Translating Theory to Practice: Exploring Teachers’ Raciolinguistic Literacies in Secondary English Classrooms

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This case study of two secondary English teachers integrates a critical translingual approach in two urban classrooms. Our inquiry is guided by two questions: (1) How did two teachers engage critical translingual approaches in their classrooms? (2) How did their positionalities shape implementation of these approaches? This article illustrates how teachers’ stances and practices can be affected by their identities, pointing to the ways that diverse teachers must approach their translanguaging pedagogies with an understanding of raciolinguistic ideologies. We end with a call for teacher educators to help teachers engage the transgressive elements of translanguaging in English classrooms and hone their raciolinguistic literacies so that they can design classroom learning in more humanizing ways.

In 2014, our nation’s public school–aged population became composed of a majority students of color (Maxwell, 2014). Amid these demographic shifts, fervent white nationalism, religious and linguistic intolerance, xenophobia, racism, and heterosexist discourses characterize our current sociopolitical environment. These forces are, without a doubt, shaping the landscape of learning, and literacy learning in particular. Ironically, as secondary English classrooms become increasingly “hyperracial” (Alim & Reyes, 2011) and multilingual, “we have no national public dialogue on language that recognizes it as a site of cultural struggle” (Alim & Smitherman, 2012, p. 5). A result of this silence around language is a lack of discourse around the ways in which, as Alim and Smitherman put it, “we not only see race but we hear it too” (p. 25). It is this “hearing” by those whom Flores and Rosa (2015) refer to as the “white listening subject” that continues to shape the educational experiences and identities of students of color in the United States.
The silence around language is often most deafening in English classrooms. Despite its potential as a site of linguistic and sociolinguistic inquiry, English classrooms regularly uphold and calcify oppressive ideologies around English and, importantly, speakers of English. And if there is little discussion of “language” in “English Language Arts” classrooms (Martinez, 2017), there is even less conversation around the racism and coloniality embedded in approaches to teaching English in those classrooms. To fill this void, we hone in on two classroom teachers whose pedagogical choices offer important insights into what it means to prepare English teachers to talk about language and its links to processes of racialization in the English classroom. Our collaborative inquiry is guided by two primary questions: (1) How did two teachers engage critical translingual approaches in their classrooms? (2) How did these teachers’ positionalities shape their implementation of these approaches? By describing moments in their teaching that made space for students’ existing awareness of and experiences with what Flores and Rosa (2015) refer to as raciolinguistic ideologies, we explore what it might look like to prepare teachers to take up a critical translingual approach (Seltzer, 2017).

A critical translingual approach to English education is one that is rooted in traditions of critical literacy and in the “multilingual turn” (May, 2013), an epistemological shift that continues to challenge the framing of monolingualism as the norm. While translanguaging has been taken up by teachers across programs and grade levels, it is often seen only as a scaffold, a temporary and removable set of discrete strategies that can support language minoritized youth1 as they learn English. We believe that the use of translanguaging strategies in instruction, particularly at the secondary level where students are held to increasingly rigorous academic expectations and benchmarks, is certainly preferable to past “sink or swim” approaches. However, a critical translingual approach puts English itself in quotation marks; it asks teachers to view “English” not as a teachable subject, but as an ideological “named language” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015) that leaves out the language practices of many language minoritized students.

A critical translingual approach also extends translanguaging theory and practice so that all language minoritized students—including those who would not commonly be viewed as bilingual/multilingual—are invited to share their diverse language practices and critique dominant language ideologies that portray those practices as deficient. And a critical translingual approach, when applied to teaching and researching with language minoritized youth, means that rather than impose “criticality” in top-down ways (Souto-Manning, 2013), we must respectfully engage in “listening,
storying, and seeing” (Caraballo & Souto-Manning, 2017, p. 556) students for who they are and what they believe from their perspectives. For both teachers and researchers, this necessarily requires a commitment to a critical reorientation of their ways of seeing and listening so that they challenge the oppressive ideologies that shape their perceptions of students’ language practices and identities.

To take up this approach in English classrooms means designing instruction and curricula that make space for students’ existing linguistic expertise and awareness and, at the same time, encourage students to think critically about “how language is used and, importantly, how language can be used against them” (Alim, 2005, p. 28). As students engage in this kind of inquiry, a critical translingual approach also calls for action. Through writing and multimodal text production, students can put their (socio)linguistic inquiry to work in ways that challenge ideologies of linguistic separateness and standardization. In this way, English teachers can hone the linguistic creativity that students of color already bring with them—the “blending, merging, [and] meshing” that make up their languaging (Young, 2009, p. 72)—and encourage students to use that creativity in writing to challenge the coloniality and racism that inform English classrooms’ hidden audience of white listening subjects.

As we juxtaposed our individual studies, which consisted of in-depth ethnographic work alongside one white female teacher for Kate and one Chicano teacher for Cati, we saw the successes and the different struggles and tensions that emerged as these educators implemented a critical translingual approach in their respective classrooms. As the field of English education evolves in its attention to the linguistic diversity of students and classrooms, our article contributes an important consideration to the preparation of those who teach in those classrooms. Specifically, we argue that more than “respect,” “welcome,” or “embrace” students’ linguistic diversity (Martínez, 2010), teachers must be prepared to engage the intersections of diversity with processes of racialization and linguistic violence (Anzaldúa, 1987), which remain at the core of structural inequality in U.S. schools, and in English classrooms in particular.

**Theoretical Framework/Literature Review**

In light of the increasing diversity across the United States, all teachers must be prepared to work in what Ball (2009) calls culturally and linguistically complex classrooms. In preparing these teachers, however, a focus on practice alone cannot sufficiently address this challenge. As Britzman (1994)
 contends, “there remains the danger of viewing the teacher’s practical knowledge as unencumbered by authoritative discourse and as unmediated by the relations of power and authority” (p. 72). Thus, a focus on relations of power is integral to the reimagining of English classrooms for language minoritized students. Rather than focus simply on classroom strategies, we take up Britzman’s call and emphasize the development of English teachers’ identities and stance (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017), particularly in relation to the power-laden intersections of race and languaging.

Building Racial Literacy in Teacher Education

According to Omi and Winant (1994), race and racial ideologies are “too essential, too integral to the maintenance of the U.S. social order” (p. 62) and are thus thoroughly ingrained and durable features of U.S. culture. Omi and Winant understand race as a social construction in formation and argue that it is the “process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meaning” (p. 61). As such, race continues to determine positionings of privilege or marginalization for children navigating K–12 schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) where an unacknowledged “racial contract” functions as a normative agreement of white supremacy and non-white subjugation throughout larger systems and institutions (Mills, 1997).

