

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reimagining Newcomer Instruction through Multilingual Possibilities: Secondary Language Teachers Provide Home Language Invitations

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates how secondary language teachers integrate multilingual teaching practices through home language invitations in classrooms with newcomer students, defined as those who recently immigrated and are learning English. By analyzing the practices of two secondary language teachers over two academic years, the study explores how these invitations, which allow students to access and respond to information in their native languages, affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Findings reveal that teachers who position themselves as language learners and utilize students' home languages can promote biliteracy and build stronger relationships. While students initially showed uncertainty, they eventually responded positively, demonstrating enhanced comprehension and engagement. Despite challenges, the study highlights the potential of multilingual education to create inclusive, supportive learning environments.

Keywords

biliteracy development; emergent bilinguals; home language invitations; multilingual teaching; translanguaging

INTRODUCTION

Navigating the educational landscape in the United States poses unique challenges for emergent bilingual (EB) students, particularly for newcomer students at the secondary level. The U.S. Department of Education (2022) defines newcomers as students in grades K-12 who were born outside the United States, entered the country within the previous three years, and are currently acquiring English language skills. According to the American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, the average annual influx of newcomer adolescents aged 12–21 into the United States was 154,100 between 2000 and 2014 (Sugarman, 2017). Newcomer students are often marginalized and positioned as English-deficient in their academic environment (Corson, 2023; Mitchell, 2012). Furthermore, the systemic inequities inherent in educational practices that do not incorporate students' home languages (HLs) into the classroom significantly disadvantage newcomer students. This oversight not only impedes the students' ability to acquire a new language proficiently but also affects their perception of inclusion and self-identity within the academic system (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Despite notable advancements in multi/plurilingual instruction for EBs (Prasad, 2021), opportunities for biliteracy development among adolescent newcomers remain scarce because most newcomers are in English-centric school contexts (Seilstad, 2021). In these English-centric school contexts, there is often a hyper-focus on English, since there is limited time in U.S. secondary schools for newcomers to acquire specific English language literacy practices and academic content in English (Lang, 2019). Such hyper-focus on English constantly leads to the insufficient usage of newcomer students' rich linguistic assets in their HLs, which are often disregarded or undervalued (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). However, incorporating multilingual teaching practices can enhance newcomers' learning outcomes and support affective domains such as belonging, identity, and trust (Allard, 2017). Recognizing the importance of multilingual teaching practices, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how secondary language teachers provide HL invitations, and how newcomer students respond within multilingual classroom settings in superdiverse environments where students have myriad HLs (Vertovec, 2007), a common phenomenon in secondary classrooms. A HL invitation involves teachers offering students the opportunity to access information (through reading and listening) and respond to it (writing and speaking) in their native language. Such practice provides an optional opportunity for students rather than a mandatory requirement. Thus, this research describes the dynamics of language use, the interaction between teachers and students, and the educational strategies that foster or hinder the development of a multilingual classroom. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How do secondary language teachers provide home language invitations with newcomer students?
2. How do the newcomer students respond to home language invitations?
3. What possibilities and challenges exist for a multilingual secondary newcomer classroom?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Adolescent newcomers are most likely sequential bilinguals (Wright, 2019), defined as those who have gained initial exposure to one language and then later gain another. These students may possess advanced oral and written literacy skills in their native language before embarking on English acquisition (Garrison-Fletcher et al., 2019). The gap between instruction and multilingual teaching practices for EBs highlights the importance of leveraging existing literacy skills in the HL to facilitate English language acquisition and academic success (Aubé

et al., 2022). Therefore, recognizing and nurturing the existing literacy skills of adolescent newcomers in their native language can serve as a valuable foundation for their English language development and academic achievements. In this study, we adopt a multilingual view of translanguaging (MacSwan, 2017) to denote the distinction between students' HL and the language they are just beginning to acquire, English. One practical application of this view is through 'HL invitations,' where teachers encourage students to use their HL for accessing and engaging with academic content. This perspective challenges the traditional segregation of languages in educational settings and suggests that the dynamic interplay between a student's HL and English can enhance cognitive and linguistic development.

