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Research Article

We Been Bilingual: A Critical Literature Review on Creating Space for African American Language in Bilingual Education

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The current dichotomy of many Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) programs hinges on engaging equal groups of students of two linguistic backgrounds in literacy and content instruction through two languages, a partner language (often Spanish) and English. However, this program structure promotes an incomplete view of the student population, which further marginalizes the Black student population who are literate in African American Language and standardized English. Further, understanding that language is inextricably connected to identity, one of the simplest yet most controversial ways to heal Black children in P-12 settings and beyond would be through acknowledging the legitimacy of, teaching about, and encouraging dialogue in African American Language (AAL) in the dual-language classroom. In this systematic literature review, using a critical lens, we examined the intersection of literature discussing AAL and translanguaging, using the historic 1996 Ebonics debate as an entry point and extending our literature search through 2024. The findings suggest that translanguaging can be effective for all students when their full linguistic repertoires are accessed and honored, restraints on English that present a native/non-native binary should be eliminated, and bilingual education programs must embrace rather than silence Black students. Moreover, the crux of translanguaging and AAL offers a metaphor for the lack of respect and naming of AAL and its conventions and literacies. Overlooking this Black Language reality further marginalizes Black multilingual students and their linguistic genius, creating space for linguistic racism and discrimination. These discriminatory realities actively deny Black multilingual youth the linguistic justice (Baker-Bell, 2020) they deserve.

Keywords: African American language; bilingual education; Black multilinguals; multilingualism; translanguaging

1. INTRODUCTION

The United States of America's education system was neither built nor intended to provide support for Black and Brown students. From its inception, the United States has taken advantage of every opportunity to exclude non-white students from receiving a quality education (Dunn, 1993; Rabaka, 2003). Through the use of its Eurocentric curriculum and exclusionary practices, this nation has consistently sent the message

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that Black students are less valued, intelligent, and deserving than white students (Boutte, 2016; Perry et al., 2003). During the era of "separate but equal," students of color lacked tangible resources, which limited their educational experiences; however, Black students in schools led by Black educators received quality education that focused on their whole being even though they had fewer academic resources (Groves, 1951).

Two pivotal African American educational philosophers emerged in response to systemic injustice: Frederick Douglass, a formerly enslaved man who became famous for his autobiography in which he detailed his life as a slave, his road to literacy, and his belief that all could be educated; and W.E.B. DuBois, who is most famous for his conceptualization of the "talented tenth," an assertion that only about ten percent of African Americans would go on to pursue higher education (Dunn, 1993; Rabaka, 2003). Their philosophies significantly influenced the advancement of African American education throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The groundbreaking Brown v. Board of Education ruling on May 17, 1954 made desegregation in public schools unconstitutional and gave students access to resources they had previously been denied in racially segregated schools while simultaneously robbing them of their culture (Rabaka, 2003; Stikkers, 2008). With the integration of schools, Black children were subjected to a curriculum that was never meant for them and forced to learn a language that was not their own.

Even after the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education, students of color were still unable to receive a quality education because they were merely inserted into schools with pre-existing curricula that were not created with them in mind (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Thus, students received a less robust education because they were forced to leave their personhood, particularly their Blackness, behind when at school (hooks, 1994). Although integration was presented as a means of leveling the playing field for all students, it was detrimental to the Black students because it forced students to assimilate in harmful ways, leading them to neglect their cultural identities in efforts to become less *other*. These efforts have caused Black students to experience curricular trauma that requires healing.

Since language and identity are inextricably bound, one of the simplest yet most controversial ways to heal Black children in P-12 settings and beyond would be through acknowledging the legitimacy of, teaching about, and encouraging dialogue in African American Language (AAL) in the dual-language classroom. AAL refers to "the language system characteristically spoken in the African American community" (Nieto, 1996, p. 389) and demonstrates an unrelenting, undeniable relationship to West African languages (Green, 2002; Nieto, 1996; Smith, 1998). For many Black students, AAL is their home language in much the same way that Spanish is the home language of Latinx students. Thus, for Black students to ever feel connected to and included in the curriculum, educators must make content relevant to their cultural experience by uplifting rather than denigrating the use of their language—the language of home, family, community, joy. By integrating the study and use of AAL into bi- and

multilingual classrooms, teachers can educate Black and non-Black students about its legitimacy and value. This helps reduce the stigma around AAL while simultaneously highlighting and celebrating Black linguistic brilliance.