Research into the topic of critical teacher preparation has pointed out the importance of focusing on race with preservice and inservice teachers of racially minoritized youth. For example, much antiracist teacher preparation attempts to hone teachers’ “racial literacy” (Guinier, 2004) to address the “overwhelming whiteness” embedded in teacher education (Sleeter, 2001) and, more specifically, preservice English teachers’ lack of understandings of race and racism (Sealey-Ruiz, 2015; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). Central to Guinier’s definition of racial literacy is “the capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic” (2004, p. 100). To begin to address racial inequities in the United States, Guinier argues, educators must “make legible racism’s ever-shifting and ever-present structure” (p. 100). Thus, scholars have taken up racial literacy in classroom practice, both at the K–12 and teacher education levels, and describe it as a “skill and practice in which individuals are able to discuss the social construction of race, probe the existence of racism and examine the harmful effects of racial stereotyping” (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 60).
Promising scholarship on racial literacy development in education continues to emerge (Brown, 2011; Epstein & Gist, 2015; King, 2015), and key studies in literacy education (Rogers & Mosley, 2006, 2008; Skerrett, 2011) have demonstrated the importance of building this capacity in teachers by making space for ongoing professional development and learning communities where educators can develop the knowledge and skills to learn, talk, and teach about race and racism. Fewer studies, however, have extended notions of racial literacy in English classrooms to the unique racialization of language minoritized youth. In this way, research into teachers’ ideological development—particularly in the fields of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), composition and rhetoric, and bilingual education—adds an important facet to critical English teacher education.

Building Sociolinguistic Literacy in Teacher Education

Much research has identified the importance of teachers’ pedagogical choices that bring language minoritized students’ fluid bilingual/multilingual voices to the surface and enable them to question oppressive language ideologies (Alim, 2005; Paris, 2011; Rymes, 2014). This scholarship, as Paris (2011) puts it, urges teachers to “get a little sociolinguistic,” making space for students to interrogate the language ideologies at work in their schooling and in their lives. Less research has focused on the kind of education and preparation that is needed for teachers to develop the kind of sociolinguistic literacies that enable them to make such critical pedagogical choices.

Teachers must be prepared to interrogate the ideologies that shape their beliefs about language. To call into question such “sacred cows” (Kachru, 1996) as the existence of “native” speakers or the existence of a “standard” form of a language requires a reconceptualization of language itself. Rather than a discrete and autonomous system, language must be understood as social practice that shapes and is shaped by interaction. Recent scholarship around translanguaging (García, 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014; García et al., 2017) provides theoretical and pedagogical support for teachers who wish to challenge dominant language ideologies when educating language minoritized youth.

Translanguaging describes the fluid, dynamic language practices that bilingual speakers and their communities use “without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 285). Pedagogy that takes up a translanguaging lens views students’ language practices as
Pedagogy that takes up a translanguaging lens views students’ language practices as interconnected and inseparable, and it organizes classroom learning so that students can draw on all their linguistic resources at all times.

Building Raciolinguistic Literacies in Teacher Education

Raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) are those that “produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects” (p. 150). In other words, the ways in which speakers of marginalized language practices communicate—even if they are linguistically similar to the ways that white speakers communicate—will always be stigmatized because of larger racial ideologies mapped onto their ways of languaging.

To take up a raciolinguistic lens means moving away from a focus on the speaker to a focus on the listener. This analytic turn rejects the notion that speakers of marginalized language practices are deficient or lack proficiency in a quantifiable language of power, and instead asserts that it is how these speakers are heard that leads to their stigmatization. As Rosa and Flores (2015) write in their analysis of the so-called “language gap,” the deficit framings so common in schools are “not based on the empirical linguistic practices that emerge from the mouths of speaking subjects . . .
but rather from the racially and socioeconomically stigmatizing language ideologies that orient the ears of listening subjects” (p. 78).

We argue that to successfully educate language minoritized students, English teachers must develop their own raciolinguistic literacies. By this we mean the myriad ways in which teachers can engage their own and their students’ processes of reading and writing that “interrogat[e] the societal reproduction of listening subject positions that continually perceive deficiency” (Rosa & Flores, 2015, p. 79). Though Flores and Rosa’s concept of raciolinguistic ideologies has provided a much-needed theoretical basis for understanding intersections of race and languaging, our study aims to flesh out what it means for different teachers to take up such a lens in practice, simultaneously building their raciolinguistic literacies and fostering those literacies in students. In particular, we aim to bring a theory of raciolinguistics into the English classroom by emphasizing that teachers must hone their aural literacy practices. To varying degrees, all teachers—both white teachers and teachers of color—have been subject to raciolinguistic ideologies that shape our listening practices. As such, all teachers, and particularly white teachers, must reorient such dominant white listening practices to hear their language minoritized students differently (N. Flores, personal communication, September 22, 2017). Our study illustrates the tangible ways that two teachers translated such a theory into pedagogical practice and raises new questions about how teacher education programs can prepare teachers who occupy different positionalities to adapt and shift their pedagogies and their stances in response to students’ lived experiences and existing raciolinguistic literacies.

**Methods: Comparative Case Study**

We draw on a comparative case study (CCS) design (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) of two secondary English teachers who employed a critical translingual approach in their respective classrooms in two urban cities. A comparative approach differs from traditional case study research in that it “places culture, context, comparison and a critical understanding of power at its core” (p. 24). This stance, as articulated by Bartlett and Vavrus, does not view socioeconomic forces and power structures apart from the contexts of learning but as directly impinging upon local practices in and outside of schools. Through this lens, we looked for teachers’ articulations of their translanguage stance and curricular design as mediums through which they sought—in their own distinct ways—to disrupt oppressive raciolinguistic ideologies. We sought to better understand how two teachers’ distinct posi-
tionalities and engagement in similar processes led to different outcomes and, also, how different influences led to similarities in teachers’ practice. Our collaborative research also seeks to look “comparatively across two diverse raciolinguistic contexts to better understand the role of language in maintaining and challenging racism as an enduring, global system of capitalist oppression” (Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016 p. 6).

In thinking about how teacher education programs can promote a critical translingual approach to English teaching, it was important for us to explore how a pedagogy that aims to destabilize raciolinguistic ideologies is taken up by racially, ethnically, and linguistically different teachers. More specifically, it was important for us to compare our case studies of two teachers—one white, the other Chicano—to understand whether (or if) such differences shaped their uptake of a critical translingual approach as well as students’ responses to this approach in each classroom. In doing so, we echo Bartlett and Vavrus’s (2016) assertion that taking up CCS can generate robust theoretical insights that transfer to different contexts and cities.

