as equal and high proficiencies in two named languages. However, TCs’ desire for teachers of EBs to have a holistic understanding of their journeys, including linguistic and cultural backgrounds (España & Yadira Herrera, 2020), moved beyond

seeing EBs simply as learners of one named language and toward the concept of repertoire. Thus, these initial findings show tensions even within TCs' translanguaging stances (Henderson, 2017, 2020).

TCs' Subsequent Beliefs about Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

There was little change in TCs' beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education after one semester in an ESOL-focused teacher education course. This section presents the instances where change *was* documented in order to bring awareness to those aspects. In other words, this section of the findings focuses on the ways in which TCs strengthened their translanguaging stances: through a focus on a perspective of bilingualism that included dynamic use and the need for teachers to pay particular attention to EBs' languaging practices and the ways in which they are assessed.

Towards dynamic bilingualism. As was the case at pre-administration, the majority of TCs still characterized being bilingual as speaking more than one language, and fluency/proficiency in those languages continued to be a requisite for being bilingual. However, at post-administration, some TCs showed emerging beliefs of a more dynamic view of bilingualism. Whereas some combination of language skills and modes was a requirement at pre-administration, use of only one of those skills was requisite at post-administration. Fluency was also a prevalent theme in both administrations, but it was understood more dynamically at post-administration. TCs mentioned a greater number of aspects of bilingualism, going beyond simply mode and skill, including *exhibition of various and flexible proficiencies*, the *dynamic use of different language skills*, and the *advantageous nature of bilingualism*.

Exhibition of varying and flexible proficiencies. At post-administration, responses to “*What does it mean to be bilingual?*” were more inclusive, noting that any level of proficiency in two languages qualified. Some TCs used “some” to showcase their expanding understanding of bilingualism: “To be able to communicate in some form in another language,” “Speak some type of language either little bit or more,” and “When someone is bilingual, they have SOME knowledge of at most two languages.” Others made explicit mention of fluency or perfection: “To speak two or more languages but you don't have to be fluent in both languages to be bilingual,” “a certain level of fluency is not necessarily needed,” “To speak two languages (sic) but I personally do not believe you must be fluent or ‘perfect’ with both,” “A bilingual person does not necessarily need to know the two languages to perfection,” and “Perfect knowledge of any language, even for monolinguals, is not to be expected.” And others still chose to focus on proficiency, but with flexibility: “To be bilingual is to use two languages proficiently though degree of proficiency may differ between the languages,” and “To communicate in at least two languages to a variety of different levels.” Although proficiency was discussed in class, the notion of fluency was approached from a bilingual perspective. That is, an idea can be expressed fluently without adhering to only a specific set of linguistic features/one named language (e.g., English). It appears that some TCs may have begun to internalize the perspective that EBs' linguistic repertoire must be viewed holistically and not separated into one language or another (García & Wei, 2014).

Dynamic use of different language skills in two + languages. At post-administration, TCs mostly changed their use of connectors, adopting “or” instead of “and,” indicating a growing belief of the dynamic ways that bilinguals language. For example, responses included (with added emphases):

- To have an understanding and ability to express oneself in another language whether in reading, writing, **or** speaking

- It means being able to speak two or more languages **or** be able to read **or** write it.
- To be bilingual means to speak, read, **or** write in two or more languages.
- To speak two languages **or** read **or** write **or** understand two languages
- Speaking, comprehending, **or** writing in two languages. Or any of the above individually or in any combination.

I spent considerable time focusing on language as performance instead of language as proficiency (García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Through examples of his daughters' enactment of dynamic languaging (e.g., "She's chuping her dedo" to refer to a sister sucking her thumb), billboards (e.g., "Oye, my friend, aquí tenemos tu perfect match" referring to the car just right for the buyer) and bus stop signs (e.g., "Scratch parquear off your to-do list" for Lyft) marketing to the local bilingual community, and videos showing parents and teachers interacting bilingually with comprehending children/students, TCs were exposed and asked to comment on the ways that bilinguals translanguage. Observing and analyzing how bilinguals' knowledge and skills are dynamically developed may have influenced TCs' responses to this question.

