UNDERSTANDING AND LEVERAGING SPANISH HERITAGE SPEAKERS’ BILINGUAL PRACTICES

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Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the richness of the bilingual practices that Spanish heritage students bring to K-16 classrooms, in the belief that an understanding of these practices will allow educators to take full advantage of their pupils’ competencies in the further development of linguistic, metalinguistic, and analytic skills. The cognitive and social mechanisms implicated in bilingual practices have been well studied within various subdisciplines of linguistics, often under the umbrella label code-switching. More recently, the interlacing of languages and varieties has garnered attention among scholars within the field of education, where the conceptual construct translanguaging has been proposed in referring not only to the continuity of learners’ multilingual repertoires but also to the pedagogies that support these expressive and creative modes. Herein, we espouse a critical-pedagogical view, in advocating for pedagogies that legitimize the extensive continuum of bilinguals’ repertoires in the community and in the classroom. While such approaches have been adopted for young emergent bilinguals in elementary schools and for adolescents in high school courses for heritage speakers, to our knowledge, similar strategies of valuing hybrid language practices have not been fruitfully implemented for university-level learners. We submit that the embracing of code-switching and translanguaging pedagogies can serve educators in guiding learners of all ages in developing bilingual oracy and literacy as well as in promoting bilingual identities that support academic achievement.

We begin with a discussion of prevalent concepts and issues, describing the evolution in the perspectives and attendant terminology that circulate among scholars and practitioners with interests in bilingual speech practices. The larger part of the chapter is then devoted to an overview of pertinent research literature, focusing principally on studies in education that promote hybrid language practices and translanguaging curricula. Thereafter, we consider the ways in which published findings can be extended to adult Spanish heritage populations and offer new insights to heritage language studies. Finally, we echo the call of many for fostering an appreciation of code-switching and translanguaging in contributing to scholarship and teaching and in leveraging heritage bilinguals’ practices in the service of their success and well-being.
Beyond code

Spanish heritage speakers are commonly observed to draw on Spanish and English, separately and in tandem, within and across conversational turns, as in the exchange in Example 1. In linguistics, this phenomenon is termed code-switching or code mixing.

Example 1

Speaker A: ¿Ganaste Most Shy en lo que es del yearbook?
Speaker B: Aha, en high school. Gané Most Shy, which is—¿cómo se dice?—weird, because era porrista y las porristas tienen que estar muy hyper, I guess, y pues yo era la más timida.

Bullock & Toribio, 2013: AF004 1991 EP

Code-switching has been explored from multiple disciplinary perspectives, each focused on a particular aspect, but three general approaches can be identified. Structural approaches to code-switching are concerned primarily with what code-switching can reveal about linguistic structure at all levels, including lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and discursive. Sociolinguistic approaches attend to the individual, community, and societal factors that promote or inhibit switching and view code-switching as allowing insight into constructs such as power, prestige, and identity. Finally, psycholinguistic approaches investigate code-switching to better understand the mental mechanisms that underlie bilingual production, perception, and acquisition (see Bullock & Toribio, 2009 for an overview).

Of all types of code-switching, the mixing of languages within utterances has been of greatest interest among linguists, who have analyzed which grammatical sites are most opportune for switching and which are most resistant, in order to advance morpho-syntactic and psycholinguistic theories (Myers-Scotton, 1993). As one example, Poplack’s (1980) Equivalence Constraint captures the fact that switching between languages tends to occur at points where their structures coincide (e.g., Mi mamá te vio; My mom te vio), but not where they diverge (e.g., *Mi mamá te saw and *My mom vio you). However, bilinguals often innovate forms that are absent from the participating languages. For instance, the bilingual compound verb construction hacer cultivate in Example 2 is not present in Spanish or English (cf. *hacer cultivar; *do cultivate). In addition, while the hacer + V construction appears robustly in the oral corpus of New Mexico Spanish (Vergara Wilson, 2013; Vergara Wilson & Dumont, 2015), it is attested only sporadically in the Spanish in Texas corpus (Bullock, Toribio & Greaser 2012), and is reportedly absent from the corpus of New York City Spanish (Ricardo Otheguy, pers. comm.).