Two Cities, Two Teachers

Our two teachers’ classrooms are representative of two distinct teaching contexts. Ms. Winter reflects the common situation in urban U.S. classrooms: a white, monolingual, and, to use her descriptor, upper-middle-class woman teaching a classroom comprised of students of color with several different languages spoken. Mr. Miranda, on the other hand, is a “home grown” teacher of color who teaches young people in the same school setting that he once attended as an adolescent, and where his linguistic, ethnic, and childhood socioeconomic background mirrors those of his students. Despite these two teachers’ obvious and important differences, in conversations about their work, we were often surprised by their similarities. The tension between their differences and their commonalities led us to a place of discovery: What might be learned about developing teachers’ raciolinguistic literacies by putting the two side by side?

Kate’s study took place in an English classroom at a small public high school in a borough of New York City. Of the approximately 460 students at the school, 70 percent were labeled as Hispanic and 28 percent were African American, nearly 90 percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, and 23 percent were classified as English Language Learners. Though the large majority of these students spoke Spanish, there were also Fulani speakers from West Africa and small numbers of Arabic, Urdu, and Albanian speakers. Because of the school’s emphasis on inclusion, students classified as ELLs
were programmed into the “mainstream” English classroom and received their mandated hours of support from an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who “pushed in” and co-taught with the English teacher. This meant that the English classroom contained students from across the bilingual continua (Hornberger, 2005) as well as students commonly viewed as monolingual.

Ms. Winter is an 11th-grade English language arts teacher. After graduating from an Ivy League university, she joined an alternative certification program and began teaching at the school approximately 10 years before the study took place. When Kate was a researcher with the City University of New York—New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB), a large, state-funded project on the education of emergent bilinguals, she worked closely with Ms. Winter, who was an active member of the school’s Emergent Bilingual Leadership Team. Ms. Winter was enthusiastic about implementing translanguaging strategies that drew on students’ home languages. During Kate’s observations of her classroom through the project, she saw that Ms. Winter was a highly engaging and effective educator. It was these observations, as well as Ms. Winter’s overall enthusiasm for CUNY-NYSIEB, that prompted Kate to partner with her for this project.

Over the year, students in Ms. Winter’s classroom engaged in a number of activities that aimed to elicit their metacommentary (Rymes, 2014) about the intersections of race and language in their lives. For example, students explored language practices often stigmatized in the United States, such as AAVE (African American Vernacular English), “Spanglish,” and “slang.” Rather than simply “name” students’ languages for them, which, as Godley and Minicci (2008) point out, can be problematic especially coming from a white teacher, Ms. Winter provided students with multimodal texts that emphasized the role of ideology on perceptions of these language practices. For example, students inquired into the phrase “broken English,” using Amy Tan’s essay, “My Mother’s English,” among other texts, to discuss how different Englishes—especially those spoken with an “accent” by racialized speakers—are perceived. Each of the texts, activities, and inquiries brought forth students’ sophisticated awareness and ability to articulate the intersections of race and language.

Cati’s 10-month study took place in an 11th- and 12th-grade English elective course titled Chicano/Latino Studies offered at an urban public high school in the greater Los Angeles area. According to California Department of Education data, the school demographics at the time were 85 percent students labeled Hispanic, 12 percent African American, and 3 percent undisclosed; 81 percent of the student body received free or reduced-price
lunch. About 42 percent of the student body were classified as English Language Learners, with the primary language being Spanish. The Chicano/Latinx Studies course was composed of primarily first- and second-generation Chicano students (of Mexican descent) with a few students of both Central American (primarily from El Salvador and Guatemala) and Mexican mixed ancestry, and all at various points on the bilingual continua (Hornberger, 2003). The teacher, Mr. Miranda, is a first-generation bilingual Chicano who is a product of local public schools and was raised in the same working-class immigrant community where the school is located. While at the time of the study “translanguaging” was not a term that Mr. Miranda or the students used, his teaching demonstrated a clear translanguaging stance and instructional design that worked to mobilize students’ bilingualism for learning. Mr. Miranda saw students’ different varieties of Englishes and Spanishes as an asset from which to build and fortify stronger understandings of self, community, and their larger sociopolitical world. Mr. Miranda’s natural approach to translanguaging was one of the primary reasons his classroom was selected for inquiry.

When Mr. Miranda began teaching at the school, Cati was a classroom teacher who taught the Chicano/Latinx Studies course. In the year before Cati left the classroom to begin her graduate studies, she worked with Mr. Miranda and helped him prepare to take over the Chicano/Latinx studies courses she had spearheaded years prior. Though some of the course content remained similar, Mr. Miranda devised the majority of the curriculum during the time of this research. As an ethnic studies teacher, his primary curricular aim was to create a space where concepts of race, colonialism, and hegemony were explored—especially through the lens of racialized young people in the United States (de los Ríos, López, & Morrell, 2015). Given the antiracist nature of ethnic studies, Mr. Miranda had an existent commitment to developing racial literacy in his classroom. Early in Mr. Miranda’s teaching, he began to see the deeply rooted raciolinguistic ideologies that permeated students’ everyday lives, even among Latinx peers. By positioning himself as both a critical listener and learner of his students’ discourses and lived experiences, Mr. Miranda worked to reorient the design and goals of his ethnic studies course to include the exploration of raciolinguistic ideologies. More specifically, many of Mr. Miranda’s students’ experiences with racism were tied to their identities as immigrants and children of immigrants, their style of dress that reflected a certain “paisa” culture, and their perceived linguistic deficiencies. Furthermore, while ethnic studies courses might still seem uncommon across the landscape of secondary English electives, they are swiftly expanding across the Southwest, especially after the passing of
California Assembly Bill 2016. Scant knowledge exists about the nature of literacy and language in these unique classroom settings.

Data Sources

The data presented here hail from two larger yearlong ethnographic case studies that spanned from 2015–16 in New York City for Kate and 2014–15 in Los Angeles for Cati. While our individual studies focused on youths’ language and literacy practices in English classrooms (our collaborative analysis of students in these same classrooms are explored in de los Ríos & Seltzer [2017]), for this article we shift our analytic lens onto the teachers. We attend closely to three primary sources of data to explore teachers’ stances, curricular shifts, and their developing raciolinguistic literacies: (1) in-depth, semistructured interviews with the teachers as well as numerous ongoing informal conversations; (2) detailed field notes from weekly classroom observations; and (3) audio recordings of the natural talk in the two classrooms we studied.