The current dichotomy of many DLBE programs hinges on engaging equal groups of students from two linguistic backgrounds in literacy and content instruction through two languages, a partner language (e.g., Spanish, French, Chinese) and English. For example, in Spanish/English programs, the majority of the student population consists of emergent bilinguals with linguistic repertoires that include Spanish and English, and monolingual English speakers. This program structure, however, offers an incomplete view of the student population, which further marginalizes the Black student population who are literate in African American Language and standardized English.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and LangCrit (Crump, 2014) provide possible explanations for the systemic exclusion of Black students from DLBE programs. LangCrit is a critical framework for language studies that builds on foundations laid by CRT. Like CRT, it recognizes that racism is deeply embedded in everyday society and structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). LangCrit extends this lens to examine how language, race, and identity intersect to shape individuals' lived experiences and possibilities. And while translanguaging (Garcia & Lin, 2016; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Williams, 1994), an encouraged teaching approach and linguistic practice that invites multilingual speakers to use their full linguistic repertoires, has permeated bilingual education programs and scholarship in recent decades, similar to the DLBE program structure, it was not developed and is not currently practiced with the language practices of Black multilingual students in mind. Therefore, this systematic literature review, using a critical lens, examines how translanguaging has historically failed to include speakers of AAL while also exploring the greater impact that DLBE could have on Black students if their full linguistic repertoires were acknowledged and leveraged for language learning.

2. AUTHORS' POSITIONALITIES

Tempestt is a Black bilingual educator whose home language is African American Language and has general knowledge of pronunciation, phonemic awareness, and key phrases in Mandarin Chinese. She is a certified English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor, has taught EFL in China, and is certified to teach English Language Arts (grade 6 through 12) teacher who also holds a terminal degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She is a former university lecturer/EFL instructor and high school ELA and EFL instructor in China and ELA teacher stateside. Her research agenda focuses on the lived experiences of Black girls and women, African American Language in terms of bilingualism, and the lived experiences of Black girls and women and dance.

Reka is a Black bilingual educator, and her linguistic repertoire includes AAL, Spanish, and English. She learned Spanish through childhood friends, public school foreign language courses, university-level Spanish courses, and international travel inclusive of local cultural and linguistic immersion. She is a former dual language program teacher. Her research agenda focuses on Black Girl Multilinguals—Black girls who are adding Spanish to their linguistic repertoire through dual language programming.

Evelyn is a second-generation Ugandan-American doctoral student whose linguistic repertoire includes AAL, English, Luganda, and French. A daughter of Ugandan immigrant parents, she learned and continues to improve her Luganda through conversations with her family and learned French through private school foreign language courses, university-level French courses, and her study abroad program. Her research agenda centers the literacies, language practices, and identity negotiation of Black immigrant and transnational students across home, school, and community spaces.

3. AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE (AAL)

As previously mentioned, AAL refers to "the language system characteristically spoken in the African American community" (Nieto, 1996, p. 389) and demonstrates an unrelenting, undeniable relationship to West African languages (Green, 2002; Nieto, 1996; Smith, 1998). Although deficit beliefs surrounding AAL exist, there is documented research spanning seven decades (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Baker-Bell, 2020; Baugh, 1983, 1999, 2005; Boutte, 2007; Green, 2002; Kinloch, 2010; Labov, 1972; Lippi-Green, 2012; Mufwene, Rickford et al., 2022; Rickford & Rickford, 2007; Smitherman, 1981, 1986, 1994, 2006, 2022; Wolfram, 1969, 1991) affirming AAL to be a "systematic and rule-governed" language (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2022, p. 113) that dictates the rules for "sounds, grammar, meaning, and social use" within the language (Boutte, 2022, p. 148).

Over the years, AAL has been referred to by many names, including African American English, African American Vernacular English, Black English, Black Language, and Ebonics. Of the names that AAL has gone by, Ebonics was the most controversial because of the Oakland School Board's decision to incorporate it into their curriculum in efforts to aid Ebonics speakers to acquire "mastery of Standard English" (Linguistic Society of America, 1997). Although John R. Rickford along with other linguists presented a research-based argument for inclusion of Ebonics in the classroom drawing from efforts such as the 1997 resolution for the Linguistic Society of America that Rickford helped draft (Rickford, 1999), lawmakers and the public were against it because they believed its inclusion would reinforce or justify the use of "bad English" (Peterson, 2020). In the Linguistic Society of America's Resolution on the Oakland "Ebonics" Issue, the following was resolved:

> Whereas there has been a great deal of discussion in the media and among the American public about the 18 December 1996 decision of the Oakland School Board to recognize

> the language variety spoken by many African American students and to take it into account in teaching Standard English, the Linguistic Society of America, as a society of scholars engaged in the scientific study of language, hereby resolves to make it known that:
>
> a. The variety known as "Ebonics," "African American Vernacular English" (AAVE), and "Vernacular Black English" and by other names is systematic and rule-governed like all natural speech varieties. In fact, all human linguistic systems—spoken, signed, and written—are fundamentally regular. The systematic and expressive nature of the grammar and pronunciation patterns of the African American vernacular has been established by numerous scientific studies over the past thirty years. . .
>
> b. The distinction between "languages" and "dialects" is usually made more on social and political grounds than on purely linguistic ones. For example, different varieties of Chinese are popularly regarded as "dialects," though their speakers cannot understand each other, but speakers of Swedish and Norwegian, which are regarded as separate "languages," generally understand each other. . . (Rickford, 1999, no pagination)

Yet, rather than believing research, politicians, stakeholders, and even teachers believed in a narrative governed by -isms that excluded people of color, particularly Black people. Due to negative press and assumptions about Black language and Black people during the 1996 Ebonics debate "most educators do not realize that AAL is a legitimate, rule-governed language system" (Boutte, 2022, p. 144; Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Boutte & Johnson, 2012, 2013). In turn, because the major voices were calling it bad, Ebonics was mislabeled as a substandard variety of language rather than a language governed by its own rules. As a result, this has caused Americans—African Americans and others—to view any allusion to this language, regardless of name, as less than. However, when teacher education programs begin to instruct pre-service teachers how to identify anti-Black linguistic racism (Baker-Bell, 2020) and produce curriculum that speaks to the whole student, then society will gain the resources it needs to embrace AAL, and this will be the first step towards finally embracing Black people.