Example 2

Francisco: hacían cultivate papas
Gabriel: yeah
Francisco: . . . ahí iban todos a trabajar.

Vergara Wilson & Dumont, 2015: 451

Addressing the variability in code-switching patterns among speakers of the same language pairing, Gardner-Chloros and colleagues (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Gardner-Chloros & Edwards, 2004) suggest that mixing typologies are community-specific. To be sure, identifying community norms is a pressing task for linguists pursuing research on heritage Spanish speakers.
in the United States, as the latter are socialized into local vernaculars, which often differ from standard monolingual varieties acquired in non-contact contexts (Silva-Corvalán, 2000 [1994]; Valdés, 2001). This is not due to speakers’ failure to perceive, process, or produce the language, as popular stereotypes might suggest; rather, it owes to the nature of the language input they receive, e.g., the input may be restricted or limited in style and register (Montrul, 2008, 2013; Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998, 2011). In Example 3, Miguela presents the non-normative pa’tras, calqued on the English particle ‘back,’ as well as the regularization of the second-person singular verbal paradigm in the preterite form vinistes (cf. viniste), which may reflect the absence of normative pressures on the local vernacular input (Otheguy & Stern, 2011).

Example 3

Miguela: I don’t want Rick Perry anymore because I found out he’s mean.
Teacher: ¿Por qué?
Miguela: Mi mamá me dijo.
Teacher: ¿Qué te dijo?
Miguela: Que Rick Perry dice que está bien que nos paren y luego si no tienes tus papeles te van a mandar pa’trás, de donde vinistes.
Dolores: That’s true, mi mamá said that too.

In the same way that heritage speakers are socialized into local varieties of Spanish and English, they are socialized into code-switching, acquiring the necessary linguistic and communicative knowledge to engage their multiple codes in different speech situations and to respect the ‘ways of speaking’ of the community (Auer, 1998; Hymes, 1989). In Zentella’s ethnographic study of the residents of el bloque, children, adolescents, and adults were observed to mix languages for conversational aims, as when managing talk with strategies such as realignment, appeal, clarification, and emphasis. Zentella also recorded neighborhood norms of language choice, i.e., who spoke what to whom and when. In Example 4, 8-year-old Lolita (L) and 5-year-old Timmy (T), who typically interact with each other and with their siblings and peers in English, switch to Spanish to address the adults, demonstrating the requisite due deference and respect for elders.

Example 4

L to T: Get off, Timmy, get off.
L to adults: ¡Ella me dio!
L to T: ¡Porque TU me diste!
T to L: Liar!
Adults to L: ¿Por qué [interrupted by Lolita]
L to adults: Porque él me dio, por eso. El siempre me está dando cuando me ve.

Zentella’s analysis further chronicles the ways in which children and young adults in the New York Puerto Rican enclave are socialized into language-mediated identities. For instance, young men presented African American features in their English, and young women displayed more standard Spanish forms, each expressing particular social roles and obligations through language. Finally, Zentella elucidates the relationship between language and identity, recording
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one of her male adolescents who explains, “Sometimes I’m talking a long time in English and then I remember I’m Puerto Rican, lemme say something in Spanglish” (Zentella, 1997: 114).

While ample research has been devoted to examining the hows and the whys of switching from one code to another, some linguists have remarked on the challenge and dubious value of classifying distinct language codes in the study of bilinguals’ practices. Urciuoli (1985) maintains that the boundaries between Spanish and English may be blurred, i.e., she argues that there is a ‘continuity of code’ that is reflected in the blended accent, parallel grammatical structures, and unified lexicon that incorporate and contribute Spanish and English into utterances. She notes that speakers draw on forms that are ‘confounded’ within a single system. For instance, loan translations (e.g., *prender un cigarillo/a cigarette*) and more standard English and Spanish phrases (*light a cigarette, encender un cigarrillo*) may be employed in ways that are equivalent. And this consolidation is demonstrated in interactions, which are often characterized by congruent discursive patterns, as illustrated in the Examples in 5, where the common colloquial English usage of *right* and the colloquial Puerto Rican Spanish usage of *verdad* align, and each is freely used in code-switching.

