

Interview

Navigating Linguistic Landscapes: An In-Depth Exploration of Translingual Literacies in Education

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In the realm of education and linguistics, the profound impact of linguistic diversity on learning experiences is an area of paramount importance. As educators, researchers, and advocates strive to create inclusive environments, understanding the complexities of language, identity, and power dynamics becomes pivotal. In this scholarly interview, we have the honor of engaging with Dr. Angie Zapata from the University of Missouri, a distinguished expert whose work has

significantly influenced the discourse surrounding linguistic diversity and inclusive education. Dr. Angie Zapata's insights highlight the significance of early childhood educators' critical awareness of young multilingual children. This awareness is essential for creating a classroom environment where critical encounters with language take place, allowing the students to honor their own multilingual and multidialectal identities.

Keywords: children's literature; inclusive education; multilingualism; picture book; translingualism

1. PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

Dr. Zapata's extensive expertise—rooted in her personal experiences growing up bilingual in Texas and teaching in multicultural settings—offers a unique perspective. Her journey as a daughter of immigrant parents and a bilingual individual shapes her profound insights, making her a trailblazer in the field. In this interview, we explore key themes that Dr. Zapata has passionately advocated for, including the importance of linguistic diversity and awareness, the transformative impact of multilingual literature, the intersection of language and power, and the significance of lifelong curiosity and professional development. Our conversation with Dr. Zapata delves into the nuanced variations of languages within diverse communities, challenging traditional perceptions and encouraging a deeper appreciation for linguistic differences. We explore the transformative potential of multilingual literature, examining how it fosters a sense of belonging and critical thinking among students. Dr. Zapata also leads us into the

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intricate intersection of language, identity, and power dynamics, urging us to critically analyze language representation and challenge existing societal structures.

When posed with the question of sharing background information or experiences regarding her interest in multilingual children's literacy, she provided the following response:

We're drawn to the work; it's an intellectual capacity, but we'd all be lying if we didn't say that there was also something deeply personal about the work. I grew up bilingual in Texas in both Spanish and English. I'm a daughter of immigrant parents from Peru. Growing up in Houston, teaching in Houston (such a global cosmopolitan city), I really heard many different languages and different varieties of Spanish, and I really was taken with how in particular it relates to Spanish, how different heritage countries, different regionalisms really compose a diverse linguistic repertoire within the Latinx community. It's so often lumped as one monolithic group, so to just learn and experience the diversity within this one language called "Spanish," and all the different varieties that exist within that was fascinating. So trying to teach little ones—to teach to read and write in Spanish, and how their distinct pronunciations really impacted their phonemic awareness and their spelling and their reading, I found it fascinating, and ultimately, I couldn't help but leave my time teaching with this very deep appreciation of how rich and distinct their vocabularies and their pronunciations were. It's a curiosity that just stayed with me and nudged me into my own work through graduate school and now as a teaching and research professor. I also experienced many transformative moments as an educator in multilingual multi-dialectal settings, both in the early childhood, early elementary setting but also in my higher education courses teaching undergraduate methods and graduate students and really both in Texas and now here in Missouri. When I flood the room with linguistically diverse picture books, it's really beautiful to see and experience the visceral responses! The joy, the surprise, especially among students who see their languages and lives represented in the books... The surprise and the joy and the awakening they feel to see it, to be able to hold it in a book and see their languages and lives in this form. It just immediately sets the scene for inquiry and discussion about identity and power- how languaging works, both in that written and visual form as well. It's a constant curiosity and experience for me that keeps me going in this work.

Dr. Zapata navigates the nuanced differences between "multilingualism," "multidialectalism," and "translingualism," unveiling the multifaceted layers of linguistic diversity. "Multilingualism" encompasses a repertoire of multiple languages, embracing a rich tapestry of regionalisms and expressions. In contrast, "multidialectalism" focuses on the coexistence of different dialects within a singular language, emphasizing the complexity inherent in language variations. Furthermore, "translingualism," as explored by Dr. Zapata, transcends written forms, extending into oral and multimodal compositions. It empowers multilingual and multidialectal individuals to seamlessly navigate diverse linguistic and modal resources, fostering effective communication and engagement.