Advantageous nature of bilingualism. In adopting a translanguageing stance, one firmly believes that EBs' bilingual practices are always positive and never a hindrance (García et al., 2017). At post-administration, TCs showed that being bilingual meant benefiting from a variety of advantages (Bialystok, 2011; Callahan & Gándara, 2014; de Jong, 2011; Rumbaut, 2014). As such, "Being bilingual means opportunity. Bilingualism is a gate to a more diverse future." For many, this was manifested in the meshing of two (or more) worlds, leading to greater understanding (Marian & Shook, 2012): "To me, personally as a bilingual person, it means having two worlds collide to become one" and "There's McDonalds, but there's also La Carreta [a well-known Cuban eatery], there's Coke but I also have Materva [a common soft drink]. There's Oprah and then there's Cristina. Being bilingual or multilingual means the world becomes my family."

TCs showed how they could use translanguageing as a descriptive lens through the examples of flexible languaging that they provided (Tian et al., 2020). TCs' responses showed how EBs' active role or agency and began to view language practices and languaging processes on their terms, not preconceived monolingual terms (Tian et al., 2020). Perhaps because the TCs were learning that EBs' languaging practices "cannot be compared to a prescribed monolingual use" (García, 2009, p. 51), they shared their understanding of bilingualism as complex, dynamic, and fluid.

Focusing on languaging practices and appropriate assessment. At the conclusion of the semester, TCs still highlighted the importance of understanding students' backgrounds, but with a more specific focus on language/bilingualism and fair assessment of EBs.

Leveraging flexible languaging practices. TCs made greater mention of intentional incorporation of two languages in instruction. They felt that "teachers should not try to stop a child from speaking in their native language" and "[shouldn't] be ashamed to integrate the student's first language," but "should try to embrace the student's first language and add on English because they will be bilingual learners." These statements were expanded upon, adding that "[teachers'] knowledge of other languages and/or cultures is a benefit to the student, teacher, and class" and that "know[ing] some of their language [will] help them," including "struggles within phonology, morphology, syntax" and "how their L1 influences their second language," such as "know[ing] some differences and similarities between English and the students' home languages, along with a few key words and phrases." Prior research (e.g., de Jong, 2011; Gort & Pontier, 2013; Pontier & Gort, 2016;

Valdés et al., 2015) has documented these practices as effective with and in support of EBs in developing bilingualism and biliteracy.

In identifying the need for a more strategic, nuanced, and natural way of languaging in classrooms (García & Sylvan, 2011; García et al., 2017; García et al., 2018; Gort & Pontier, 2013; Palmer et al., 2014; Pontier & Gort, 2016; Sayer, 2013), some TCs moved away from a deficit perspective of EB students. In fact, they showed evidence of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2017), emerging into a strengths-based perspective. This perspective is elucidated in the following responses:

- Just because a child cannot speak English doesn't mean they 'do not know anything' or are really behind. They just do not know the language they are being taught in yet (English).
- Just because the child does not know how to express his answer in English, does not mean he does not know the answer.
- Children may know how to say or do something in their home language but may not know how to show it in the language they are learning just yet.
- They may know the content being taught in class in their home language.
- That they are learning the English language however they may fully understand the content in their home language

Despite being an ESOL-specific course, I taught from a bilingual perspective, modeling and encouraging a translanguaged TESOL approach (Kleyn & García, 2019), always emphasizing what each topic meant for EBs and providing examples of how students developing differing language repertoires might enact their bilingualism. TCs also engaged in conversations around both their own experiences with language and what they observed in public school classrooms. As such, this “TESOL from a bilingual perspective” realization of class may have played a role in supporting TCs’ movement from a deficit orientation to a strengths-based perspective of bilingualism and bilingual education.

Leveraging appropriate assessment. TCs also noted the importance of assessment in working with EB learners. They showed an awareness that EB students may “just need extra support such as multiple assessments, experiences, and ways to express information” and/or “require more time to complete assignments in order to translate questions and answers for understanding and communication.” TCs suggested the use of authentic assessment, assessment in both languages, and a determination of whether language or content was being assessed to match these unique learning needs. Simply stated: “Teachers should know how to authentically assess their students as well as differentiate instruction in order to identify (sic) what the child knows and inform their lessons to meet the child’s needs.”