Central to a comparative case study approach is the notion of discovery that aims to be justice-oriented (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016). As such, the findings from our collaborative research seek to amplify pedagogies of possibilities in linguistically and culturally complex English classrooms. Furthermore, to ensure trustworthiness, the authors engaged triangulation, member checks, and prolonged observation in the two teachers’ classrooms. We also committed ourselves to being “worthy witnesses” (Winn & Ubiles, 2011) to the teaching and learning that occurred in these two classrooms. We sought to be the teachers’ thought partners and co-learners, earning their trust and the trust of the students so that we could do our best to honor the stories that were told over the course of the two studies.

Data Analysis

Our collaborative approach to data analysis is rooted in iterative approaches to qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013) and emerged organically through mutual interest in one another’s work. As two junior scholars who share common research interests, we have served as one another’s thought partners throughout our dissertation research and beyond. In our conversations about our research, we often landed on the many similarities we saw in our two different classroom sites. We identified that though these differences were highly important, the two teachers’ uptake of translanguaging pedagogies had similarly successful results, both for their students and for them as educators of language minoritized youth. We also identified that the two
teachers we worked with were doing more than simply using students’ home languages in instruction; they were building on students’ diverse language practices and cultural positionings in critical, innovative ways.

Having identified this important similarity, we went back to our individual data sets and coded instances of what we thought of as a critical uptake of translanguaging pedagogies. As stated earlier, we define a critical uptake as going beyond the use of translanguaging as simply “strategy” toward an explicit challenging of the ideologies that shape the English classroom. Thus, while we coded our data for evidence of translanguaging pedagogy (e.g., choosing multilingual texts or encouraging the use of home language resources), we also coded instances in which, for example, the two teachers solicited students’ experiences with the intersections of race and language or designed literacy activities that invited students to integrate their diverse language practices in ways that challenged the norms of English-medium spaces.

Because of our raciolinguistic lens, which emphasizes the importance of the listener in understanding the marginalization of certain speakers, we paid particular attention to the teachers’ articulations of shifts in their ways of hearing or listening. When possible, we also looked closely at our field notes and transcriptions of classroom moments that the teachers explicitly referred to when talking about these shifts, seeking insights into how the interactions with students might have challenged the teachers’ thinking. When looking through this newly coded, comparative data set, we simultaneously looked for patterns across the two teachers’ talk and discrepant data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2012). This enabled us to highlight both their similarities and the ways in which their critical translingual approaches and their students’ responses differed. This dual focus afforded us the opportunity to understand an important tension: though all teachers can and should take up this approach, they must do so in different ways depending on their positionality and their existing raciolinguistic literacies.

To enhance the validity of our comparative case study, we served as peer debriefers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for each other’s data analysis. We considered one another’s methodological activities and provided feedback regarding the processes of our data collection and data analysis procedures. We engaged in a comparative case analysis to mobilize our knowledge beyond our individual studies and expertise, to compare and contrast cases, and ultimately to generate new knowledge together (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). Additionally, we triangulated data from teachers’ interview data, classroom observations and field notes, classroom audio talk, and corroborated findings with one another.
Locating the Researchers

Kate and Cati saw glimpses of their personal lives, positionalities, and trajectories in their respective teachers. Like Ms. Winter, Kate is a white woman who taught English in New York City for six years to students with whom she did not share an ethnic, racial, linguistic, or socioeconomic background. Additionally, again like Ms. Winter, Kate is the daughter of an Italian immigrant, and as such is no stranger to transnationalism and bilingualism/multilingualism in her life. However, she is acutely aware of the ways in which her language practices and transnational childhood have been privileged and even championed in ways that they were not for her students. Cati, more like Mr. Miranda, is a bilingual Chicana who was raised in a Spanish-speaking immigrant household. Like Mr. Miranda, upon completing her teaching credential, Cati returned to her working-class hometown to teach and conduct research. With Mr. Miranda and his students, Cati shares a relational history of forced migration and oppressive racialization practices in K–12 settings. During her six years as a secondary literacy and ethnic studies teacher, Cati—again like Mr. Miranda—often leveraged her cultural, linguistic, and ethnic resources as strengths for teaching in the classroom.

Rather than distancing us, our racial, ethnic, and childhood class differences have enabled us to “read” one another’s data through different lenses, noting the different strengths and limitations of our individual identities. We believe that active and critical reflection on our own positionality has enabled us to uncover deeper understandings of our respective teachers’ words, which not only makes for more compelling scholarship but also respects and honors the teachers who opened their classrooms and generously gave us their time. Apart from our notable differences, we share important commonalities with regards to our sociopolitical awareness and community commitments. Morrell (2017) calls for researchers to engage in research that is “conducted in solidarity with communities” (p. 457). This call is reflected in not only our longstanding personal commitment to and relationships with our respective teachers but also our ongoing work in these same communities, our activism, and our participation in movements that work toward humanizing education for young people of color.
Findings
In this section, we step into the classrooms of the two teachers whose work we explore in this article. We first delve into Kate’s work with Ms. Winter, exploring how they collaboratively designed a yearlong curriculum around the intersections of language, power, and identity. To understand how her positionality affected her implementation of and her students’ responses to the curriculum, we focus on one classroom moment and how it pushed Ms. Winter to examine her own privilege and develop her emergent raciolinguistic literacies. Next, we look at Cati’s work with Mr. Miranda, including their development of an ethnic studies course that centered their students’ linguistic and cultural practices. Like our analysis of Ms. Winter’s teaching, we focus on a classroom moment that caused Mr. Miranda to look closely at his own pedagogy and evolve his already refined raciolinguistic literacies.

Ms. Winter’s Classroom
Kate’s work with Ms. Winter began before the school year commenced. Together, they read and discussed new scholarship around translanguaging, both as theory and pedagogy, and discussed how they might translate such theory into a year of instruction. When thinking about possible units for the year, Kate and Ms. Winter drew on a variety of models and mentors: critical pedagogues who have created engaging and innovative curricula (Bomer & Bomer, 2001; Christensen, 2000, 2009); scholars who write about intersections of critical theory, language, and teacher practice in English and literacy education (Ball, 2009; Delpit, 2006; Morrell, 2008); and researchers in the fields of bilingual/multilingual education and TESOL education whose work highlights opportunities for criticality and analysis of power in curriculum and instruction (Auerbach, 1995; Canagarajah, 2011). Through their reading and discussion, Kate and Ms. Winter came up with unit themes as well as activities, texts, and discussion topics that they felt would bring forth students’ experiences with language.