In response to the inquiry about her definitions of translanguaging and multilingualism, and the choice to predominantly use "multilingual" in her work over "translanguaging," Dr. Zapata expressed the following perspective:

Multilingualism and translanguaging certainly complement one another, so we can see some folks use them, sometimes even interchangeably or synonymously or within the same context. When I think of the term multilingual, I think of what persists or exists in one's linguistic repertoire. In many ways, I think we're all multilingual. We all bring with us different languages, language varieties, regionalisms, ways with words that can pose that linguistic repertoire. I use the word multilingual to refer perhaps to the languages or language heritage work, and then I also use the word multidialectal to refer to those language varieties that can exist within “one language.” And I do believe we're constantly doing the work of shuttling across and through these different languages and language varieties which brings me to the word “translingual.” I tend to use the word translingual in my own work given my interest in composition, in particular. I'm interested in the ways we shuttle across and through different languages to compose not only on paper but to compose orally with our bodies and in different transmodal ways as well. So yes, I believe multilingual and multidialectal folks can engage in translingual literacies to do that work. So really, I stand on the shoulders of many who have done the work in translingual literacies before me. They tend to come from the field of rhetoric and composition like Suresh Canagarajah, Steve Fraiberg, Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu. But early on in my career when I was in your place as a graduate student, that was all very fresh work to a certain degree. To me, it was very fresh work. Early in my career, they really nudged me along in my work to really think about that fluid movement not only across languages and language varieties but also across modalities. I really appreciated having a theoretical construct and really a material ontology that would nudge me to think about language and multimodality or transmodality in relationship to one another.

2. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICES

Dr. Zapata advocates for a reconditioning of classroom environments, urging educators to resist monoglossic norms and instead embrace linguistic diversity authentically. She also addresses the importance of nurturing curiosity, promoting inclusivity, and challenging biases within educational settings, which in turn fosters genuine understanding and respect for various languages and cultures.

When posed with the question about implementing critical translingual approaches in early childhood classrooms, Dr. Zapata provided the following insights:

I had the opportunity just now to define what I meant by translingual approaches, and I want to say that “now,” I mean, we're almost 15 years later, you know, my thinking continues to evolve as I read, and I will say that I've layered in and taken up and learned from so many who are reminding me to take a critical orientation to this work. So, you'll see me really trying to take up and think with critical translingual literacies and pedagogies, and I really lean on the work of folks like Kate Seltzer and Cati V. de los Ríos who are exploring translingual literacies with racialized bi/multilingual youth in secondary settings. Through their work, we're really learning how we can appreciate the linguistic ingenuity and dexterity and flexibility multilingual youth really live out daily in their lives and how, through critical pedagogies, we can invite them to truly be critical ethnographers of their language. So really thinking—helping students to think about the relationship between language, identity, race, power as part of that work. I'm also very interested in the semiotics of it all—the materiality and meanings that

exist within that work, I'm like, "Oh my gosh!" I find myself continuing to think about the material and discursive realities that are also shaping and impacting their languaging experience and being more conscious of the ways languaging becomes a racialized practice.

So, in early childhood and in elementary settings what can we do to help young children develop better awareness of linguistic diversity? How can we help them develop a curiosity and an awareness of this linguistic diversity in ways that set them up for rich, critical conversations about language? I think and—especially in recent Language Arts column that I authored with Tasha Tropp Laman (2023) and in a previous Language Art article (2020)—I talk about reconditioning a new linguistic normal in the classroom, really reconditioning a new normal that resists that monoglossic, standardized-English-only learning landscape that begins to limit opportunities for our multilingual multidialectal youth. Children need to be able to access their own and other languages as well and understand that their own ways with words have value and have rigor as well. In this work, we point to shifting the linguistic and the modal landscape so that language isn't just taught in isolation, but also taught in relationship to authentic experiences with language through play, through rich read-alouds, through authentic opportunities where community and family come into school. So, it's not just the isolated standardized English phonics or curriculum that we see.