Translanguaging is a dynamic language practice that allows students to draw from their linguistic repertoires without being constrained by language boundaries. This approach challenges monolingual ideologies, promotes inclusive language practices, and enhances cognitive and language learning processes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; García & Wei, 2014). Recognizing that newcomer students already possess the skills and knowledge in using and speaking their native language (or languages), we advocate for multilingual teaching practices that integrate, rather than isolate, a student's linguistic repertoire. By doing so, we allow newcomer students to leverage their linguistic capabilities to foster a deeper understanding and more effective acquisition of English. This approach not only supports the cognitive aspects of learning a new language but also validates students' cultural and linguistic identities, promoting a more inclusive and responsive environment (Smythe, 2023).

Furthermore, since second language acquisition (SLA) is a key notion in newcomer classrooms, we frame our application of translanguaging through the Multilingual Turn (May, 2014), which illustrates the shift from viewing SLA through a narrow monolingual context to continually considering what role the HL, or the students' native language, might play in the teaching and learning of the target language (TL), or English in this context. This shift acknowledges the significant contribution that an HL can make in the acquisition of an L2.

In the context of newcomer students in a multilingual classroom, integrating the multilingual turn means actively incorporating students' HL into the learning process. This practice not only promotes more organic and comprehensive linguistic development but also utilizes the HL as a tool in teaching the TL. By applying these principles in the classroom, our goal is to transform traditional SLA approaches by promoting techniques that perceive multilingualism as a valuable asset rather than an obstacle to academic achievement and language proficiency (García & Wei, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous scholars have actively participated in exploring and expanding the concept of translanguaging, focusing on linguistic processes for meaning-making (García & Li, 2014), the importance of identity (Sayer, 2012), and even creating hope (Semiante & Tian, 2023). Understanding that adolescent newcomers bring their unique language backgrounds, transnational experiences, and cultural knowledge into the classroom, it is crucial for educators to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches that can effectively build on students' strengths and meet their needs. This recognition is crucial, as it leverages existing literacy skills to support English language development, challenging the traditional separation of languages in educational settings (Chaika, 2023).

Through teaching high school newcomers, researchers (de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2017; Seltzer, 2019) assert the importance of establishing an inclusive environment within the secondary newcomer classroom, wherein teachers actively facilitate and encourage students' translanguaging practices, including the use of HL invitations. These invitations are deliberate actions by teachers to invite students to use their HLs in academic activities, such as reading texts in their native language, discussing classroom topics with peers in their HL, and responding to assignments using their HL. This practice not only acknowledges and values the students' linguistic backgrounds but also aids in better comprehension and engagement with the curriculum. This process entails deliberately inviting students to utilize all of their languages as a means to engage academically, express their unique identities, and develop advanced literacy skills (Daniel & Pacheco, 2015). Adopting a translanguaging stance can expand newcomer students' learning opportunities (Martin-Beltrán, 2014), removing their linguistic straitjacket in learning new content and language (Ortega, 2014). By creating an inclusive space where students can use their HLs, educators tap into the potential of multilingualism. This approach recognizes that language is a valuable tool for learning and that students' HLs are an asset rather than an obstacle. In this sense, Li and Luo's (2017) research revealed that using the HL in the classroom enhanced high school newcomers' comprehension, confidence, and overall learning outcomes.

In the context of SLA, translanguaging practices are proving to be crucial for fostering effective learning environments, especially for adolescent newcomers. Moreover, language teachers of adolescent newcomers play a vital role in navigating the challenges and benefits of implementing translanguaging practices tailored to their specific education settings (Allard, 2017). Martin-Beltrán (2014) highlighted the dynamics of translanguaging as both a cultural

and cognitive tool within peer interactions among bilingual adolescents. Her findings reveal that translanguaging facilitates the co-construction of knowledge and enriches students' multilingual repertoires. This approach not only supports cognitive development but also promotes educational equity, providing a supportive learning environment that leverages the linguistic strengths of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Adding to this understanding, Li and Luo (2017) concluded that translanguaging can enhance student rapport in the multilingual classroom. In their research, they found that bilingual high school students who regularly engaged in translanguaging in their daily language use demonstrated improved reading comprehension.

Research also reveals how newcomer students benefit from opportunities to use their HL in the classroom. For instance, Adams (2020) discussed the effective use of translanguaging strategies within the classroom, allowing students to maintain and utilize their native languages, which enhanced their self-identity and multicultural competencies while promoting academic success. These practices not only supported language development but also aided in the integration of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into their learning processes (Adams, 2020). Similarly, Álvarez (2022) underscored the importance of disciplinary practices that support language development for newcomer students. By incorporating students' HLs in the classroom, educators can enhance student participation and make academic content more accessible and meaningful, which is crucial for students' academic and language development (Álvarez, 2022). Adopting a translanguaging approach is a commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment that optimizes multilingualism. As teachers navigate the complexities of implementing translanguaging practices, their efforts play a crucial role in enhancing the academic success and personal growth of adolescent newcomers.