When students’ language practices were brought to the surface of the classroom through language surveys, whole-class discussions, student-to-student interviews, and other activities, Ms. Winter and Kate began to notice that alongside students’ conversations about language was also their talk about race. In fact, there were few class sessions that did not include allusions to or explicit commentary on race, and it became clear to both Ms. Winter and Kate that a focus on language alone “is not the fundamental solution because it is not the fundamental problem” (Zentella, 2007, p. 36).
Thus, it was students’ sophisticated articulations of their own raciolinguistic awareness that shaped Kate and Ms. Winter’s curricular choices, as they attempted to highlight students’ experiences around race and languaging into the classroom.

One way that Ms. Winter made space for these kinds of experiences was through her strategic choices of multimodal texts that framed and supplemented discussions around standards-driven instructional topics, such as understanding author choices, using textual evidence to support arguments, and making thematic connections across texts. In New York State, all students must take the Regents Examination in English Language Arts to graduate. The exam is rigorous, requiring that students display a number of sophisticated literacy practices. Ms. Winter took the exam seriously, and she and Kate had many conversations about how to prepare students for the exam and help them critique such exams that are rooted in ideologies of “standard” language (Lippi-Green, 2012), often leaving language minoritized students behind (Menken, 2008).

A constellation of literacy skills on the English Regents exam are organized around the theme of “author choice.” This means that when reading the three complex, lengthy “Reading Comprehension” passages, students are asked how an author’s writing choice—using certain language or drawing on a particular anecdote, for example—contributes to the larger message (or, in Regents-speak, “central idea”) of a passage. Inherent to “author choice” is the topic of audience, which Ms. Winter, who had read Flores and Rosa’s (2015) work, saw as connected to discussions of language and race. To get the classroom community thinking about the idea of audience and author choice—both in their analysis of texts and their own writing—she chose a series of multimodal texts that challenged students to analyze the writer’s/performer’s choices in relation to their assumed audience. The texts she chose—clips from the sketch comedy show Key and Peele, a spoken word poem by Jamila Lyiscott entitled “5 Ways to Speak English,” and comedian Larry Wilmore’s speech at President Obama’s last Correspondents Dinner, to name a few—featured writers and performers whose choices seemed ripe for discussions about audience, particularly in connection to those Flores and Rosa refer to as white listening subjects.

As students engaged with different texts, they had sophisticated discussions around questions of audience: What does the reality of the readership mean for an author’s writing choices? When writers and artists choose to integrate different societally named languages (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006; Otheguy et al., 2015) into a text, should they accommodate their audience...
with translations, glossaries, or other tactics? Are there words or phrases writers should never use in their work? Is it the author’s job to make a potential audience comfortable with the author’s writing choices or not? These and other questions shaped discussions of the texts and yielded rich conversations around intersections of race and languaging.

After listening to Wilmore’s speech, which some critics maligned for its use of the n-word, students engaged in a discussion of whether or not people of color like Wilmore should cater to a (mostly) white audience in their speech and writing. Ms. Winter asked the class how the audience might have misconstrued Wilmore’s choices, and why they might have been put off by Wilmore’s language practices. Rather than answer her question, many students pushed back against it, including David, who said:

**DAVID:** Maybe he wasn’t really—he was trying to make the audience feel a little uncomfortable. Just make them feel uncomfortable, like [Wilmore’s saying] just because I’m a black man doesn’t mean I’m gonna follow what y’all think I should do.

**MS. WINTER:** So what do you guys think, was it a good idea or a bad idea [to use the n-word in his speech]? ‘Cause he’s getting a lot of criticism.

**DAVID:** Why should you care? Like, right now what just popped into my head is why should, like, as a black person, right, why should I really care what they—what white people gotta say?

In David’s comment, and in his resistance to the foundation of Ms. Winter’s question, we see both his understanding of how the speech connected to Wilmore’s status as a black man in a mostly white space and Wilmore’s desire to challenge his own potentially white reader/audience. David seemed to read Wilmore’s choices as purposeful acts of defiance, his way of using the platform to make the audience “a little uncomfortable.” David understood that certain ways of languaging made white people uncomfortable, and that Wilmore’s purposeful use of such languaging spurred David’s question of why black people (including himself) should care about what white people have to say. In his rejection of Ms. Winter’s question, we see David’s inherent delegitimization of the white listening subject, the ideological and the literal audience on the receiving end of Wilmore’s speech. We also see a destabilization of Ms. Winter herself, as a white listening subject in her own right, as he subverted the basis of her question and pointed out a potential “blind spot” in her thinking.
Ms. Winter’s Emerging Raciolinguistic Literacies

As seen in the above section, as students talked through their understandings and experiences of the intersections of race and language, they also turned a critical eye on English and the English classroom, as well as on Ms. Winter herself. In a way, by designing a curriculum that aimed to upend traditional scripts by actively interrogating raciolinguistic ideologies, Ms. Winter was necessarily on the receiving end of this destabilization. As she struggled with those moments that shifted traditional power structures in the classroom, she also struggled with her emergent raciolinguistic literacies. Suddenly privy to some of her students’ painful experiences with linguistic racism, Ms. Winter was forced to confront her own privileges and see herself—and the English classroom overall—as complicit in upholding raciolinguistic ideologies.

The moments when students demonstrated sophisticated raciolinguistic awareness and literacies were instructive for Ms. Winter. Though the moments themselves sometimes brought with them tension and discomfort, they also brought with them opportunities for Ms. Winter to sit in the tension and learn. Ms. Winter was pushed to dialogue with students’ counter-discourses in ways that contributed to her growth as an educator and a person. In an interview, Ms. Winter reflected on moments, such as the one with David, that were catalysts for an interrogation of privilege, both her own and those close to her. In fact, the moments that she identified as causing her discomfort seemed to be markers of that privilege:

A lot of this thinking was very new for me. Um, and you realize you have so much privilege when you get uncomfortable thinking about things that you can avoid thinking about . . . because your privilege allows you that. So I’d be, like, trying to think about these ideas—it, like, hurt my brain, and I’d be like “no, must continue engaging.”

Here, Ms. Winter identifies her privilege as, perhaps, the source of her discomfort. Because of her positionality, she has been able to avoid the topics and ideas that were at the center of the classroom work. When those uncomfortable moments came up, Ms. Winter was, on reflection, able to identify her desire to distance herself or disengage. As she put it later in the interview, being “a white woman from an upper middle class background, from a suburb” imbued her with the privilege not to have to think about
the raciolinguistic realities her students encountered every day—things that “hurt her brain.”