Also, we must be okay with launching language explorations with young children... I've observed and studied what happens when we offer a linguistically diverse picture book to children, they'll go, "What's that? I heard you say something other than English. What's that?" There's just a natural curiosity that sets a beautiful, again, authentic stage to say, "Well, let's talk about that. What do you notice? What do you hear?" There are different ways to say "hello." There are different ways to, you know, write "hello" in different languages, different scripts, different ways and just building that awareness through their own questions is wonderful. That's possible when we're open to launching those language explorations that students bring up.

Also, as a third point and final point from the articles, it will be important that we as teachers develop comfort with taking up those critical encounters that happen around language. When we begin to introduce different languages within a predominantly white-English-dominant space, we know that children will often replicate the same biased or stereotypical tropes that they hear in the world around them. In one of the classrooms that I had the opportunity to partner for research, one of the children realized that there was great social momentum and social capital in knowing a different language, but she identified as only having English. So, she picked up a bilingual book and kind of engaged in what some would call "mock Spanish" and just, you know, blabbered a little bit. The teacher had to stop and say, "Well let's talk about this." So not letting those moments go by but really stepping in [to] talk. "Who speaks that language and who gets to speak that language and what do you think about that? Are we making fun of the language? Or are we curious about it?" and being okay with digging deeper into those conversations, because children, young children, as we know, run circles around us when it comes to issues of fairness and justice. So, they're very capable of having those conversations. So really again, just pointing to those three tenants—shifting our modal and linguistic landscape in the classroom, launching language explorations, and really being open to the critical encounters that children offer us—are a great place to start.

Dr. Angie Zapata explores the intricate relationship between translanguaging practices and multimodal literacy. She delves into the complexities of understanding multimodal literacies, emphasizing the need to move beyond frozen interpretations of multimodal products. Drawing from theories like assemblage theory, she highlights the importance of capturing the dynamic processes and conditions involved in producing multimodal texts. Through a vivid classroom example, Dr. Zapata illustrates how various elements, including instruments, librettos, student bodies, and justice-oriented picture books, intertwine to create transmodal operas focused on social justice topics. She views translingual literacies as an integral part of this living arrangement, emphasizing their inseparable connection with identity, materiality, and racial bias.

In response to a question about her perspective on the potential correlation between translanguaging practices and multimodal literacies, Dr. Zapata responded:

You know, to better wrap my head around multimodal literacies in particular, I found I just wasn't satisfied with the theoretical lenses and analytic methods I was using—they weren't helping me really keep to the fidelity of what was happening in classrooms. Historically, what we've done often in multimodal literacy research (and I am thankful for it, and I have leaned on it heavily) is we tend to take multimodal products and freeze them and interpret them. I have questions about the conditions and the processes that were involved in producing those multimodal products. So, I have found theories, like assemblage theory to be a very powerful theory to think with and put in conversation with theoretical constructs like translingualism and transmodal literacies. Again, it just helps me really explore this process/product ongoing that I see happening in the classroom. So, for instance, in the article "Wearing Only Our Skin" (2022) we encounter a classroom where the materials and the discursive relationships produced a multimodal text. In this case students authored operas about social justice topics, but they didn't just happen, right? The classroom was really this lively space, this constellation of instruments, librettos, their bodies, children's pictures, justice-oriented picture books—the togetherness of all of these actors—their arrangement—what emerged were these beautiful transmodal operas where children were really focused and committed to a justice topic that was of importance to them. So, this fluid movement and entanglement that we experienced in this classroom as a living arrangement, I love that idea, [it] is really a metaphor for me and very similar to how I think we kind of move through and across and with different languages towards translingual literacies. This is clearly an ontological shift in my research that I am excited about. So, to me, translingual literacies are very much a part of that living arrangement. At this time, they are hard for me to separate, and I struggle to see how language is only taught in isolation when I see it so intertwined with identity, materiality, racial bias, and so many other discursive concepts.

Dr. Angie Zapata underscores the vital importance of cultivating culturally and linguistically responsive educational environments, specifically emphasizing the profound impact of translingual approaches.