Example 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish:</th>
<th>¿Verdad que pesta?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¿Comió en casa, verdad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English:</td>
<td>Right, he could steal it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costs a lot of money, right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching:</td>
<td>Verdad que she’s going with Papo to the movies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¿Había este hombre, right?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Urciuoli, 1985: 374*

One implication of Urciuoli’s work is that researchers’ objectives in examining bilinguals’ hybrid speech must move beyond the identification of discrete monolingual systems towards an appreciation of their continuity. She recapitulates:

> So, far from code-switching being the alternation of two systems, it is the selection of elements from within a continuous system, even if those elements have been drawn from sources referable to two separate codes. Codes refer to an abstraction, not to what people do.

*Urciuoli, 1985: 383*

A similar perspective has been recently formalized within the allied fields of applied and anthropological linguistics, as scholars propose new frameworks for approaching the speech of ‘superdiverse’ environments of modern societies (Blommaert, 2010; Pennycook, 2010). In the education literature, speakers’ access to multiple and diverse repertoires is termed *hybrid language practices* or *translanguaging* (García 2009; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejeda, 1999). As a theoretical construct, translanguaging is thought to present several significant advantages over code-switching. It denotes a set of behaviors that may include code-switching as well as the many other ways in which bilinguals use multiple semiotic systems at once, such as translating or reading in one language and discussing in another. And it does not imply strict boundaries between codes; rather, it is intended to emphasize the fluidity of language practices over the rigidity of linguistic codes, viewing bilingualism “not as two monolithic systems made up of discrete sets of features, but as a series of social linguistic practices that are embedded in a web of complex social relations” (García, Flores & Woodley, 2012: 50).
Translanguaging parallels the construction of ‘languaging’ as a practice rather than ‘language’ as an object (Gort, 2012; Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015). In further expounding on the matter, Otheguy, García & Reid (2015: 303) clarify that in translanguaging, speakers engage their full linguistic repertoires “without regard to socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages.” Most importantly, translanguaging is understood not only as a linguistic strategy but as a conceptual framework for organizing instruction that promotes educational equity for minoritized learners. For the present purposes, we largely retain use of the term code-switching, though we proceed with the understanding that bilinguals’ linguistic codes are fluid and framed within social practices, and we use translanguaging in discussions of the re-envisioning of hybrid practices as a pedagogical resource.5

Code-switching practices and translanguging pedagogies in K-12

While Spanish heritage speakers are known to engage in bilingual practices in their communities, it is still common for teachers to discourage code-switching in bilingual and second language classrooms (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2009). For many teachers in bilingual programs, strict rules about language separation are viewed as necessary to provide learners with the opportunity to produce extended discourse in a single language (Lindholm-Leary, 2001) and it is thought to reduce “the natural tendency of minority language speakers to shift to the majority language” (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 108). However, it may be that such language shift is mediated by other factors, including the perception that the Spanish of heritage speakers is substandard or not worth preserving. Many educators working with heritage Spanish speakers promote standard language ideologies (Lippi-Green, 1997) and stigmatize the linguistic practices typical of bilingual communities—including code-switching—as indicative of laziness and/or “languagelessness” (Rosa, 2010).6 And children internalize and reproduce the stigma attached to their way of speaking. Martínez’s (2009, 2010) classroom ethnography captures the extent to which middle school students adopt these dominant narratives: Of 29 students, 26 cited deficit rationales when asked to reflect on their own engagement with code-switching.