METHODS

This qualitative study focuses on two secondary language teachers in a Master of Arts in Multilingual and Multicultural Studies program. The purpose is to develop innovative multilingual teaching practices that create multilingual spaces in secondary newcomer classrooms. Using a collective case study design (Yin, 2018), we operationalized each teacher as a case which includes their stated beliefs and practices regarding teaching English to newcomer students in middle and high school. The methodology enables the examination of complex social contexts and the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world educational settings.

Participants

We refer to the teacher participants in this study as Vi and Jo. Table 1 provides detailed information about their unique characteristics, experiences, and contexts. Both Vi and Jo have extensive experience working with newcomer students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Their professional backgrounds encompass a range of educational environments, each with unique challenges and opportunities that have allowed for the implementation and reflection upon innovative multilingual teaching strategies, which have enriched their personal experiences and significantly enhanced the quality and quantity of data collected for this study.

Table 1. Participants

	Vi	Jo
school setting	large suburban	urban
racial identification	biracial (White and Latina)	White
languages spoken	HL=English Some conversational Spanish as a heritage language through her mom, trying to reclaim lost Spanish	HL=English Has had some Spanish and French coursework at the university level to give her basic oral communication
grades/subject taught*	grades 6-8, middle school, language acquisition, sheltered English	grades 9-12, high school, language acquisition
students' languages*	Mandarin Chinese, Pashto, Spanish, Vietnamese	Arabic, Bulgarian, Farsi, French, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish

* during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years.

Data Collection

The data were collected during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years, which were the two years the participants were in the graduate program. The data collection was aligned with the graduate program's schedule and was integrated into the participants' educational and teaching activities. That is, the teachers shared their lesson plans, pictures of their classroom, and students' work with the researchers, in addition to their regular coursework in the program. Both teachers also participated in education abroad experiences for one week during the program (Vi in Puerto Rico and Jo in Quebec), which they wrote about as part of their coursework. Additionally, they each submitted proposals and gave presentations at professional conferences, so we added these presentations to the data.

Table 2 shows all data analyzed for the cross-case analysis. These sources span various courses and research projects, encompassing reader responses, journal entries, and course discussion board posts. The data set also included critical reflections on race, language, and culture, personal testimonies as a teacher of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) students, a marginalized voices project, research posters and proposals, and ethnographic studies. Moreover, the table incorporates notes and artifacts from conferences, study abroad programs, and French classes, demonstrating the real-world application of the research. Teachers' social media (Twitter/X) accounts and conversations that provide a glimpse into the practical implications of the findings were also included, as well as a multilingual/multicultural book review and a literature lesson based on books that further illustrate the tangible outcomes of the research.

Table 2. Data Collection

Course	Data
outside of coursework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research notes and artifacts from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ conference presentations ○ research projects ○ study abroad reflections ○ professional Twitter/X accounts ○ conversations with the teachers
coursework: 10 classes about Language (Biliteracy, Sociolinguistics, Multilingual Curriculum, Translanguaging), Literacy (Diverse Children's Literature, Reading Comprehension, Assessment), and Culture (Multicultural Education, Teaching Diverse Students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reader responses • journal entries • discussion board posts • curriculum development • student case studies • action research • lesson plans • teaching reflections

* Collected during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Data Analysis

The researchers utilized NVivo 12 Qualitative Data Analysis Software to analyze data across cases to develop themes (Yin, 2018). The team collaborated to employ grounded theory coding to ensure a rigorous and methodical approach. This involved beginning with open coding to identify initial themes and patterns within the data, followed by axial coding to explore the relationships between these themes. Through this iterative coding process, the team refined and

defined key themes that accurately represented the data. Table 3 illustrates the most saturated codes across the cases with examples from the data.