When questioned about how translanguaging pedagogy supports the engagement of linguistically and culturally diverse children or emergent bi-/multilingual children in language and literacy learning, Dr. Zapata replied:

The research on what happens when we really cultivate a culturally and linguistically responsive space tells us that engagement increases, and when we have high engagement from students, we know that this has an impact on the kind of language used in reading literacy. So, for me, I was able to witness that the level of engagement that is there when we cultivate a translingual space, the curiosity, the joy and the affirmation that manifest when children hear and see their translingual lives portrayed in their classroom, it matters. So that for me is number one, engagement. And again, affirmation. Affirmation of their own ways with words, their ways of living and loving and being in the world, that's so affirming of their identities. To me that's very important, given what the research tells us about schooling being a harmful space for our racialized bilingual multilingual youth. Schooling too often subtracts our children of their home heritage languages, too often delegates them in really deficient ways, and just does not contribute to a positive schooling experience. So, [it] seems like an easy and 'no questions asked' consequence of the value of this work is affirming identities of children who don't often feel affirmed in schools. I think we also want to just in general create or nurture children who are going to contribute to a more just society. Through this work and through cultivating a linguistic awareness towards critical language awareness, they're developing a kind of cultural linguistic competency to resist racist monolingual values that privilege some and disenfranchise others. So, that's also at the heart of the benefit of this work as you said, and I've seen that among young children where they begin with the anecdote I just shared. I found that when they were reading, they would say "I'm really curious about this language. I don't want to make fun of this language. So, who can help me read this?" They begin to take up these dispositions with a commitment to affirming and not being biased in their work. This work offers us a powerful opportunity to nurture citizens who can contribute to this global and networked world we live in. The world is changing quickly in terms of the linguistic contact zones that are emerging. Children anywhere from across the globe are watching the same videos or the same cartoons that children in the United States are... despite the languages there, they're still able to read moving pictures. So, they're hearing different languages and language varieties which necessitates a capacity to be aware of linguistic diversity.

Dr. Angie Zapata offers valuable guidance for educators seeking to effectively integrate translingual picture books into the classroom setting. She emphasizes the significance of creating a translingual space in the classroom where students feel engaged, affirmed, and curious about their linguistic backgrounds.

Upon being asked about sharing practical strategies or activities for implementing translanguaging pedagogy in early childhood classrooms, Dr. Zapata provided the following response:

As teachers, we often draw on the literature collections we have access to. We draw on old favorites, and we share the same old favorites because we know it's our go-to and what it can do. So, we have a long history as educators of doing that, and so yes indeed, what can we do when we encounter picture books in particular that reflect different ways with words and we're not quite sure how to approach that? I think one of the things to think about as a teacher is first, reflect on how and why you're choosing to share this text. To share translingual texts and picture books in ways that really fulfill their promise as a transformative literary experience, we have to not just take it up in the very same ways that we always have. That is, we can't just grab *Dear Primo* by Duncan Tonatiuh and say "Okay, now let's find the main idea or who is the

main character.” If we do that, we miss the opportunity to dig deeper into the translingual life, the transnational life that’s reflected in both the language and in the illustrations. So, first, why am I sharing this book? What kinds of conversation do I hope might emerge? Where are thoughtful moments where I might stop and say, “Let’s talk about this page a little bit.” Taking time to do that and reflect on your own orientation as a critical social educator is key. Otherwise, the experience can really fall flat, and we miss out on those opportunities and can also potentially cause harm if we’re not mindful of the potential tropes or stereotypes that might emerge in conversation because of the book. So thoughtful planning and reflection on your own orientation as a critical social educator is key before you enter.

As you are sharing a translingual picture book, being open to the questions and the noticing and the responses that children have is going to be important. Especially any attention they draw to representations of different skin shades, to different representations of language variety. We need to be open to those questions. Certainly, we can’t take every one of them up, we know. But we can also hold onto children’s noticing and questions and come back to those conversations if we don’t feel ready or if we don’t have time. But really being open to those discussions will be key.