However, given that code-switching is a normal expression of bilingualism and may be an integral part of the language experiences of many of Spanish heritage language students, it is to be expected that children continue to code-switch in the classroom. Some educators have begun to adopt flexible approaches to instruction, in which the mandate of ‘dual solitudes’ (Cummins, 2008) is replaced by the strategic mixing of languages (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Indeed, recent years have witnessed the burgeoning of a robust literature of studies on code-switching and translanguaging in K-12, some of it reviewed here. The literature comprises studies that explore the nature and function of code-switching as a naturally occurring practice of bilingual children in the classroom as well as the translanguaging pedagogies in which teachers model and promote code-switching for instructional purposes.

Naturalistic studies of code-switching in classrooms mirror what linguists working in out-of-school settings have also described, namely that code-switching serves both social and communicative purposes. In one pertinent study, Reyes (2004) analyzed the discourse characteristics of 7- and 10-year old immigrant bilinguals in California as they engaged with peers in social talk and in science activity on- and off-task talk. All of the children used both Spanish and English within and across turns for a variety of functions, such as those in Example 6. In addition, Reyes relates that the patterns of code-switching were commensurate with exposure to English and with development of bilingual communicative competence. Specifically, the older children deployed code-switching with greater frequency and for a wider range of functions than the younger children.
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Example 6

**Topic shift:** We finished all the books . . . thank you. Mira mis calzones se me andan cayendo.

**Imitation:** y luego le hace sí [robot voice] I’m hungry

**Situation shift:** Mira mira los magnets . . . what was he saying during class . . .

Reyes, 2004:81

In addition to social and communicative purposes, code-switching in classroom settings aids in cognitive functions, as students externalize and extend their thinking processes. Gort’s (2012) study of a first-grade dual-language class revealed that code-switching served several important functions in students’ writing-related talk. As they wrote, the children code-switched to self-regulate and evaluate their writing, to articulate metalinguistic connections and insight, and to signal a change in footing. In addition, the children regularly mixed languages within their stories in order to maintain the culturally and linguistically relevant references to community places (e.g., *bodega*, YMCA). These strategies were used regardless of whether the child was participating in an activity that had been officially designated as ‘English time’ or ‘Spanish time.’

Velasco and García (2014) likewise documented elementary ESL students’ use of code-switching in a writing task, for all stages of the writing process (planning, editing, and production), even as the students were asked to produce text exclusively in one or another language. In the draft in Example 7, a fifth-grader describes an event in Spanish, as instructed, but reflects his own internal and social dialogue in English, i.e., discounting defined boundaries. The authors underline the merits of allowing for a recursive interplay between the linguistic resources the child possesses and the demands of the writing task.

Example 7

Los otros días yo vi a tres niño y a 3 niñas juando en la nieve y los tres niños empujaron a tres niña en la nieve y las tres niñas se calleron en la nieve donde havía poca caca mucho susio. I said to myself is she going to yell then I said it out loud to my friend.

Velasco & García, 2014: 17

And in her classroom study, Palmer (2009) inspected the language practices of second-graders enrolled in a dual-language class. In this ‘no code-switch zone,’ students were encouraged to remain within a single language and mixing was monitored and corrected; nevertheless, code-switching occurred and facilitated learning tasks, especially during peer-only interactions, as in Example 8, where a group is engaged in drawing a map of North America.

Example 8

Rose: Oh mira, lo hizo backwards, Oh man! Yo voy a hacer como estos son los waves aquí y éste es un xx es como los waves están (gestures moving inland).

Eduardo: Oh . . . I’m done with the lakes.

Roberto: D’aaa. Está surrounded por agua. ¡Aquí puede estar un volcano!

Palmer, 2009: 52

The above findings challenge the deficit view that considers code-switching among learners as reflective of a lack of proficiency. Rather, it is a natural part of being bilingual, a linguistic and experiential resource that can be exploited in the classroom. A number of scholars have
signaled the promise of pedagogies that build on an understanding of vernaculars, including code-switching, as a useful linguistic practice with connections to the school curriculum. As argued by Hornberger (2005: 607), such pedagogies create the opportunity for bilingual and heritage speakers “to draw from across all their existing language skills (in two+ languages), rather than being constrained and inhibited from doing so by monolingual instructional assumptions and practices.” In particular, they allow for cross-linguistic comparisons that might not be possible in a monolingual context. Teachers have adopted such pedagogies to provide rich vocabulary instruction, to make metalinguistic connections, to revoice or recast talk, to organize and manage instructions, to teach standard linguistic forms, and to explain language use (Gort & Sembiante, 2015, Palmer, Martínez, Mateus & Henderson, 2014; Worthy, Durán, Hikida, Pruitt & Peterson, 2013).