4. DUAL LANGUAGE AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

DLE[1] studies have provided evidence that students in DLE, no matter what their home language, outperform their counterparts in traditional classrooms, maintain higher levels of reading performance, and are more empathetic and knowledgeable about people who are different from them (Thomas & Collier, 2004). In addition, DLE students have higher lifelong cognitive benefits, better problem-solving skills, and increased marketability and job opportunities (Thomas & Collier, 2004; Steele et al., 2017).

[1] For the purposes of this paper, we do not create a harsh distinction between DLE and BE. While we know nuances and use of the terminology exist, those nuances are not necessary for the objectives of this literature review. Both bilingual and dual language were used in the search processes that inform this paper.

While multiple proponents of dual language for all have pioneered the initiative of "dual language for all" and "multilingualism for all," who is actually included in the *all?* For many years this initiative and languaging have only included the Brown and white binary, filling dual language classrooms across the country with the Latinx Spanish language speakers and white monolingual English speakers. It is highly uncommon, outside of Valdes' (1997, 2002) multiple cautionary notes and questioning, to even see Black multilinguals referenced in the research and literature around DLE programming, and this invisibility is also present in the enrollment of two-way dual language education (TWDLE) school sites. Since Valdes' 2018 analysis of her two previous cautionary notes, many more scholars have entered this conversation from many different angles and perspectives. Dorner et al. (2020) center their conversation on African-American youth in dual language programming, and one finding from the study is that DLE "leaves out a discussion of the rich language varieties and histories of Black America"' (Dorner et al., 2020, p. 101). So, while more scholars are entering this space, much of the conversation still highlights the invisibility of Black students and the gaping void in the research.

The invisibility of Black students in the literature is present every time an article references the student population of English speakers and Spanish speakers or the dichotomy of the white and Latinx student populations. For example, it is present in Parkes' (2008) quantitative study, in which 400 parents were surveyed about the factors that contributed to choosing a dual language program for their children. Many of the white parents saw the benefits of being bilingual and the future assets it could bring their child. Some parents also talked about the benefits of meeting, learning, and understanding others. Most Latinx parents talked about the need for preservation of the heritage language of the family and for their children to be able to converse with their grandparents and extended family. While this study gave some insight into the benefits of dual language and parents' knowledge of these benefits, this study was also limited, as it seemed to consist of an overwhelming majority of white and Latinx families, which does not account for underrepresented minoritized groups in DLE.

The stratified approach to acknowledging and documenting the expansion and growth of DLE continues to fuel inequities in funding and services for Black children and their schooling communities. A significant part of this problem is the oversimplification of Black children's identity as solely English speakers. This dismisses their true linguistic identities and groups them into homogenous American or Western cultural classifications, effectively distancing them from their cultural inheritances. This is particularly harmful given the reality of AAL, a cornerstone of Black linguistic heritage which is often treated as inferior or nonexistent in the United States.

5. TRANSLANGUAGING WITHIN SPANISH, ENGLISH AND AAL

With its origins in Cen Williams' (1994) Welsh term *trawsieithu* referencing pedagogical practices of bilingual students in Welsh/English classrooms who "alternate[d] languages for the purpose of receptive and productive use" (Garcia & Lin, 2016, p. 2), the term translanguaging has been a part of the zeitgeist of bilingual education, transforming in meaning with subtle and not-so-subtle exclusions of particular languages. Though it is epistemologically related to code-switching, given their rejection of the isolation of languages, code-switching is sometimes viewed less favorably (Baker-Bell, 2020; Young & Barrett, 2018) and considered an illegitimate teaching strategy. Although code-switching incorporates students' various languages, translanguage purists see it as problematic when working with students who speak minoritized languages for fear that the students' language(s) will "contaminate" the named state and/or national languages (Otheguy et al., 2015).

The primary difference between code-switching and translanguaging is conceptual. Code-switching requires switching from one language to another and back, relying more heavily on one's primary language, while translanguaging, as Garcia and Wei (2014) explain, involves the speaker's "construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another definition of language, but that make up the speaker's complete language repertoire" (p. 22). Translanguaging scholars (e.g., Auer, 2005; Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 2005), therefore, argued that code-switching encourages monoglossic views of bilingual speakers having two *separate* language systems, while translanguaging views bilinguals as heteroglossic with integrated linguistic systems. Garcia (2009) to some extent agrees that translanguaging goes beyond code-switching because translanguaging emphasizes "the *process* by which bilingual students perform bilingually in the myriad multimodal ways of classrooms" (Garcia & Lin, 2016, p. 5, emphasis original). For our purposes, however, views of translanguaging feel shallow because without the universal recognition of African American Language as a named language, barriers are perpetuated as the hegemony of Standardized English disregards this linguist-supported language as a dialectal system or a linguistic variation of English.