TCs’ responses may have changed from the beginning of the semester since they experienced an assessment unit at the conclusion of the methods stand-alone course and an emphasis on the use of rubrics to understand EBs’ bilingual speaking and writing development in the foundations course. In both cases, the use of authentic assessment was stressed and modeled, and TCs were expected to first focus on strengths, including bilingual development, when analyzing EB students’ language development. TCs showed how they could use translanguaging as a pedagogical lens through their calls for various types of assessment that would reflect EBs’ dynamic ways of languaging and knowing (Tian et al., 2020). Moreover, providing multiple opportunities for EBs to show what they know and can do by drawing on their entire semiotic repertoire highlights EBs’

agency and creativity as they make sense of complex material while TCs question the social hierarchies that typically stymie those same traits (Li Wei & Wu, 2009; Tian & Link, 2019).

Conclusion

This study adds to the literature by focusing on TCs' beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education, or their translanguaging stance. Although other studies included greater numbers of TCs in a suburban district recently impacted by increasing numbers of immigrant and refugee EBs (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004) and in-service teachers in regard to their teacher education preparation experience (Coady et al., 2011), the present study serves as example—albeit smaller—of current TCs' beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education in a large urban district characterized by multilingualism and multiculturalism, thus further demonstrating the potential of teacher education programs to be the impetus for effecting larger-scale change in our education systems.

When exposed to a perspective of dynamic bilingualism—one that visibly challenged prior experiences and beliefs—throughout their time in class, TCs began to speak of enhanced understanding of bilingualism and increased feelings of empowerment (both for themselves and others). That is, whereas before the confluence of many narratives and experiences from TCs' lives exerted a monolingual (and sometimes negative) influence on their perspective of bilingualism and bilingual education, the focal class may have played a role in disrupting those past patterns. In fact, as evidenced in TCs' change in beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education, it seems that their experience (a) in class through discussion, videos, readings, (b) out of class with friends and family, and (c) in the field placement where observations were conducted may have done just the opposite: begin to generate a more strengths-based bilingual perspective. As such, these TCs show the baby steps typical of developing a translanguaging stance (Menken & Sánchez, 2019).

It may be necessary to not only develop a more radical approach to designing and implementing teacher education courses that address the needs of EBs, but also to provide TCs with several meaningful and authentic opportunities to experience and engage in settings that accurately reflect scenarios that they are likely to encounter as future educators of EBs (Palmer & Martínez, 2013). Not all TCs demonstrated shifts from a deficit perspective to a strengths-based perspective. Still, we must recognize that TCs are being asked to transgress expectations/experiences that have been modeled for them for much of their lives (Henderson, 2017, 2020). When daily messages reify bilingualism as a high level of balanced proficiency in two languages and they are rewarded for expecting and enacting that perspective of bilingualism, shifts in stance may be hard to come by. In essence, they are being asked to unlearn what they have known (Pontier & Ortega, 2021; Pontier & Tian, in press) and to instead believe and act on something that may seem ideal (bilingualism as dynamic), but not real or practical (schools and employers might not accept bilingualism defined as flexible).

By showing changes in TCs' beliefs about bilingualism and bilingual education after having experienced an ESOL-specific course taught from a bilingual perspective, findings from this study support the growing body of research calling for purposeful revisions in the way that teacher education programs prepare TCs to work with EBs. Instructors in teacher education programs might consider ways in which they can provide similar experiences for their TCs. In doing so, teacher educators must check their own assumptions about TCs' stances before, during, and after engaging with them. For example, relying on the assumption that TCs' experiences and beliefs fully align with the surrounding community could lead to a deficit perspective. However, just as a

translanguaging stance calls for educators of EBs to see, value, and stand in solidarity with dynamic ways of languaging (España & Yadira Herrera, 2020), so too must teacher educators see, value, and stand in solidarity with TCs' dynamic and evolving translanguaging stances, which often already include strengths-based understandings of bilingualism and bilingual education.

Note

[1] TCs were only permitted to observe and interact with students in this grade range since their ESOL Endorsement only covered K-12.

About the Author

Ryan W. Pontier is an assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Florida International University. His research focuses on using a translanguaging lens to understand teachers' language ideologies and explore instructional practices in support of emergent bilingual students.

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Appendix A

Open-Ended Questions about Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

1. What does it mean to be bilingual?
2. What do you think teachers should know about emergent bilingual students in their classes?

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