As discussed, code-switching in the classroom is a resource for developing content area knowledge like science and social studies (as in Example 8) or language-based literacy and oracy skills. Sayer (2013) details the ways in which one second-grade teacher uses a flexible bilingual pedagogy in engaging her bilingual students in developing standard Spanish language forms. In Example 9, the teacher, while typically welcoming students’ code-switching, reformulates the student’s mixed utterance to call attention to lexical choice in a formal speech genre; and in Example 10, a peer picks up on this, calling out another on the use of a nonstandard borrowing.

Example 9

*Teacher:* Ahora explícalo en tus propias palabras.  
*Josue:* Que habían cinco Chihuahuas, pero corrió uno so quedan cuatro.  
*Teacher:* [imitating Josue’s voice] Corrió uno SO quedan cuatro.  
*Students:* [giggling]  
*Teacher:* Corrió uno y ahora quedan cuatro; no pongas so.  
*Sayer, 2013: 83*

Example 10

*Jonathan:* La otra vez cachamos uno bien grande.  
*Erick:* ¿Cachamos o pescamos?  
*Sayer, 2013: 83*

Michael-Luna and Canagarajah (2008) point to the potential of valuing and modeling mixing for literacy instruction, even in early grades. In one such intervention, Durán (2015) innovated and implemented a translanguaging pedagogy that involved a curricular focus on audience awareness for a first-grade ESL class. Students’ awareness of their audience dictated language choice and writing decisions, guiding them in choosing between a range of languages and modalities in response to their intended readers, which included friends, family, and mentor authors. One student, Kelsey, preferred to compose entirely in Spanish or in English at the beginning of the term, citing her elders’ admonitions against mixing languages, but she later experimented with code-switching when writing for an audience of her peers, producing mixed-language poetry, such as in Example 11. In interviews, Kelsey described similarly mixed poems by bilingual children’s book authors like Pat Mora as exemplars of the kind of writing that she most enjoyed and that she planned to emulate.
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Example 11

La rosa esta red como the sun y la bluebonnet
esta como the bluebarys
La rosa is great cosa para dar a tu esposa
y la bluebonnet es de los estados unidos ay muchas Flores que son beautiful
y briyando bonitas be careful there ar thorns
y la blue bonet is como tu

Durán, 2015: 106

The use of children’s literature as a model or ‘mentor text’ for literary code-switching has been the focus of several accounts of writing instruction for Spanish heritage speakers. Zapata, Valdez-Gainer, and Haworth (2015) looked to award-winning Latino picture-book makers in engaging their fourth-grade learners. In Abuelito and Me, a young girl integrates colorful landscapes and cultural cues into her pictures and selects between language varieties for her narrative (Example 12). This picturebook project was inspired by and echoes Papá and Me (Dorros, 2008), in capturing familial togetherness and cultural practices, to include language.

Example 12

“Vamos a plantar flores!” I say. Mi Abuelito dijo, “Si. Vamanos.” We buy flowers to plant in nuestra jardin. We plant rosas, tulipanes, and girasoles. “Que bonito jardin.” He says. “Si, me encanta!” I say.

. . . After that, we go to la tiendita del parque to visit my aunts. There are a lot of people there so I decide to help them. We hear las campanas de la iglesia. That means that it is 6:00 p.m., so we go home.