Though translanguaging is a useful tool in educating bilinguals, we would like to problematize its use in bilingual classrooms given its focus primarily on named languages, which represent languages that have been recognized as *standard* in myriad spaces and are usually backed by a national military. This work aims to move from the earlier understandings in the field of education and towards Canagarajah's (2011b) and Garcia and Lin's (2016) understandings of translanguaging less as a pedagogical strategy and more in line with what linguists would call the theoretical perspective of translanguaging, "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 281).

It is not uncommon to see translanguaging in the literature appear with English and other named languages; however, the disconnect or gap occurs when we search for translanguaging at the crux of Blackness and African American Language. It is for this reason that we conducted a systematic literature review from a critical lens—specifically incorporating components of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and more precisely, LangCrit (Crump, 2014)—to review literature over the past thirty years that seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How are multilingual speakers with one of their languages being AAL identified in the literature? 2) What does literature say about the intersection between translanguaging and AAL?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Database Search Strategy

We conducted a preliminary search using Google Scholar to gain a general understanding of the existing literature on "translanguaging." The results of that search yielded 98 pages of results before a “Server Error” message appeared. The next keyword search, “translanguaging + AAL,” had 10 pages of results but less than one page of relevant articles. Finally, we used the keywords “translanguaging + African American Language,” which yielded one page of relevant articles out of 100 pages, but encountered a “Server Error” after page 98. The search explored topics related to translanguaging and language and Africa.

Next, we conducted several successive searches using the same search strings outlined above via the following databases: Academic Search Ultimate, Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Premier, APA PsycInfo, Chicano Database, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), Education Index Retrospective: 1929-1983 (H.W. Wilson), Education Source, ERIC, Family & Society Studies Worldwide, Professional Development Collection, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Race Relations Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX with Full Text, Teacher Reference Center, Urban Studies Abstracts, and Women’s Studies International.

Table 2 below shows our systematic keyword search, including databases used, limitations, and date range. In the table, you will see that when grouping databases using different search criteria, they yielded the following results based on different keyword searches: (a) Translanguaging and AAL yielded 2 results; (b) Translanguaging + African American Language with no limitations or date range yielded 51 results; (c) Translanguaging + African American Language with the limitation that it had to be peer-reviewed but with no date range yielded 45 results; (d) Translanguaging + African American Language with peer-reviewed limitation and date range of 1996 to 2024, yielded 47 results; and (e) Black Language + Translanguaging with no limitations or

date range, yielded 50 results. We repeated this process through the ERIC databases, switching between the EBSCO and ProQuest interfaces.

Using EBSCOhost, we searched the terms “translanguaging” and “African American Language “ as well as the abbreviation “AAL” and “translanguaging” and “Black Language” (see Table 1). We recognize that the associated terms (e.g., African American Vernacular English, Black English, Ebonics) are also used to reference AAL and Black Language, but we attained the highest amount of search results with the terms “AAL” and “Black Language”. Ultimately the resulting data set contained 47 publications.

Table 1. Literature Search Details

Database	Keyword Search	Limited To	Date Range	Number of Results
(EBSCO) Academic Search Ultimate, Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Premier, APA PsycInfo, Chicano Database, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), Education Index Retrospective: 1929-1983 (H.W. Wilson), Education Source, ERIC, Family & Society Studies Worldwide, Professional Development Collection, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Race Relations Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX with Full Text, Teacher Reference Center, Urban Studies Abstracts, and Women’s Studies International	Translanguaging and AAL	N/A	N/A	2
	Translanguaging + African American Language	N/A	N/A	51
	Translanguaging + African American Language	Peer reviewed	N/A	45
	Translanguaging + African American Language	Peer reviewed	1996 - 2024	47
	Black Language + Translanguaging	N/A	N/A	50
ERIC	Translanguaging	N/A	1996 - 2024	696
ERIC	Translanguaging and AAL	N/A	N/A	0
ERIC (EBSCO interface)	Translanguaging + African American Language	N/A	N/A	5