Table 3. Primary Themes and Codes across Cases

Primary Themes	Codes
teachers as language learners and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning students' languages • translating for students and families • technology (Google Translate, immersive reader, research in HL) • writing in HL to show learning/comprehension of TL text • HL classroom small group discussion
biliteracy opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books in HL for independent reading • bilingual writing for class publications
uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental influence • no language partners
positive reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excitement • seeking permission to use HL
possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationship building • curriculum in Languages Other Than English (LOTE)
challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding • assessment in HL • confronting prejudices toward newcomers

Cummins (2021) emphasizes the importance of conducting plurilingual research in real-world settings. Thus, the themes we developed are grounded in actual practice in middle and high school multilingual classrooms. To ensure the validity and representativeness of the results, the research team collaborated in the discussion and refinement of the final themes. The researchers' collaborative effort allowed comprehensive and insightful results that can be used to inform future research and practice.

RESULTS


In this section, we present the findings from each of the research questions under the themes that we determined best represented the coding. Overall, the cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018) suggests that the teachers were able to provide HL invitations by positioning themselves as language learners and resources, using the HL for TL learning, and providing biliteracy opportunities. The students responded to these HL invitations with both uncertainty and


positive reactions. Finally, we share both the possibilities and challenges of providing HL invitations in the secondary newcomer classroom.

How Secondary Language Teachers Provide Home Language Invitations to Newcomer Students

The first research question explores how secondary school teachers provided opportunities for newcomer students to use their native language through HL invitations. These invitations were a key strategy for integrating students' HLs into the learning process. Three primary themes emerged from the data analysis, which provided answers to the first research question: Teachers as Language Learners and Resources, Using HL for TL Learning, and Promoting Biliteracy Opportunities (see Table 4).

Table 4. Home Language Invitations to Newcomer Students

Primary Themes	Codes and Examples from Data
<p>Teachers as Language Learners and Resources</p>	<p>Learning Students' Languages “As I continue to acquire my Spanish vocabulary, I am able to demonstrate how it can be difficult to pronounce words correctly and it is a process to learn. Emergent Multilingual students use my experience as an understanding that the pronunciations take practice and time to learn and adjust between the two languages.” “[After study abroad in Quebec] I have been having conversations with my Congolese student in French. She has had a very hard time adjusting and is not happy to be in classes surrounded by only Spanish-speaking students. She has started to work for me, whereas she wasn't working before.”</p> <p>Translating for Students and Families “I have started to build a case of resources that are provided from the district as well as the community. My team is working on translating the resources to the languages that make up our school culture.”</p>
<p>Use HL for L2 Learning</p>	<p>Technology (Google Translate, Immersive Reader, Research in HL) “Students were able to read the texts in the language of choice through the immersive reader.”</p> <p>“I also provide the opportunity through technological programs to read and write in their home language. This empowers students and provides an opportunity to make connections to learning in a way to understand the content.”</p> <p>Write in HL to Show Learning/Comprehension of TL Text “Students could initially write answers in their native language.” (see Figure 3)</p> 

	<p>HL Classroom Small Group Discussion</p> 
<p>Biliteracy Opportunities</p>	<p>Books in HL for Independent Reading “The student was happy to have <i>The Hunger Games</i> in Arabic to read.”</p> <p>Bilingual Writing for Class Publications</p> <p>câu chuyện về with quái vật của</p> <p>tôi có một with quái vật tên là color nó sống ở trên những ngọn núi tuyết to lớn và nó rất thích chạy xe unicycle trên những ngọn ni đ và nó rất vui tính. Nó có ba chân và không có tay. With quái vật của tôi nó rất hiền nên khi nào bạn rảnh bạn có thể lên núi chơi với nó.</p> <p>The story of the monster</p> <p>I have a monster named color that lives in the big snowy mountains and he loves to ride unicycles in those mountains and he's very friendly, he's a good kid, and he's funny. It has three legs and no arms. My monster is very gentle, so when you are free you can go to the mountain to play with it.</p>

Teachers as Language Learners and Resources

Teachers demonstrated to their students that they were also language learners by using English to acquire their second or heritage language. For example, Vi often relied on her Spanish-speaking mother as a resource to further her Spanish language acquisition. Similarly, Jo attempted to write part of a class essay in Spanish and took French classes during Spring Break. When teachers practiced language learning with their students, they observed that their HLs were helpful tools in learning their TL.

Using HL for TL Learning

During English classes with TL English as the focus, students were often allowed to use their HL in specific ways to comprehend TL texts and content. The teachers relied on Google Translate to provide written instruction in all students' languages and encouraged their students to use this technology when designing their outlines for a paper. When teaching, Jo regularly used the immersive reader feature in her class, which allowed students to translate English text

into their heritage language. Sometimes, the teachers would teach in English but invite students to speak and create representations of their learning in their HL.