Zapata et al., 2015: 252–253

However, Ranker (2009: 33) found that while the code-switching modeled by the teacher and in published children’s books was present in his first-graders’ writing, it was dampened by the dominance of English in the school. He surmised that because of restrictive language policies, “hybrid language practices did not emerge as much as they might have in a context where multiple languages are expressed and viewed as equally valuable.” One implication, then, is that the use of mentor texts that feature language mixing might not by itself change the classroom environment, and that teachers must consider the sociolinguistic climate as well.

As one final example, Nichols and Colón (2000) extended a unit on language awareness in a California high school Spanish for Spanish Speakers program to include vernacular varieties of Spanish and code-switching. Code-switching material was introduced in phases: From observation of natural language in the classroom and community, to evaluation of code-switching in dramatic presentations (e.g., in Luis Valdés Los Vendidos), through transcription and analysis of code-switching in audiotaped conversations with peer and family. The researchers found that the early use of code-switching allowed students to later transform their essays into higher quality monolingual Spanish-language essays. These pedagogical activities were complemented with articles on code-switching written in Spanish and in English, which further promoted bilingual vernaculars as worthy of positive attention in the school setting.
Code-switching in university-level heritage language classrooms and curricula

Many Spanish heritage learners are concerned that their home language is unacceptable in the ‘formal’ or ‘standard’ language settings of university institutions and that it may hinder their academic success, a worry that may be further heightened by broadly held beliefs among community cohorts and by comments from instructors and peers (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005; Carreira, 2003; Potowski, 2005; Villa, 2002). Addressing similar concerns voiced by African Americans, Alim (2005) articulates the need to develop critical language awareness, in which teachers and learners examine the biases about language, class, power, and equity that underlie language practices and develop the knowledge and tools to respond to linguistic discrimination and subordination (Correa, 2011; Leeman, 2005; Reagan & Osborn, 2001). Not yet broadly applied for university heritage language classrooms (but see Potowski, 2017), it should be self-evident that such a ‘problem-posing’ dialogic approach (Martínez, 2013) would be ideal for this context.

The handful of studies that report on the application of critical-pedagogical approaches to heritage language learners share an emphasis on inspiring students towards academic advancement without rejecting their own varieties of Spanish and towards becoming aware of the reasons that they might encounter linguistic discrimination outside of the classroom, i.e., they focus on regional and social dialects and ideological stances towards them vis-à-vis the (idealized) standard. But code-switching often elicits more strident criticism than do dialects that differ from the chosen standard. Thus, we concur with Martínez (2013) that critical language awareness approaches should be implemented to engage Latino students in discussions of bilingual varieties and language mixing practices that are all too often slurred inside the classroom. No pedagogy for college-level Spanish heritage language curricula has as yet advocated for the strategic mixing of languages in achieving pedagogical purposes. Rather, programs promote ‘parallel monolingualisms’ (Heller, 1999) through the compartmentalization of languages.

In entering the university Spanish language classroom, heritage speakers are expected to leave their hybrid practices at the door, and the potential pedagogical benefits of attending to their code-switching practices are overlooked. However, Macaro (2009) notes that the belief that language teachers should exclusively use the target language is widely held but not empirically substantiated. Rather, there is some evidence that teachers’ deliberate, pedagogically oriented code-switching is not less effective than exclusive use of the target language, and, at least in some circumstances, facilitates students’ language learning. Research from K-12 bilingual education confirms that children learning English in school achieve higher levels of proficiency in English in classrooms that make use of both English and Spanish than those that use English exclusively (Lindholm-Leary, this volume). This suggests the possibility that university students who are English-dominant might learn Spanish as a heritage language better when instructed bilingually than when instructed only in Spanish. The aversion to code-switching in the university heritage language classroom may be pedagogically counter-productive as well as potentially alienating to heritage Spanish speakers.

Thus, rather than simply arguing that heritage language educators must recognize the normalcy of the practice (Beaudrie, Ducar & Potowski, 2014), we hold that the inclusion of code-switching, as a topic and practice that is worthy of study and enactment, can produce positive results. Informed by translanguaging pedagogies such as those we outlined for K-12, we suggest that educators charged with leading Spanish heritage language classes in 12–16 should make the most of students’ extant languages and registers in developing levels of oracy and literacy in Spanish. In adopting a critical language awareness perspective, we can well appreciate the
heritage language curriculum for its linguistic-pedagogical value and as affording organic opportunities for conversations on a myriad of issues shared among students, e.g., migration, social mobility, ethnic and national identity, and prejudice and discrimination, all of which can be focused on language.