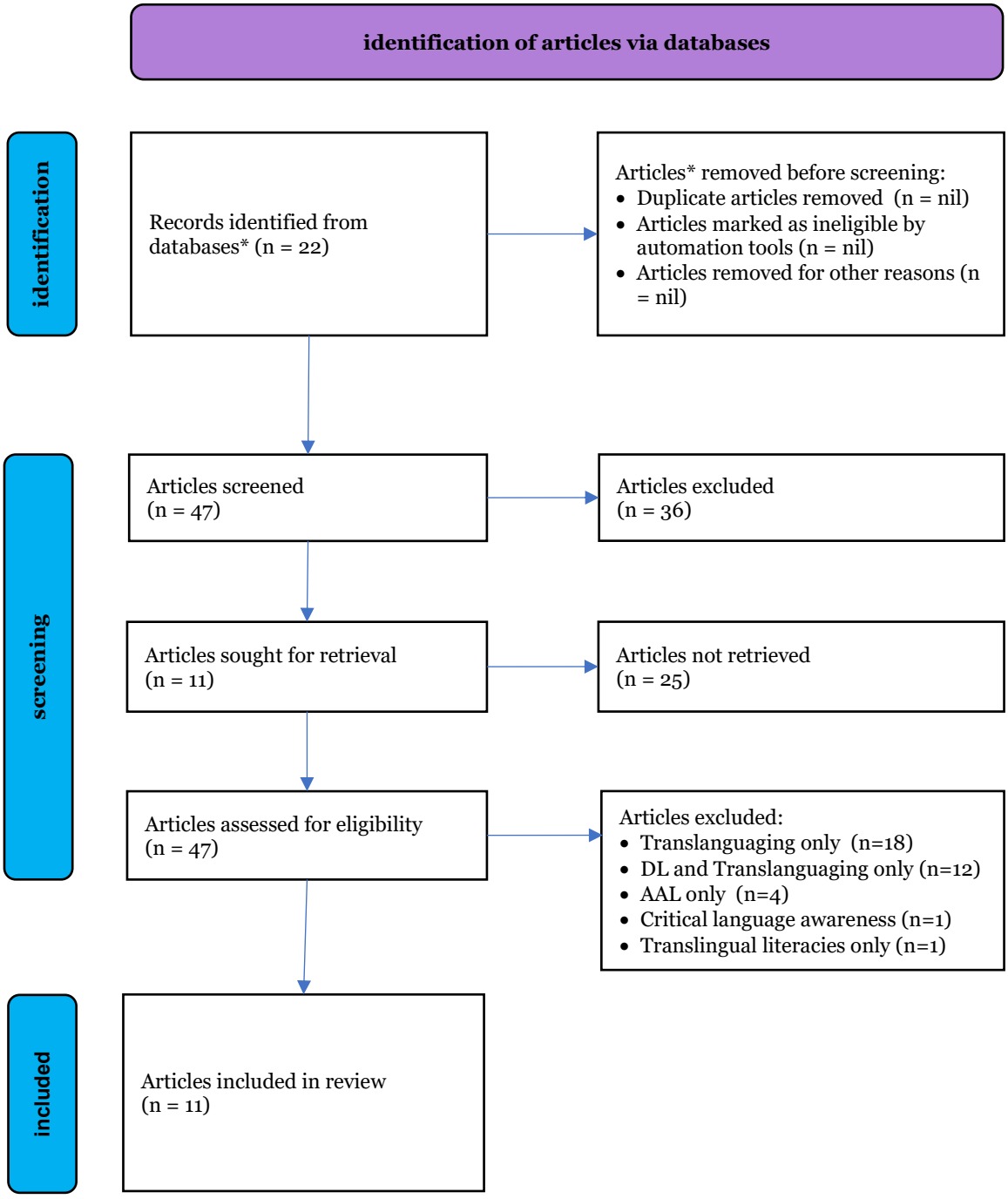
ERIC (ProQuest Interface)	Translanguaging + African American Language	Peer reviewed	N/A	9
ERIC (ProQuest Interface)	Translanguaging + African American Language	Peer reviewed	1996 - 2024	9
ERIC (EBSCO interface)	Translanguaging + African American Language	Peer reviewed	1996 - 2024	2
ERIC (EBSCO interface)	Black Language +Translanguaging	N/A	N/A	4

6.2 Selection Criteria and Rationale

We narrowed our choices by reviewing abstracts of the articles identified. After identifying the articles, we proceeded to review abstracts, looking for ideas and concepts related to Black language practices and Black multilinguals across the diaspora and their intersectional relationships with translanguaging. We specifically looked for mention of translanguaging, African American Language or Black Language, and/or dual language programs. Through this selection process, we were able to narrow the articles down significantly. After narrowing the initial search criteria (see chart), we reviewed abstracts within the 11 remaining articles to establish an intentional connection between the way the authors wrote about translanguaging and African American Language (AAL). We specifically wanted to find articles that take an asset-based view of AAL, viewing speakers' linguistic repertoires as resources rather than restrictions to learning another language.

Additionally, we sought to find articles that specifically examined the process of learning to speak another language, rather than focusing on skills such as listening, reading, and writing. In our systematic review of the articles, from a critical lens, incorporating components of CRT, mainly, Langcrit (Crump, 2014), the following broad categorizations emerged: Black language practices and Black multilinguals. These general categorizations led to themes of multilingualism across the African diaspora, particularly in South Africa; speakers' perceptions of languaging; translanguaging in the classroom; Black language perception in and out of school settings; translingualism; the binary of native versus non-native; and the translanguaging binary. Figure 1 below shows the specific exclusion criteria based on the search of 22 databases.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Chart



*The EBSCO databases do not provide an exact number of duplicated articles. Instead, it notes the following: "Exact duplicates removed from the results."

Table 2 below represents the articles that were ultimately chosen. They are listed in order of publication, with the most recent listed first.