Then in the after part, this is [where] we don’t tend to get to because we’re so busy and we’re trying to move on to our schedule, but really finding a moment to reflect and really have a pointed conversation about the translingual life and language that’s represented in both the picture and in the words. “Let’s stop and talk about this double-page spread.” Here, I’ve had teachers even scan the double-page spread and project it on the big screen so that the little ones can go up and touch and see the illustration with more detail, and they want to talk about those things. So really taking a moment to slow down, hold still a particular moment of translingual life that’s there for discussion with children because they can, and they will talk about those things. So, there’s kind of a before-during-after sequence that the teacher collective that I work with has developed. We’re working right now to put out a kind of a bit of a protocol that folks can individualize for their own work. Critical to that work was us really reflecting on the purpose for sharing these books, reflecting on our critical orientation as a social educator, and then also kind of stopping and having that pointed discussion about translingual life. And one of the things we noticed is it’s very difficult to do all of that in one day or in one setting.

I’m thinking about the teachers and the children, and what really emerged in their picture book reading is often when we share picture book read-alouds, we are so focused on the narrative that we tend to focus on the printed text. So, inviting children to be picture readers is so essential to reading a picture book. There is so much translingual life that is portrayed in the visual narrative as well, in the illustration where children can see the relationship between language and skin shade, and language and dress, and language and the community landscape and the land. So, it’s such an opportunity to challenge and critique stereotypes—for example, that folks who speak Spanish only wear braids. It’s just such an opportunity to challenge and resist some of those stereotypes that they encounter around language.

Dr. Angie Zapata discusses several key strategies for effectively incorporating translingual picture books into educational settings. She emphasizes the importance of curating a diverse collection of translingual picture books. She also advocates for language study focused on language awareness rather than rigid correction.

When discussing strategies that teachers can implement in their classrooms, Dr. Zapata suggested:

The first thing that comes to mind is what many call a “book flood.” Once you build a really thoughtful collection of translangual picture books that have authentic representations, nuanced representations, so wide and varied representation of language—what does it mean to offer a really open space for children to read, picture read, and partner read this collection? It's really focused on an aesthetic experience with the text in the spirit of Louise Rosenblatt—having that transaction with a picture book in ways that we're not just looking for one answer where children can ask questions and notice and just experience. We found that to be a critical, absolutely essential time for children to have rich discussions later about books. Because through the book flood, later children will say, “Ooh that's like the book *Under My Hijab*,” and that was a book that they spent time with in the book flood. So that's just essential. Having immersive, aesthetic experiences with the text is really essential.

Planful read-aloud—so much like I just discussed—is important. Taking time to move through a process of planning thoughtfully to engage in a read-aloud of these translangual picture books is essential. For example, pairing picture books together, or pairing picture books with a podcast or with a chapter book. These planful read-alouds are really rich opportunities for students to talk across texts and their noticing about language.

Language study with young children, as I shared just a bit ago, is also powerful. Really being open to inviting children to notice that there are different ways with words (rather than just going straight to correcting) is so important. For example, I grew up in Texas and one of the things we say quite a bit is “fixin’ to.” I’m “fixin’ to” go to the store. I’m “fixin’ to” get in the car, and that's just part of our language. So, when we correct children and say, “That's wrong. You need to say ‘fixing to,’” we're actually telling children, “Your family's wrong. Your family is saying it wrong. Your community is saying it wrong.” So, what might it mean to step into language study to cultivate language awareness? “Fixing to,” there's lots of different ways to say, “fixing to,” to communicate the same thing. Let's gather them all on a chart. “Fixin’,” “fixing to,” “going to,” “I’m gonna.” Let's collect them all, just so they can visually see and notice how many different ways we can say the same thing. Afterwards, talk about fixing and when different folks spell it, “fixin’ to” or “fixing to” and the differences they see/hear. So, we're not setting up a compare and contrast that says this one's better than this one, rather we're really cultivating a space where they're building language awareness that shows different ways we say words and use expressions.