Oracy and community engagement can be reinforced by enlisting students to document the Spanish language in the communities of which they are members, as observers and/or participants, e.g., collecting oral histories from family and friends, conducting sociolinguistic interviews with community leaders, and recording themselves in interactions with diverse interlocutors and in diverse contexts. For literacy development, students can be invited to participate in the selection of texts by bilingual poets and prose writers (Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, Junot Díaz, Tato Laviera, Pat Mora, among others) and to model the Spanish or code-switching in creative writing activities. Additionally, students can be asked to maintain journals or to engage in meaningful communicative exchanges with authentic readers, e.g., with friends and family on social media platforms or email, and to contemplate their language choices across audiences and orders of discourse. Students can also be inspired to write and perform spoken-word pieces, which accentuate all aspects of language and representation. The final products of these assignments can be compiled in a shared class corpus, affording valuable sources that can be profitably recruited for additional instruction, e.g., for lessons on regional, social, or stylistic variation, for examination of discursive-pragmatic routines, for discussion of genres, etc. Most crucially, these activities require personal investment, and thus in addition to being educational, they have the potential to be affirming and transformative.

Educators abiding by more stringent policies may maintain Spanish as the language of instruction and of deliverables while nevertheless benefiting from bilingual texts in the study of Spanish-language linguistic structures. Single-word switches of this Puerto Rican author—e.g., bosso, leyof, and sócheluerkers in Esmeralda Santiago’s (1994) *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, excerpted in Example 13—could serve as points of departure for lessons that develop knowledge of morphological gender, the mapping of phones to graphemes, and lexical composition, e.g., the use of doublets, as when bosso is used alongside jefe, reflecting bilinguals’ expanded repertoires and the distinctions between nuanced, local terms and more neutralizing terms (see Otheguy & Stern 2011). This passage would also allow for an appreciation of text as a product of social structures and norms, e.g., calling attention to the very presence of the loanwords within this Spanish-language narrative.

**Example 13**

Yo no puedo depender en nadie—Mami nos decía, y sabíamos que era la verdad. El bosso le podía dar leyof cuando quisiera. Las sócheluerkers nunca creían que una mujer fuerte y joven como Mami no podía conseguir trabajo. Tata a veces era responsable, pero muchas veces más se emborrachaba, o no salía de la cama porque le dolía el cuerpo. Nuestros vecinos eran desconocidos, o peor, gente mala.

*Santiago, 1994: 273*

In the same way, Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez’s (2012) *Apuntes de un cruzador de fronteras* includes numerous vignettes that could serve as the basis of exercises on Spanish grammar, e.g., irregular verbs and mood selection, as in the author’s listing style essay, “Confesiones de un cruzador de fronteras” in Example 14. But a second reading of the same text could point to the strategic alternation to English that explicitly illustrates the author’s confessed condition of bilingualism.
Example 14

1. Confieso que soy cruzador impenitente de fronteras.
2. Confieso que I was made in México, nacido en los USA.
3. Confieso que la primera frontera que crucé fue la línea entre México y los Estados Unidos. La segunda fue la franja entre el español y el inglés.
4. Confieso que vengo de la comunidad de la lengua bifida, que brinco constantemente la frontera lingüística back and forth and forth and back. Jumping of a language to another.

Vázquez, Vásquez, 2012: 191

Lastly, the inclusion of the more ‘radical’ Spanish and Spanish-English vernaculars of Susana Chávez Silverman’s (2004) *Killer Crónicas*, excerpted in Example 15, could motivate exercises on phrasal constituents and their grammatical functions (most switching occurs at major boundaries) as well as on the intermingling of languages, regional lects, and registers and what it reveals about the author of this bilingual memoir.