Table 2. Articles and Categorization

Citation	Authors and Year	Categorization
"I Have Magic in My Mouf!": Embodied languaging enactments of African American multilingual students in a Spanish-English immersion program	Bauer & Sánchez, 2024	Black Language Practices
Supporting Multilingual Black Children: Building on Black Language Genius	Frieson & Presiado, 2022	Black Language Practices
"Make sure you see this": Counternarratives of multilingual Black girls' language and literacy practices	Presiado & Frieson, 2021	Black Multilinguals
Linguistic artistry and flexibility in dual-language bilingual classrooms: Young Black children's language and literacy practices	Frieson & Scalise, 2021	Black Language Practices
Enacting culturally sustaining immersion pedagogy through SFL and translanguaging design	Troyan, King, & Bramli, 2021	Black Language Practices
Biliteracy of African American and Latinx kindergarten students in a dual-language program: Understanding students' translanguaging practices across informal assessments	Bauer, Colomer, & Wiemelt, 2020	Black Language Practices
The case for translanguaging in Black immigrant literacies	Smith, 2020	Black Language Practices
Translanguaging, place and complexity	Prinsloo & Krause, 2019	Black Multilinguals Black Language Practices (South Africa)
Teaching strategies to develop inquiry and literacy skills: Languaging in foreign language immersion education	Husbye & Dorner, 2017	Black Lang. Practices
Language contact and translingual literacies	Coronel-Molina & Samuelson, 2016	Black Multilinguals Black Language Practices
The ubuntu paradigm in curriculum work, language of instruction and assessment	Brock-Utne, 2016	Black Lang. Practices (across Africa)

AAL has been researched since the 1930s, but there has been little research to support its intersection with translanguaging and bilingual education. We do not actually see the intersection of translanguaging and AAL in the literature until 2016, although the conversations of AAL have been in the public sector since 1996.

7. FINDINGS

After a thorough systematic search of the literature, we returned to the questions guiding this exploration: 1. How are multilingual speakers with one of their languages being AAL identified in the literature? 2. What does the literature say about the intersection between translanguaging and AAL? We selectively identified 11 articles out of the 47 total articles located through the process detailed in the methodology section above. The findings of this literature review revealed that in addition to the lack of literature specifically focused on translanguaging inclusive to AAL, there is also a lack of focus on inclusion of Black bilinguals. While we as Black multilingual scholars know and identify the deep and myriad practices of Black multilingual youth as languageful, the literature is lacking in its demonstration of those truths. This study's findings show that translanguaging is heavily regarded as a practice outside of the linguistic realm of Black multilingual youth and that much of the literature focuses on linguistic capital and practices at the expense and exclusion of race, specifically Black as a race. The findings have been compiled into the following themes: the translanguaging binary, native English speakers and non-native English speakers**,** and the translingual conversation.

7.1 The Translanguaging Binary

The lack of inclusion of Black as a race and Black multilinguals as a group of speakers led us to our first finding, *the translanguaging binary*. We went in exploring questions such as "translanguaging for whom?", and we found that translanguaging exists in the literature, but primarily for Latinx speakers and within a dichotomy of Spanish and English (Coronel-Molina & Samuelson, 2016). We ultimately decided to exclude the Coronel-Molina and Samuelson (2016) piece from detailed analysis because the article's scope was too broad, focusing on code-switching, code meshing, and translanguaging as useful to being a world citizen, which we viewed as positive and necessary positions in languaging. It discussed the value of vernacular and indigenous languages, but not in the context of DLBE with Black students.

What was found and what was missing showcases whom translanguaging is for and for whom it is not. It is clear through the severe gap in research in this area that translanguaging, from its inception, intended to only include named languages (e.g., Spanish, English) to the exclusion of spoken languages without specific geographical spaces that help define them (e.g., AAL). The articles we reviewed that fit our specific search criteria highlighted that translanguaging positions Spanish-speaking students

with no or limited mentions of race. When Black students were mentioned, it was infrequent, by Black author(s), and without an explicit mention of AAL, such as in Bauer's (2019) work around bidialectal Black kindergartners and Husbye and Dorner's (2017) study.

As language and literacy scholars that subscribe to the notion of AAL, BL, AAVE as a language, we felt that the articles fell into the binary of translanguaging being created and dominated by the English/Spanish target languages.

Bauer et al. (2020) used a translanguaging framework to examine the linguistic practices of a small group of African-American students in a dual language program. This article highlighted the dearth of "research into African American students' languaging in such [dual language] programs" (p. 333) and went on to explore the dynamic bilingualism (Flores & Schissel, 2014; Garcia, 2011; Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015; Wei, 2018) and the translanguaging practices of the students, centering and highlighting African American students and their exposure to AAVE. However, it failed to amplify and highlight the usage of AAL as a language, using the term bilingual to reference English and Spanish rather than multilingual to incorporate AAL.

In Husbye and Dorner's (2017) classroom study of literacy practices, they explored the translanguaging practices of French and Spanish immersion students and their teachers' translanguaging pedagogies. Sixty percent of the participants identified as Black, and "these students also brought multiple linguistic varieties and capacities to school" (p. 39). Although this study articulated and affirmed the Black students' vast linguistic repertoires, the article did not name AAL as a language and also did not include this part of students' linguistic repertoire in their records of "transferring literacy strategies and developing skills across contexts" (p. 43).