Figure 1. Jo's Prompt to Students

Think. Write. Pair. Share. (Newcomers)



Figure 2. Jo's Students' Response

Think. Write. Pair. Share. Students' Writing: L1 or L2



Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how Jo used Google Translate to provide a prompt in students' languages (Spanish and French) and then allowed them to respond in either English or their HL on the online discussion board. Furthermore, Table 3 illustrates how some of Jo's students made posters about racism in Spanish to represent their experiences and scholarly understanding of this concept.

Biliteracy Opportunities

Jo and Vi provided their students with opportunities to showcase their biliteracy skills. They encouraged their students to write stories in their HLs (e.g., Vietnamese and Spanish) and English and publish them in a class book.

Figure 3. Example of Vi's Students' Bilingual Writing

EL MONSTRUO DORMILON

Habia una vez un monstru super bello llamado panfleta. Panfleta era super dormilon y un dia su mama iba a salir a una entrevista de trabajo y le dijo a panfleta que saque el pollo para que se valla desconjelando para el almuerzo, la mama iba a una entrevista de trabajo y estaba muy apurada por que ya era super tarde panfleta le dijo *aja aja yo voy a sacar el pollo no te preocupes* pasan 2 horas de que la mama esta en la entrevista y panfleta escucha el timbre y se acuerda del pollo que la mama le mando a desconjelar panfleta abre cuidadosamente la puerta, y ve que no ay nadie panfleta se pone feliz porque no era su mama, y sale corriendo a desconjelar el pollo y cuando se da la vuelta para mirar su mama esta alli parada mirandola fijamente.

THE SLEEPY MONSTER

Once upon a time there was a super beautiful monster called Pamphlet. Pamphlet was a super sleepyhead. One day her mom was going to go out for a job interview, and told Pamphlet to take out the chicken so that it would defrost for lunch. Mom was going to a job interview and she was in a hurry because already it was super late pamphlet told her *aha aja I'm going to take out the chicken don't worry*. Two hours later, and pamphlet hears the bell and remembers the chicken that the mother sent him to defrost. Pamphlet carefully opens the door, and she sees no one. Pamphlet is happy because it wasn't her mom, and she runs to defrost the chicken. Pamphlet turns around, and her mom is standing there staring at her.



Figure 3 shows an example of a student's response to a unit on monsters in Vi's class. Also, Jo provided books in all her students' HLs for independent reading at home and school to support their biliteracy development. This approach helped students develop their literacy skills in both languages and gain confidence in their writing and communication abilities.

How Newcomer Students Respond to Home Language Invitations

The second research question delves into how newcomer students reacted to HL invitations. Responses varied from initial uncertainty to positive engagement. Some students, especially those without language partners, were hesitant to use their HLs due to a lack of familiarity with such practices in previous educational settings or parental influence urging them to focus on English. However, positive reactions were evident as students became more comfortable. They expressed excitement when greeted in their native languages or when their cultural backgrounds were acknowledged through music and classroom activities. Students began seeking permission to use their HLs for preparing debates or completing assignments, demonstrating increased confidence and engagement. Two primary themes, Uncertainty and Positive Reactions, arose from the data analysis (see Table 5).

Table 5. Uncertainty and Positive Reactions

Primary Themes	Codes
Uncertainty	<p><i>Parental influence</i> Vi shares with researchers that in general, her Asian students who speak Korean and Vietnamese are reluctant to write in the HL because they say their parents want them to learn English.</p> <p><i>No language partners</i> Jo explains that her French-speaking student does not want to use French because no one in the class can read it.</p>
Positive Reactions	<p><i>Excitement</i> “This week, I will be greeting students in Korean and posted the translanguaged greeting on the board to help students visualize what I am was saying. I also played Korean music that I noticed my students take an interest in (BTS and Black Pink). When students realized the music I was playing and the greeting, they became excited and some students even corrected my pronunciation.”</p> <p><i>Seeking Permission to use HL</i> “Students asked for permission to use Spanish to prepare a debate in English.”</p>

Uncertainty

Vi’s observations revealed that some of her students, particularly those who spoke Chinese and Vietnamese and did not have a language partner in the class, were initially hesitant to accept the invitations to write in their native language. This hesitation was also observed in some other students who were unsure about this practice, having never encountered it in their other classes. This initial uncertainty underscores the learning journey, and the daily challenges newcomer students face in their learning.