Example 15

I jumped into the first taxi my blurry night vision identified—por su whirly top light and door sign en la puerta trasera y su imponente antena—as a radio taxi. Al subir, inmediatamente sentí ese como frisson de weirdness my “septieme sens” always helps me feel y los little hairs on my forearm stand straight up y OJITO, me dije, this dude’s out there. Yo a veces les entablo conversación, just to be polite, cancherita, pa transmitirles buena onda so they take me the right way, the fastest way y no me desvien ni me roben or worse. Este era un señor algo mayor, de gafas, parecido a mi amigo from college, el mexicano Noé Chávez who studied portugués conmigo y NUNCA, pero nunca le puedo dar la correcta nasalización and was always tan y tan mexicano. Anyway, al taxista right away le noté un acentito, not too specific, I mean, OB-vio no era ni cordobés ni santiagueño ni del Chaco ni de Catamarca ni de Misiones or Tucumán or any of the other acentos del so-called “interior” (máh bien INFERIOR, the way the porteños talk about the rest of the country . . . ). I’ve learned to recognize so many of them.

Chávez-Silverman, 2004: 88

The above activities are intended to supplement (not supplant) current heritage language curricula. They move beyond the what’s and how-to’s that are typically at the core of heritage language curricula to pose questions of relevance to heritage Spanish bilinguals: When, with whom, in what contexts, and with what intent and consequence are Spanish and English monolingual and hybrid vernaculars used? Seldom do university educators open up spaces for such culturally responsive discussions in language classrooms.

**Conclusion**

While researchers in linguistics and education have made great strides in assessing and addressing the needs of heritage Spanish speakers, educators often struggle to understand their students, and students often find little connection with classroom learning. What is needed is an understanding of bilingual language practices and pedagogies that reflect on and engage with the full continuum of learners’ repertoires. As has been consistently established, code-switching is more
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than a crutching or scaffolding device for heritage Spanish speakers; it is a skill that allows for
the full expression of linguistic competence and sociocultural identities. Translanguaging can
yield large returns for Spanish heritage learners, reinforcing the value of their linguistic funds of
knowledge in further developing Spanish–English bilingual oracy and literacy, and supporting
their individual and collective success.

Notes
1 The New York City corpus, referenced in Otheguy and Zentella (2012) is not publicly available.
2 Here again, several issues come to the fore. There is ample variation within communities at the level of
the individual, and even if we admit that multiple mechanisms of contact and change co-occur within
the same community (Van Coetsem, 1990), it appears that not ‘anything’ goes. The view that has
gained the most traction in the field of bilingualism holds that there are multiple, competing processes
at work in language mixing (Chan, 2009; Muysken, 2000; Sebba, 1998).
3 Pennycook argues that all language is really linguaging, a set of practices with social history, rather than a
collection of fixed structures.
4 While limitations of space preclude a proper deliberation of the empirical coverage that these newer
terms are intended to afford, researchers such as Bhatt and Bolonyai (2015) argue against the need for
novel terminology or constructs.
5 A reviewer points out that this distinction may unwittingly serve to perpetuate the insularity of our
disciplinary perspectives on code-switching, effectively excluding classroom code-switching from formal
linguistic study.
6 There is substantial evidence that the stigma attached to code-switching is ideologically mediated,
with language serving as a proxy for race- and class-based bias (Gutiérrez, Asato & Baquedano-
López, 2001).
7 The young author describes her mixing of languages as serving both referential and indexical
purposes:

   This takes place in Mexico so I wanted the book to like, show my culture. So that’s why I
   put that I’m mixing Spanish and English. I put that so that I could show my identity, to show
   that I’m Mexican-American. So that they’ll know, “Hey, this girl is Mexican-American, not
   just American”

8 Canagarajah (2011: 402) explored ‘acts of translanguaging’ in the code-meshing of a university student,
while cautioning, “We still have a long way to go in developing teaching strategies out of these broadly
conceived models [of translanguaging].”

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