I think this kind of language study is far more complex, and far more intellectually demanding than just saying, “Please just replicate this form,” “Please just write ‘fixing.’” Language study is so much more demanding, and children are capable of doing this. We've witnessed this through the research that we're doing. So, I think that's powerful, and I don't think it is in tension with learning phonemes and graphemes in standardizing English as well. I think actually it pairs quite nicely.

Another practical approach is really tapping into and building reciprocal partnerships with families and communities—such an asset to bring our families and our communities into the classroom. That can serve as guest readers. That can serve as important partners for community literacies, watching them display their translangual life, and in really authentic ways as a powerful model. And then, of course at the heart

of this, another practical approach is, as educators, we have to continue to revisit our work as critical social educators. Those constant appointments to assess ourselves and think and reflect on “Where are we? What experiences have I had so far? How have my beliefs changed? How do my practices reflect those beliefs?” It’s good that’s at the heart of it.

In the latest article, Dr. Angie Zapata highlights the intriguing intersection of technology and resistance within the classroom, particularly in the context of adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID recovery phase. Teachers, including Dr. Zapata herself, are increasingly embracing digital technologies as a means to challenge the monolithic nature of traditional classrooms:

One of the things—especially as we enter into this COVID recovery season—we find our teachers are feeling, including me, feeling more comfortable with finding ways to integrate digital technologies into their work and what that affords. So, again, once we move beyond a print, a standardized English print environment, so many other possibilities are available that, again, resist this print standardized English opportunity. We know what happens when we put and provide thoughtful opportunities for children to engage with iPads to make... when, if you pair that with mentorship in how to compose a translingual life, gosh, amazing, amazing picture books that children get to make online are beautiful. We have a beautiful article that we hope will come out soon where a child has an illustration from the picture book *Yo Soy Muslim*, and the child is looking at the phenotype of the character that’s portrayed there. So, in the picture book, we see the roundness of the character’s face and the almond shaped eyes and the darker skin shade. And then the girl has her iPad open with the camera where she looks at herself a little bit more. So, she’s putting the two next to each other and she’s really having this powerful moment where she says, “Hey, that’s me! I see myself in the picture book and on the iPad.” So, you know, again, these possibilities that emerge because we’ve shifted into this transmodal literacy landscape where children can dig deeper into these critical and transformative moments is really exciting to see.

3. CHALLENGES, COLLABORATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In her interview, Dr. Angie Zapata sheds light on the formidable challenges faced by early childhood and elementary educators striving to integrate translingual pedagogies into their classrooms. These challenges are especially pronounced given the deeply ingrained monolingual values and the prevailing focus on phonics-based instruction and scripted curricula.

Upon being asked about the challenges or obstacles educators might encounter when incorporating translanguaging pedagogy in their classrooms and seeking suggestions for overcoming them, Dr. Zapata shared:

This is a really difficult time for early childhood and elementary educators interested in this work. I mean, first we have already a very long history of here, and I’ll speak here in the United States, but this very long history of monolingual values

standardizing English-only movement that are deeply tied to white supremacist, racist ideologies that shape our policies and mandates and adopted curriculums in schools and in early childhood settings. So that's just a long-time obstacle.

But on top of that, currently, many early childhood and early elementary teachers are also facing a sociopolitical landscape that has begun to limit their instruction. With this growing emphasis on phonics-only as the panacea to grow readers, teaching language in isolation, scripted schedules, adopted scripted curriculum, adopted materials... it begins to limit the pedagogies and approaches that teachers can use to do translanguaging literacy work. So, I think to address your question [of] how teachers can face these and begin to incorporate translanguaging pedagogies, is to first understand that we're not alone. We don't have to do this work by ourselves. Reaching out to colleagues and building your squad within your school is so important. Looking beyond that as well. If you're not finding collaborators in your school, looking into your city community—there are so many teacher groups that exist right now, especially if you are fortunate enough to be in a university town. But also, what a fascinating time to be part of a collective in a virtual space as well. Through social media, through other online national organizations, [there are] so many webinars and communities to be a part of to really develop and grow your resources to do this work and navigate that. So, I think that's at the heart of navigating these difficult times. You have to remember that you're not alone.