Positive Reactions

Students’ enthusiasm was palpable when the teacher incorporated their heritage language into the class. They eagerly embraced the use of their language in written form on the board, or in audiovisual format, through music and videos. In the mornings, the teacher greeted the students with music from different countries, representing the languages spoken in the classroom. As a result, the students began greeting each other and the teacher in various languages, with enthusiasm and smiles. When a song in their heritage language was played, the students started asking permission to use their HL because they realized that it helped them better understand the content when reading, discussing, or writing about it.

What Possibilities and Challenges Exist for a Multilingual Secondary Newcomer Classroom

The third research question discusses the possibilities and challenges in a multilingual secondary newcomer classroom through the lens of HL invitations. Teachers noted that these invitations fostered stronger relationships with students and created a more inclusive classroom environment. The use of students’ HLs helped build trust and rapport, essential for effective teaching. Two primary themes emerged from the data analysis, which answered the third research question: Possibilities and Challenges (see Table 6).

Table 6. Possibilities and Challenges

Primary Themes	Codes
Possibilities	<p>Relationship Building “I have given my students the ability to express themselves in their native language; as well as empowered them with literature and poetry this year, which talks about being proud of one’s culture and making their voice heard. This is huge in building relationships with students. It empowers and demonstrates to them that their native language is beautiful and can be heard.” “The ability to communicate at an informal level [in Spanish and French] with students helped me build a trusting relationship and provide them with opportunities to practice academic vocabulary.”</p> <p>Curriculum in LOTE “I will continue to investigate new methods to make language learning accessible using technology” “In the book the author uses various words that are transliterations for Arabic as she talks about things in her culture as well as her new life when she moves”</p>
Challenges	<p>Funding “My district would not purchase the translation software I requested.”</p> <p>Assessment in HL “The one downside of Google Translate is that Farsi will not show the transliteration, nor will it project on the speaker.”</p> <p>Confronting prejudices toward newcomers “We are more than ever faced with mindsets that are negative against Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) communities; whether it is previous administrations, or ingrained prejudice that we have not been made aware of.” “We must be intentional with the literature we use due to, first of all, make making connections with our students and showing them that they can see themselves in the books that they read and write, and secondly, in order to stop the marginalization of BIPOC communities through a whitewashed curriculum.”</p>

Possibilities

The findings illustrate areas where we might build on to create multilingual newcomer spaces. For instance, one possibility is the use of technology to facilitate language learning, although a possible obstacle is the scarcity of resources available in the students' first languages. Both teachers highlighted the importance of relationship-building in the classroom. The findings show that encouraging students to share and use their HLs in class effectively connected with them. They recognized that, as HL English-speaking White/White presenting teachers, they faced challenges in gaining their students' trust. However, they showed solidarity with their students, immigrants, and refugees of Color by emphasizing the beauty of their HLs and how language is closely linked to one's culture and identity.

Both teachers noted the scarcity of instructional and curricular resources in LOTE, particularly, languages such as Farsi, and Pashto. However, they have started to explore the possibilities of creating a curriculum through technology, online resources, and books in their students' HLs. With some innovative use of technology and knowledge of finding books in the student's first language, they successfully developed a multilingual curriculum for their classroom that included every student's language. They were even able to accomplish this when they did not have a translator for a particular language.

Challenges

Despite teachers finding significant possibilities and making progress, they also faced challenges that must be addressed. The administrators hesitated to provide additional funding for translation software or books in the students' HLs. Unfortunately, these administrators were under the impression that teachers were the only resources that newcomers needed; therefore, a limited amount of funding was available. Teachers believed that administrators had research and theoretical knowledge on the importance of embracing and using the students' HLs. As a result of this lack of knowledge, the teachers had to overcome challenges on their own.

The teachers had students in their classrooms who spoke languages they needed to become more familiar with, including Farsi. Not having the resources in the students' languages made it challenging to assess their writing, presentations, or class discussions. To overcome this challenge, the teachers used more informal measures to evaluate the students' HL work, with a greater focus on comprehension and engagement.