7.2 Native English Speakers and Non-Native English Speakers

The assumption that "native speaker" means white student in dual language contexts is evident within bilingual programs. Therefore, translanguaging is viewed as something that is to be learned and taught rather than intuitively understood based on experiences prior to entering BE programs. In this way, Black students are excluded because their linguistic repertoires and how they are used is not fully considered and their presence is lacking in dual language and bilingual programming.

There has been a noticeable shift even in how AAL scholars have positioned and categorized AAL to meet with publishing trends while remaining steadfast in their distinction between AAL and standardized English (e.g., Boutte & Johnson, 2012). This shift is largely based upon the field's reception to distinguishing AAL as a language system, given that it does not meet the criteria to hold "named language" status. However, as the field moves forward, it has begun to accept the linguistic brilliance of

AAL speakers, embracing what linguists and scholars have long acknowledged as a language system (Baugh, 2005; Smitherman, 1986; Rickford, 1999; Linguistic Society of America, 1997; Baker-Bell, 2020). While scholars such as Boutte (2022) and Boutte and Johnson (2013) have a longstanding history of research and literature that suggest the bilingual nature of Black youth between English and AAL, it is only within the last decade that we can find literature acknowledging the translanguaging within English, Spanish, and AAL (see Frieson, 2019, 2021, 2022; Valdes, 2018).

With this move in mind, we no longer need to question the *nativeness* of a Standardized English speaker or even a speaker of another English variety who also has AAL or other Black languages as a part of their linguistic repertoire. Building on this perspective, Smith (2020) offers a nuanced approach to understanding Black immigrant literacies, particularly those from English-speaking Caribbean countries, through an understanding of translanguaging as a theoretical lens. She expands translanguaging by pairing it with an "integrated model of multilingualism" (MacSwan, 2017) to examine how Black immigrant youth leverage their various Englishes and literacies. She contends that this approach allows researchers to foreground race and racialized language use while considering both individual linguistic repertoires (I-languages) and shared mental grammars (E-languages).

More specifically, Smith extends the concept of translanguaging beyond standardized languages to include the standardized and non-standardized Englishes used by Black immigrant youth, including AAL. This approach aligns with the growing recognition of AAL as a full language system, and by doing so, she encourages researchers to analyze how these students navigate tensions between their individual language practices and imposed language systems as they become racialized as Black in the U.S. context.

7.3 The Translingual Conversation

Frieson and Presiado (2022), Frieson and Scalise (2021), and Presiado and Frieson (2021) extend this conversation by using translanguaging as a framework to understand how Black multilingual students resist being "silenced" and seen as "homogenous speakers of Mainstream American English (MAE) (Presiado & Freison, 2021; Valdes, 2018)" (Frieson & Presiado, 2022, p. 707). It is this persistent glossing over of Black students' experiences and language practices that they counter in their work by centering Black children's voices to understand how they flexibly traverse linguistic boundaries in dual language bilingual education (DLBE) programs. All three articles employ and understand translanguaging as a helpful framework to explain how Black students in DLBE programs navigate rigid language policies and resist raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

In Frieson and Scalise (2021), translanguaging enables Black children to fluidly use their linguistic repertoires, including AAL, in restrictive settings where only

standardized English and Spanish are typically recognized. Similarly, Presiado and Frieson (2021) highlight how Black girls in DLBE programs use translanguaging to construct counternarratives, allowing them to challenge dominant ideologies and affirm their identities in spaces that often marginalize their linguistic practices. However, all articles emphasize that translanguaging alone is not enough to fully recognize and center Black students' linguistic practices and cultural identities.

Frieson and Scalise (2021) build on this finding by insisting that translanguaging be paired with explicit efforts to validate Black children's language within educational spaces, while Presiado and Frieson (2021) critique DLBE programs for their structural limitations that still marginalize Black girls, despite their use of translanguaging. Finally, Frieson and Presiado (2022) call for translanguaging to be used alongside a broader commitment to decolonizing education, advocating for pedagogies that actively humanize and empower Black students, ensuring their linguistic practices are fully respected.

In Troyan et al. (2021), a French immersion teacher used "translanguaging design to position his African American students in a culturally sustaining genre pedagogy" (p. 567). This study dissected interactions during classroom instruction between the teacher, Ahmed, and his students. While the article acknowledges that "translanguaging involves not only moving among named languages, but also among varieties of languages (p. 569)," there are few mentions of AAL, and even when mentioned, the conversation lacked substance. The article included only six mentions of AAL, and four of those were listed under the home language column of the student participants' table. The initial mention was the study's claim that the authors "witnessed Ahmed's knowledge of their families and of African American Language, (p. 572)" and the last mention was also describing Ahmed's actions, as he "positioned them as bilingual users of all of their varieties of AAL, Arabic, English, French, and Spanish that they spoke at home and school" (p. 584). While this article boldly included African American students, there was more to be desired in the intentional inclusion of their language practices and elevating AAL as a valuable linguistic resource.