We've also seen... witnessing now teachers just resisting, resisting, and finding ways and working within and beyond the constraints that they're under. But I think whether it's substituting a translanguaging picture book in lieu of the one that's been adopted to invite these conversations, or using after school spaces, or using those in-between moments as they can to do this work, it all matters. It all adds up actually. Something, too, to think about is this work doesn't just happen in your language arts or literacy block. It is part of your day. If it's part of what you believe, if it's part of your belief system as a teacher, this work can permeate across the day, not just in a wonderful space.

Dr. Angie Zapata stresses the importance of two-way reciprocal partnerships with families and communities. When inquiring about suggestions on how teachers can effectively collaborate with families and communities to support the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy in their own classrooms, Dr. Zapata responded:

First of all, bringing them in for read-alouds or songs that reflect their own ways with words is a number one. Having them audio record those and putting that in the listening station with the enlarged script for shared reading too is very powerful so that, again, that translanguaging life is reflected in both a print-rich and highly multimodal environment. So, again, shifting to that translanguaging classroom includes seeing language not only in print and visual but also auditory and embodied ways.

Always looking for two-way, reciprocal partnerships with families I think is important. What ideas do families have? And communities have? It doesn't always have to just come from you. What they see is a contribution they can make to the translanguaging learning that's happening in their classroom.

Family workshops where families work with children to document their stories, maybe make a podcast together, record songs or make picture books together that reflect their translanguaging life, or create, make, sing, play together with their translanguaging

literacies would be beautiful. What does that look like? It's as simple as inviting families to come in. There's also so many different oral storytelling traditions that I think have yet to be explored in early literacy classrooms. Oral storytelling practices that reflect different communities, different heritage countries as well, and what that work looks like in an early childhood classroom.

In response to the inquiry about recommended political frameworks or perspectives for early career scholars navigating today's multilingual world, Dr. Angie Zapata provides insightful recommendations based on her expertise. Her perspective also encourages a deep understanding of the relationships among language, materiality, and discourse, advocating for a holistic approach that recognizes their intertwined nature. When we inquired about recommendations for early career scholars in today's multilingual world, Dr. Zapata shared insights on the preferred political framework or perspective:

I mean, the first theoretical framing that comes to mind is Ofelia García's work and her colleagues' work on translanguaging and the translanguaging corriente. I think that really captures the forces and flows that are involved in a translingual life. I also love the work—you know this is my preference—on critical translingual literacies. So many are beginning to also layer in that needed attention to the relationships among language, identity, power, and can't ignore race in particular as well. And then more recently, I'm interested in the work around translingual assemblages. That's emerging right now, and I think again it really captures for me the dynamism of language, material, the discursive in relationship to one another, and really keeps to the fidelity of the vitality and vibrancy of that work rather than just holding it still and freezing it. It keeps to the liveliness, the reality of it, I think. But again, that's based on my own research questions. There's so many other frameworks to think about. I'm drawn currently to relational ontologies. Ontologies that really nudge to think about the relationships among language and material in the discursive. Historically, we've treated them as separate in research. We've placed languaging and material practices in conversation and put them next to each other, but we have not truly embraced them as intertwined.

In summary, Dr. Angie Zapata's insights underscore the importance of embracing linguistic diversity, promoting critical awareness, and integrating technology to create inclusive and empowering educational spaces. Her perspectives highlight the need for educators to continually reflect on their practices and engage students in transformative learning experiences that honor their multilingual and multidialectal identities.

THE AUTHORS

Angie Zapata is an Associate Professor at the Department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum at the University of Missouri. Her scholarship centers anti-oppressive and justice-oriented language and literacies experience in the classroom that nurtures more inclusive schooling experiences for racialized bi/multilingual/multidialectal children and youth. Throughout collaborative inquiry partnerships with practicing and inservice PK-12 teachers, her research highlights classroom experiences featuring picture books

with diverse representation, and how/what translingual and transmodal literacies are produced in these moments.

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