This acknowledgment of the privilege inherent to her positionality extended to Ms. Winter’s personal life. Being a teacher was integral to Ms. Winter’s identity, and she related our classroom work to her relationships with her family and friends, her experiences as a wife and a mother, and her consumption and analysis of the media and the news. In particular, she engaged in conversations about the course content with her husband, who, like Ms. Winter, was Ivy League–educated. In Ms. Winter’s words, her husband was “a foil” to the work we were doing in the classroom, as he was “this well-meaning, well-intentioned, not bigoted, open-minded, elite educated person who’s like, ‘Well, no, the way they speak is wrong you have to teach them, like, proper grammar.’” In these conversations, Ms. Winter was confronted by this opinion held by someone she loved, and she chose to push it. She related that in a conversation with her husband, she had tried to argue that:

You have to say, my success is in large part not due to anything I have done. I was born into a group of people who speak this particular language practice, which happens to be privileged, therefore I can maneuver much more easily through institutions. And I think it’s a lot easier to feel like, “well, no, I’m educated and speak properly.” I’d like to think I pushed his thinking, but he’s—I think it’s hard for people to recognize how unfair so much is.

Ms. Winter’s raciolinguistic literacies emerged through her reading of theoretical and scholarly literature, but they were expanded through interactions with students who challenged her thinking. The professional—her curriculum design that aimed to elicit students’ diverse language practices and the subsequent shifts that occurred as her raciolinguistic literacies were honed—became personal as she processed the ways in which tense or uncomfortable classroom moments revealed parts of her own and her loved ones’ belief systems that were rooted in white supremacy and raciolinguistic ideologies. This willingness to grapple with privilege—as Ms. Winter put it, to sit in the moment and “continue engaging”—is integral for those white educators who wish to develop their raciolinguistic literacies.

Mr. Miranda’s Classroom

Unlike Ms. Winter’s classroom, Mr. Miranda taught an English elective ethnic studies course to a more linguistically and racially homogenous group of students where state-mandated policies and high-stakes standardized testing were not as critical. Drawing from his cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal,
1998)—his distinct insights and personal experiences as a Chicano in the United States—Mr. Miranda was able to curate a unique yearlong curriculum of the borderlands (de los Ríos, 2013) based in border literature, history, poetry, music, and anticolonialism that invited in students’ everyday practices of translinguaging. At the outset of this research, Cati spent time with Mr. Miranda before their work together to discuss and develop facets of his curriculum that could best meet the academic, cultural, and situational needs of his Mexican and Central American students from immigrant households. A piece of this preparation consisted of discussing and developing how best to teach notions of race and racism to a group of bilingual Latinx youth with different generational statuses.

Even after Cati left the school, she and Mr. Miranda kept in touch and would often discuss issues pertaining to the students. One such issue was the evolving social construction of paisa culture—a strong Mexican popular youth culture present at the school site. *Paisa* is a colloquial word used in the Mexican immigrant community and refers to “paisano,” which means fellow countrymen in Spanish (Rendon, 2015). It is a word that is often used by first- and second-generation young people to describe recently arrived, often undocumented immigrants who espouse a certain Mexican rancho lifestyle (Rendon, 2015) and vernacular (Christiansen, 2015). Paisa identities and language practices have also been taken up by Central American immigrant youth in Los Angeles (Garcia-Hernandez, 2016) who subscribe to its cultural practices and listen to corridos, ballads in Spanish that tend to amplify border strife, socioeconomic struggle, and even transnational drug trafficking (Paredes, 1958; Simonett, 2001). Corridos remain central to the literary landscapes of many U.S.-Mexican transnational young people as they often emphasize the complexities that bilingual immigrants face in the United States (de los Ríos, 2017). Paisa youth culture—which can include a “cowboy/girl” style of dress—have been associated with specific racial stereotypes that center perceived linguistic deficiencies, especially by white elites in Mexico and Latin America, to reference poor communities in rural areas (Christiansen, 2015; Farr, 2006).

In Cati’s conversations with Mr. Miranda, he regularly shared that he was aware of the linguistic borders existent within the Latinx community that emanate from the same internalized racism (Bejarano, 2005) that informed negative stigmas around paisa culture. As Rosa (2016) notes, “signs of accents and Spanish-language use are regarded as reflections of abject foreignness, regardless of the long history of Spanish-language use across the Americas” (p. 67). In one such conversation, Mr. Miranda discussed this precise phenomenon and the nature of some of his students’ resistance to
appear from immigrant or Spanish-dominant backgrounds. He noted that early in his career at the school, rather than “flash their boots or tejanas” (fashion emblems of paisa culture), students were “made to feel ashamed of being an immigrant . . . ashamed to speak English with an accent or for looking and dressing a certain way.”

Like Mr. Miranda, the students in his classroom articulated sophisticated understandings of the raciolinguistic ideologies embedded in the social category of paisa. In an informal conversation during class, one student, Miguel, brought up the term, acknowledging that “to most people it means you’re immigrant, del rancho, and don’t speak good Spanish or English.” Another student, German, echoed Miguel’s comment, stating, “We’re made to think how we talk is less important than English . . . some kids don’t want to act Mexican or paisa at school because it’s looked down on.” Many students shared related experiences and affirmed that people—including some of their peers—did, in fact, hold negative views of paisa culture, music, and language practices, linking them to stigmatized ethnoracial groups with strong agrarian roots in Mexico.

Running counter to this perceived stigmatization of paisa, in the last decade students have subverted such oppressive ideologies through the reappropriation of paisa culture and vernacular. Always tuned in to his students’ lives, Mr. Miranda noted this shift in students’ attitudes and behaviors, which, as he noted, included “wearing cowboy boots, attending rodeos, going to ‘paisa clubs,’ listening to corridos and banda, and even making paisa phrases, like ‘arriba pariente!’ more mainstream.” Miguel echoed Mr. Miranda’s observations, explaining this subversive phenomenon in his casual conversation about paisa culture in class:

People can see the word how they want, but, to me paisa or chúntaro is something positive and something I have pride in. It shows part of my family’s culture, how we talk and live, and also is something cool. . . Like when I wear my botas and tejana at school, all the students in the hallways see me and are like dayamm, quiero esas botas! And being paisa is getting more cool, like more now than when I was a freshman.

Miguel uses paisa and chúntaro interchangeably, though they do have distinct origins. Like paisa, chúntaro, or chúnt for short, is Mexican derogatory slang that works to demarcate social class and is often used to racialize people who are perceived to be undocumented, from rural areas, with little formal education, listen to banda and corridos, and have a perceived lack of linguistic sophistication (Rosas, 2010; Urrieta, 2009). Miguel’s resistance to these ideologies through his metacommentary on the changing nature
of paisa over time, as well as on his own identity and cultural and language practices, is illustrative of “citizen sociolinguistics” (Rymes, 2014). Citizen sociolinguists “have become collectors of sociolinguistically meaningful distinctions—meaningful because these are the distinctions that have stood out to everyday people” (p. 51). As a citizen sociolinguist, Miguel analyzes his social world and makes critical on-the-ground observations of “the particularities and attitudes” (p. 52) about language and culture. Miguel redefines the term *paisa* for himself as cool, a sentiment that was commonplace and growing at the school.