The teachers faced pushback from other educators in their multilingual, secondary classrooms due to prejudices toward newcomers. They observed that primarily White teachers

and administrators gave language restrictions (English-only) to their newcomer students of Color. Some examples of such language restrictions were not allowing students to write in their HL, telling them to only speak English in the hallways, and enrolling them in elective classes, claiming that the students would not be able to succeed in that class because of their limited English. Therefore, teachers in this study considered their linguistic justice work in the secondary newcomer classroom critical to fight for racial justice for multilingual secondary newcomer students.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study align with the theoretical frameworks behind the Multilingual Turn in SLA (May, 2014) and the Multilingual View of Translanguaging (MacSwan, 2017). These frameworks advocate that integrating students' first languages in the classroom improves their linguistic and cognitive development. In this study, the active use of HL invitations by teachers facilitated a more inclusive classroom environment, supporting both engagement and the development of biliteracy skills. This approach enhances the educational experience by not only validating the students' linguistic and cultural identities but also using them as assets in the process of learning a second language.

The findings have several implications for educators involved in multilingual education. First, the positive impact of HL invitations suggests that schools should integrate multilingual teaching practices more comprehensively within the curriculum. This includes training teachers to recognize and utilize the linguistic resources that multilingual students bring into the classroom. Educational leaders and curriculum developers should consider designing instructional materials that encourage translanguaging, which can enhance student engagement and comprehension. Moreover, the use of technology such as translation apps and immersive reader tools, as observed in the study, highlights the potential for digital tools to support multilingual learning environments. Schools should invest in and promote technology that aids in language translation and supports the learning of content in multiple languages, providing students with greater access to learning materials in their HLs.

Furthermore, these findings underline the importance of creating supportive educational environments that value linguistic diversity. This involves not only acknowledging the linguistic capabilities of students, but also actively fostering an educational culture where multiple languages are seen as an asset rather than a challenge. Encouraging the use of students' HLs can build trust and rapport, which are crucial for effective teaching and learning.

This study contributes to the body of research on multilingual education and sets the stage for further investigations into the effectiveness of translanguaging practices. Future research should consider longitudinal studies that describe how multilingual teaching practices impact long-term academic and linguistic development. There is also a need for more studies involving a large number of participants from diverse educational settings. This will allow researchers to generalize findings more broadly and examine how different school settings impact the implementation and outcomes of multilingual teaching practices.

In addition, future research should explore specific teaching strategies that most effectively promote biliteracy and bilingualism within the classroom. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the components that contribute to the effectiveness of multilingual education programs can assist in the development of policies and professional developments for middle school and high school teachers that more effectively cater to the diverse linguistic needs of newcomer students. Exploring students' and parents' perspectives on translanguaging practices can also provide valuable insight into how these teaching practices impact the educational experiences of newcomer students outside of the academic context. This could provide insights for more comprehensive approaches to education that not only focus on linguistic development but also encompass cultural integration and identity formation.

The limitations of this study include its focus on only two teachers, which may not fully capture the variability of teaching practices across different educational contexts. Another limitation in this study is the self-reported nature of the data, which may introduce bias, as research-participants might portray their practices in a more favorable light. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to observe the long-term effects of multilingual practices on student outcomes.

CONCLUSION


This study demonstrates an effective approach by which secondary newcomer classrooms, traditionally the most English-centric educational environments (Seilstad, 2021), can be transformed into richly multilingual spaces. This is accomplished through intentional HL invitations. Despite challenges such as not speaking students' languages fluently, lacking an official curriculum in those languages, and minimal administrative support for multilingual instruction, teachers in this study have successfully fostered spaces where students could engage with their HLs. This engagement took various forms, including being able to listen to,


see, and having the choice to speak and/or write in their native languages, which thereby nurtured biliteracy (Gort, 2019) in innovative ways.

We suggest that viewing HL invitations as a practical and acceptable method can be beneficial in secondary newcomer settings, where using the first language (HL) might seem counterintuitive and even face resistance from educators, students, and their parents. Moving forward, our findings emphasize the need to equip teachers with more resources concerning multilingual technological tools (Smith et al., 2020), acknowledging the daily advancements in language learning and translation technologies.


Moreover, the study emphasizes the value of teachers experiencing and reflecting on their own language learning journeys, which can enhance their instructional approaches, even if the languages they learn are not spoken by their students (Kang & Pacheco, 2020). A significant ongoing challenge is the need for greater administrative understanding and support for multilingualism, a concern also highlighted in related research (Menken & Solorza, 2014). By continuing to push the boundaries of traditional language education, we can better support the linguistic and academic development of newcomer students in multilingual environments.


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