Similarly, a study by Bauer and Sánchez (2024) expands the concept of translanguaging by bringing race to the forefront of how we understand bilingual students' language practices. While translanguaging is typically framed as the fluid use of multiple languages, this study introduces racialized translanguaging (p. 7), which emphasizes that racial identity plays a crucial role in how and why students shift between languages. By focusing on Gabrielle and Tamara, two Black girls in a Spanish-English dual language program, the authors challenge traditional definitions of translanguaging that do not account for the racialized experiences of speakers. For example, Tamara's integration of AAL into her Spanish demonstrates how translanguaging involves not only linguistic flexibility but also navigating racialized expectations of language use.

The study problematizes the notion that translanguaging is purely about linguistic resources, highlighting that social and racial perceptions of language speakers can shape

these practices in significant ways and that language in and of itself is "embodied", "dynamic", and "mapped across the multiple terrains of an individual's experience" (p. 2). By introducing racialized translanguaging, the article pushes the boundaries of how translanguaging is typically understood, urging educators and researchers to consider how racial identity intersects with language use, particularly in bilingual education contexts where Black students' linguistic practices are often marginalized or misunderstood. This expanded definition calls for a more nuanced understanding of translanguaging that recognizes the racialized dimensions of language use and challenges deficit views that exclude Black students from bilingual spaces.

The observation from these studies that translanguaging alone is insufficient finds its complement, and possible solution, through Brock-Utne's (2016) article, "The *ubuntu* paradigm in curriculum work, language of instruction and assessment," which explains how impactful applying principles of ubuntu to translanguaging practices in language instruction might be beneficial for students on the micro-level (i.e., classrooms) and macro-level (i.e., systems, states, and countries). Moeketsi Letseka (2012) translates the meaning of ubuntu into English to mean "a human being is a human being because of other human beings" (p. 48).

Applying the paradigm of ubuntu to translanguaging practices, according to Brock-Utne (2016), requires cooperation across communities and nations that encourages African people across borders to incorporate local and post-colonial languages into their classroom instruction in a sustainable way. Citing a study done by Ofelia Garcia and Sarah Hesson (2015), Brock-Utne provides a micro-level example of how effective "innovative teachers who use a translanguaging framework" can be. In their study, Garcia and Hesson (2015, p. 233) discuss Lucas, a teacher who encourages multilingual students to access their full linguistic repertoires on a daily basis with the following classroom list displayed on the wall:

- Take notes during independent reading time in any language
- Brainstorm and outline your ideas in any language
- Annotate Science and Social Studies texts in any language
- Ask for help with unfamiliar vocabulary or difficult concepts in any language
- Try your idea aloud in any language before speaking or writing it in the target language
- Create a summary or version of your final work in an additional language to share with speakers of that language
- Keep multilingual vocabulary lists
- Research a new topic using all your languages.

Application of this list across the African continent, given its multilingual nature, could change the way African languages have traditionally been viewed in the classroom. For the purposes of our study, application of such a list might also be valuable in reshaping the way AAL is viewed in classroom settings. Although this article does not specifically

refer to dual language or bilingual classrooms, it resonates with us because it speaks to larger issues in the treatment of Black Languages in classrooms across the diaspora, which has direct implications for our understanding of the treatment of AAL in the bilingual classroom.

8. BEEN BILINGUAL, STILL BI/MULTILINGUAL

Although the demographics of bilingual education are ever-changing and include more and more Black students, there is still a lack of attention to an asset-based inclusion of their full linguistic repertoires. The small number of articles that we found provides evidence of the dearth of literature that attends to the translanguaging practices of Black multilinguals. While we are grateful to the scholars who are amplifying the translingual conversation while centering Black students (Smith, 2020; Baker-Bell, 2020; Frieson & Presiado, 2022), we still have a long way to go in the pursuit of linguistic justice. The demonstrated binary of Spanish and English in relation to translanguaging practices highlights the exclusion of Black multilingual youth and Black multilingual futures. The demonstrated binary of Latinx students and white students also highlights the erasure and invisibility of Black students in bilingual education.

As we continue expanding dual language and bilingual education programming, future research is essential in expanding this conversation. Additional literature reviews should be taken up to look at the intersection of other languages, especially those that are offered in neighborhood and public school programming. While the literature reviews are important to highlight the current and available research, other studies need to be conducted that offer space for the voices and experiences of Black students and their linguistic capital and development over time across their full linguistic repertoire.

The erasure and invisibility of Black multilingual youth is hidden behind the prolonged existence of the Native Spanish Speaker/Native English Speaker dichotomy that equates native English speakers to white. As we continue to problematize the lack of naming AAL as a language and the status of white mainstream English, we begin the necessary work of honoring students' full linguistic repertoires and the languagefulness they possess. We, as multilingual Black scholars, educators, and language and literacy researchers, remind the field of Valdes' multiple cautionary notes (1997, 2002, 2018) and call for a more inclusive future, where we not only tolerate but highlight and amplify the linguistic genius of Black multilingual youth.

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