The tension between this kind of positive reappropriation and the oppressive stigma still present in the Mexican and Latinx community around terms such as *paisa* reflect the raciolinguistic ideologies and internalized oppression that permeate students’ lives. As noted by Rosa (2016), raciolinguistic ideologies work to create a “double-stigmatization” of Latinx communities’ “English and Spanish linguistic practices” (p. 68). While most would assume that sharing Spanish as a cultural and linguistic practice would create some sort of unification among Mexican Spanish-speaking people (especially among students of first- and second-generation), De Genova and Ramos-Zayas’s (2003) research demonstrated that Latinx migrant communities’ “shared language was instead an especially salient object around which to produce their difference” (p. 145). This was the precise conundrum that Mr. Miranda witnessed when teaching Mexican and Central American youth who ranged in their generational statuses. It was also precisely why he attempted to center such tensions in his curriculum, as a way of leveraging students’ existing raciolinguistic awareness toward increased criticality and social change. As Mr. Miranda put it:

> Students are bringing their home cultures and language practices to school and now it’s our job as the teachers to respond appropriately and value those cultural and language practices . . . but while also teaching those that think they’re above those practices that that’s a type of internalized racism and why they should interrogate those feelings and stereotypes.

Mr. Miranda’s experiences with and observations of students led him to shift his curricular design to incorporate literary genres that spoke to the liminal spaces that Mexican and Central American immigrant youth experience. Most of these musical genres were in Spanish and spoke to the complex racialization processes of Mexicans and Central Americans in the United States. Mr. Miranda often chose provocative corridos that placed larger hegemonic discourses of the U.S.-Mexico border and competing discourses into conversation with one another. This type of responsive curricular design
was integral to the creation of a classroom environment that fostered critical thinking around students’ language practices. For example, students were positioned to problematize the pervasive class, racial, and language ideologies that permeate Latin American communities and also develop an awareness of the ways in which Spanish speakers are held to colonial standards—even by their Latinx peers—of linguistic purity governed by privileged white listening subjects (Flores & Rosa, 2015). The corridos used in Mr. Miranda’s class also engaged paisa identities, vernaculars, and popular culture in humanizing ways—pointing to the ingenuity, strengths, and perseverance of immigrant communities as well as the tensions that exist among Mexican American young people around their bilingual and bicultural lives. By engaging a grassroots approach to curriculum design, Mr. Miranda created space for students’ (and their families’) experiences, language practices, and literacies to come to the fore.

One such corrido that Mr. Miranda drew on in the class was called “La Jaula de Oro” by Los Tigres del Norte. The song’s title, which translates to “the golden cage,” is, according to Mr. Miranda, “very representative of [undocumented] immigrants’ lives as ‘prisoners.’” In the corrido, a father talks about how his children no longer speak to him in Spanish and that they feel deep shame when they do speak Spanish. The father laments that his children deny being of Mexican descent, even though they are brown-skinned, and their desire to speak only “good” English because of that shame. As Mr. Miranda put it, the corrido was, for him and his students, “a gem . . . it touches on everything, like internalized oppression, language, [and] race.”

Mr. Miranda knew that by making curricular links between students’ languaging, cultural practices, and their identities as racialized subjects in his classroom, he sanctioned his students’ community knowledge. While the word paisa has long been used to disparagingly racialize working-poor undocumented immigrants from Mexico and their perceived concomitant linguistic practices tied to linguistic deficiency, Mr. Miranda’s translingual curricular modifications aligned with students’ subversive attempts to disrupt the colonial white linguistic supremacy present in the term. Thus, taking up a literary genre that is perceived to be deeply “paisa” and centering it as a sophisticated academic text reoriented his classroom around students’ cultural practices and their raced, classed, and transnational ways of knowing.
Mr. Miranda’s Evolving Raciolinguistic Literacies

As a bilingual Chicano, Mr. Miranda was attuned to the ways in which racism and language ideologies have affected his and his family’s life in both structural and personal ways. His work as a teacher raised in the community helped him see first-hand the ways in which “language use and race come to be constructed and interpreted in relation to one another” (Rosa, 2016, p. 67) and how raciolinguistic ideologies transcend physical borders and are associated with processes of naturalization that are key to linguistic analyses of racialization (Rosa & Trivedi, 2017). This positionality, while allowing him certain epistemic privileges (Moya, 2002) in destabilizing hierarchies of power in his classroom, also came with its own challenges, especially around intersectional conversations in his classroom. For example, Mr. Miranda noted that within the larger corpus of corridos, even among those that speak to social justice-oriented topics, lives a strong hyper-masculinist spirit. At the end of the same unit that closely examined corridos as counter-narratives to hegemonic discourses about immigrants, Mr. Miranda posed an important question around sexism and whether women’s struggles and voices were equally represented in the popular corrido genre. Several male students eagerly jumped to voice:

**ORLANDO:** But, Mr. Miranda, it’s not that bad . . . women are so much better off now [in the Mexican regional music industry].

**MARCOS:** Yeah, it’s not that bad anymore.

To Mr. Miranda’s surprise, more students (all young men) echoed these sentiments and kept referring to these same two statements. In response to this and in reflecting on his curricular moves Mr. Miranda shared,

While using corridos in class allowed my students and I to examine the privileging of English, racism, exploitation, and injustices within our own communities and in the U.S., it also brought to the surface our communities’ tensions with sexism and patriarchy. Which are conversations I’m personally still trying to figure out and get better at. Those two things are so entrenched in our communities and it’s been hard for me to really get students to critically think about why and how women are silenced and oppressed and how harmful constructions of gender and sexuality are still oppressive in 2017.

These were topics of conversation that he felt he was not “totally prepared for.” Mr. Miranda recognized that he benefits daily from male privilege and had not done the work to truly prepare scaffolds for constructive conver-


sations around intersectional topics with his (primarily male) students who did not see inequities across gender and sexuality as clearly. Mr. Miranda’s struggle with facilitating conversations around raciolinguistic ideologies and its ties to gender in his classroom point to the ongoing need for developing robust “intersectional approaches that understand race as always produced in conjunction with class, gender, sexuality, religion, (trans)national, and other axes of social differentiation” (Alim et al., 2016, p. 6) in the classroom.

Discussion and Implications

The teaching of English is an inescapably political and ideological endeavor that involves colonial histories, ideals, and powers (Canagarajah, 2012; Morrell, 2008; Willinsky, 1998). Thus, to build a teaching force that can destabilize the oppressive ideologies that result from these histories and unequal power relations, English teachers must commit to developing and extending their critical stance and their raciolinguistic literacies by reorienting their listening practices in ways that resist oppressive language ideologies. To take up this call, teacher education programs must make space for all teachers to grapple with the intersections of race and language in their pedagogy and in their lives. Here, we lay out several implications of our work with Ms. Winter and Mr. Miranda for teacher education programs. Each of these implications calls for shifts within the traditional curriculum and scope of English teacher preparation: namely in these programs’ approaches to theoretical foundations, instructional methods, and the exploration of English teachers’ roles and positionalities.

A critical translingual approach calls for teachers to shift their stances and resulting instructional designs to make space for students’ diverse language practices, voices, and experiences as racialized speakers. This shift will be more radical for some teachers than others. For Ms. Winter, her students’ responses to the curriculum and direct challenge of her perspective made her consider her own privilege and biases, from which her raciolinguistic literacies began to emerge. Mr. Miranda, who unlike Ms. Winter mirrored his students in myriad ways and already had well-developed raciolinguistic literacies, was further pushed to adjust and evolve those literacies to create a classroom environment that responded to students’ intersectional experiences of marginalization. So how can English teacher education programs help to usher in these kinds of shifts?

First, programs must expand their theoretical and scholarly foundations so that English educators can incorporate into their pedagogical stances not only literacy theory but sociolinguistic theory and critical theories of
language. We agree with Alim (2005), who argues that “sociolinguists and educational researchers must put aside their disciplinary issues and come together for the sake of our youth” (p. 381). English educators must, then, “get a little sociolinguistic” (Paris, 2011, p. 123), learning to see and hear language—and language learners—in new, more critical ways. For example, the foundation of Ms. Winter’s critical translingual curriculum was built on her interactions with theory and research around translanguaging and critical literacy; this exposure to cross-disciplinary research enabled her to expand her understandings, challenge her biases, and make space for her students’ ways of languaging and knowing to take center stage.

In our experiences as both students and instructors in English teacher education programs, we have found that these programs could do more to shift their instructional methods courses, providing as models the multimodal, linguistically and culturally diverse texts and critical lines of inquiry we saw in Ms. Winter’s and Mr. Miranda’s classrooms. From Ms. Winter’s use of sketch comedy and popular speeches to Mr. Miranda’s use of the musical genre of corridos, these teachers saw that to leverage students’ existing raciolinguistic literacies, they had to use different kinds of texts and engage meaningfully with the questions and critiques that emerged from students’ readings of these texts. These two teachers designed and implemented curricula that attempted to destabilize the raciolinguistic subjugation of nondominant students and to invoke a critical consciousness through the selection of multilingual, multimodal texts by multilingual authors and authors of color that spoke to issues of social injustice and linguistic colonialism.

Though there is power in bringing students’ unique readings and perspectives to well-established texts, English teachers must also be taught to push the boundaries of “the canon.” English teacher education programs must continue to help teachers come up with creative ways of using multimodal, linguistically diverse texts in their lessons, as well as soliciting from students themselves the texts that they interact with outside the classroom that shed light on raciolinguistic and translingual realities. Alongside the use of new kinds of texts, English teacher education programs must also encourage teachers to come up with new approaches to reading and analyzing those texts with students. As they explore the choices writers and other artists make, students can engage in analysis of how those choices might be perceived and read by an audience whose listening practices (and reading practices) are influenced by dominant language ideologies. In this way, teachers and their students can grapple with the “hidden audience” of speech and writing that is so often obscured or unexamined in the English classroom.
Last, teacher education programs must make space for teachers from different backgrounds to unpack what it means for them to take up a critical translingual approach with their students. This means encouraging critical self-reflection on how teachers’ positionality both reifies oppressive language ideologies and informs their attempts to destabilize such ideologies with students. As we saw in both Ms. Winter’s and Mr. Miranda’s classrooms, students themselves are highly adept at pointing out the “blind spots” in their teachers’ awareness. Providing teachers with the time and space to acknowledge these blind spots in ways that help them become more critical, empathetic, and self-aware can help them take up a critical translingual approach without reifying the oppressive ideologies this approach intends to resist.

Part of the project of developing teachers’ raciolinguistic literacies is disrupting the “directionality” of the classroom. By this we mean that, particularly for white, monolingual educators like Ms. Winter, English teachers must be taught how to see themselves not as the bearers of knowledge or standard language ideologies (Lippi-Green, 2012), but as facilitators of a space that enables students to leverage their divergent entry points and positionalities to name and critique structures of power that impact their everyday lives and language practices. In our two teachers’ classrooms, it was students’ subversion of oppressive raciolinguistic ideologies that served as the driving force behind the teachers’ shifts in their curriculum design and stance toward teaching language in the classroom. While Ms. Winter and Mr. Miranda might have introduced their students to terms such as raciolinguistic ideologies and internalized oppression, the students were already the experts of those concepts and experiences and the racialization processes they bring forth. English teachers must be encouraged to cede their positions as linguistic “experts” and create their classrooms from their students up.

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Notes

1. We use the term language minoritized youth for several reasons. First, the use of minoritized vs. minority emphasizes the active, purposeful ways in which these speakers are portrayed as being separate from the linguistic majority or norm. Second, we use this term to encompass all youth of color, including those who use two or more
“named languages” and those who would commonly be viewed as “monolingual.” We contend that all these young people, to an extent, are subject to linguistic prejudice tied to their racial identities in and outside of school, and would benefit from an approach to English education that values their diverse language practices and resists those ideologies that render them minoritized.

2. All participants’ names are pseudonyms.

3. We further explain paisa in the findings section, but briefly here we are referring to a Mexican youth popular culture that has strong U.S.-Mexico transnational affiliations and ties to Mexican regional music like corridos (popular narrative ballads) and banda (musical ensemble in which wind instruments, mostly of brass and percussion, are performed).

4. California Assembly Bill 2016 was sponsored by Assembly member Luis A. Alejo (D-Salinas) and signed by Governor Jerry Brown in September 2016. It aims to create the first “model” curriculum for ethnic studies in high schools and will be made accessible to all California public secondary schools by 2019–20.

5. Cowboy hats.

6. From the ranch and/or countryside.

7. Loosely translated, “big ups, fam!”

8. I want those boots!

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