

Print Literacy Humiliation: Translanguaging and emotions with newcomer children

Katie Brubacher

Volume 24, Number 2, 2022

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1092084ar>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20360/langandlit29529>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada

ISSN

1496-0974 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Brubacher, K. (2022). Print Literacy Humiliation: Translanguaging and emotions with newcomer children. *Language and Literacy / Langue et littérature*, 24(2), 133–152. <https://doi.org/10.20360/langandlit29529>

Article abstract

Emotions not only take us deeper in but also reveal larger political and historical structures that dominate how the Grades 4 to 6 newcomers with emerging print literacy in this study shape their literacy practices. Following a humanizing approach, I conducted three qualitative, critical case studies in Ontario urban schools. Data collection tools included in this article include plurilingual texts, focus group interviews and field notes. Through a thematic deductive analysis, themes emerged such as desire and written English, and print literacy humiliation. Moving away from historically oppressive, English-only structures in the classrooms, created more excitement and pride around writing and language.

© Katie Brubacher, 2022



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Print Literacy Humiliation: Translanguaging and emotions with newcomer children

KATIE BRUBACHER

University of Toronto

Abstract

Emotions not only take us deeper in but also reveal larger political and historical structures that dominate how the Grades 4 to 6 newcomers with emerging print literacy in this study shape their literacy practices. Following a humanizing approach, I conducted three qualitative, critical case studies in Ontario urban schools. Data collection tools included in this article include plurilingual texts, focus group interviews and field notes. Through a thematic deductive analysis, themes emerged such as desire and written English, and print literacy humiliation. Moving away from historically oppressive, English-only structures in the classrooms, created more excitement and pride around writing and language.

Key words: Emotion, Affect, Translanguaging, Print Literacy, Elementary, Multilingual

Context

In my early days as a middle school educator, some of my own greatest learning as a teacher came from those, often racialized, students who arrived in Canadian classrooms not having learned to read and write in any language and not having had consistent access to formal schooling. The students, whom I will refer to as *newcomers with emerging print literacy*, were placed in Grade 6, 7 or 8 mainstream classrooms where I worked as either a homeroom teacher and as a language and literacy specialist teacher. At times, we questioned “those often unquestioned instructional and school cultural practices and flip[ped] elements of school culture, practices, and rules on their head” (Montero et al., 2012, p. 2). However, it never felt like it was enough. Moreover, I felt like I could be doing so much more for the students. With this thought in mind, I have turned my own thinking towards how to add to the research and further find ways to provide rich, non-discriminatory programming for students.

Within the larger Canadian context, studies have found that these newcomer students and those with refugee backgrounds in particular do not always have positive experiences with schooling (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2017; Miles & Bailey-McKenna, 2016; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Although my research is not specifically focused on refugee students, many of the studies on students of a refugee background in the Canadian context include students who have missed school and may not have learned to read and write in any language. Some of the studies have found that students describe experiencing racism (Kanu, 2008; Schroeter & James, 2015; Stewart, 2011). Similar to my experience, the research in Canadian secondary schools suggests that there is a lack of rich programming for students. However, almost all of these studies have been completed in secondary school

and do not include elementary children as co-researchers. Moreover, the category of newcomer with emerging print literacy that I have created does not focus on the children's immigration status. An exception to that being the Guo et al. (2019) study with Syrian children of refugee background ages 10-14 (Grades 5 – 8). The main purpose of this study, however, is to focus solely on Grades 4 to 6 newcomers, with emerging print literacy and from diverse backgrounds, to understand how emotions shape their literacy practices and identities. My study was originally open to Grades 4 to 8, but the schools that were available to me through professional contacts were in the Grades 4 to 6 range. I examine how emotions, as understood by Ahmed (2004), give shape to things. Emotions take us further in and allow us to examine how histories position literacy practices and identities. For the purposes of this paper, identity is understood as being strategic and positional (Hall, 1996). The following questions guide this research: What emotions are associated with and shape the students' literacy practices? How do the students' understand the relationship between these emotions and their literacy practices?

Next, I highlight how different concepts and theories taken up in this paper have already been used by researchers in this area.

Translanguaging and emerging print literacy

Translanguaging is an approach to educating students that acknowledges all of their literacy practices. With translanguaging, García and Otheguy (2020) draw attention to the practices of using an entire linguistic repertoire. At its essence “translanguaging acknowledges multilingualism as a product of socio-political categorization, centrally important for identity purposes, but rejects the psycholinguistic reality of two separate linguistic systems” (García & Otheguy, 2020, p. 26). Researchers such as King and Bigelow (2020) have found translanguaging to be a useful approach in working with students with emerging print literacy. There continues to be debate as to the validity of certain types of translanguaging. Cummins (2020), raises concerns about translanguaging in that it aims to move away from named languages and may add to the theoretical implications, but not necessarily practical implications in the classroom. Despite this, an approach to language that does not focus on named languages and boundaries makes sense for children with emerging print literacy because it allows them to learn about print literacy using their entire linguistic repertoire and not have to wait until they have learned one named language, English. Moreover, translanguaging allows for a playfulness with language in that children can pull from their entire linguistic repertoire instead of focusing on perfecting one language. For the purposes of this paper, García et al.'s (2017) concept of the *translanguaging corriente* (Spanish for current) will be addressed, which they see as language use in the classroom. Are students' languages hidden? How can language be heard and felt in the classroom? With García, language is a complex interrelated discourse where the multilingual person brings together all facets of their lives.

A few studies employing translanguaging have begun to appear in the area of newcomers with emerging print literacy practices and students of refugee backgrounds, in general (Helm & Dabre, 2017; Stille et al., 2016; Van Viegan, 2020). In addition, Dávila (2015) completed a year-long qualitative study with two young African immigrant women who she described as having limited or interrupted prior schooling. She examined literacies

in and out of school using a translanguaging approach that examines how the young women make meaning. Another study by Bigelow et al. (2017) incorporated the use of new literacy and translanguaging in a classroom with newcomers with emerging print literacy as they use social media to engage in creating content for their peers and for larger global audiences. In these ways, translanguaging is emerging as an important theory in the research with newcomers with emerging print literacy.

Emotion

An understanding of literacy that examines students' emotions is central to this research. Ahmed's work on what she refers to as the sociality of emotions is central to this research. Ahmed (2004) examines how "emotions are bound up with the securing of social hierarchy" (p. 4) and are passed over the body by structures within society. She is concerned with how emotions circulate within histories and structures giving shape to people and ideas. It is the emotions that become associated with a subject or idea that matter. In a conversation, she tells us

emotions don't work simply in a located, bound subject. They move and they are not just social in the sense of mediated, but they actually show how the subject arrives into a world that already has affects and feelings circulating in very particular ways. (Schmitz & Ahmed, 2013, p. 98)

Emotions come both from within and without and begin to define the boundaries of who we are: "emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4). The emotions from without refer to the sociality of emotion where structures in society like the nation, for example, assume racist emotions on the body.

Ultimately, Ahmed (2010) is interested in the body and how emotions affect it. For Ahmed (2010), "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" (p. 29). She is concerned with emotions that stay with us, which she refers to as *sticky* emotions. Belonging and un-belonging then become markers of emotion on the body. Ahmed (2010) further states that "[t]o be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things. To give value to things is to shape what is near us" (p. 31). In the case of the participants in my study, I ask them to turn towards their own language repertoires and literacy practices to reflect on how certain emotions *stick* and how these *sticky* emotions give value and shape to those objects. Those emotions that stick and preserve the connections between these things are closely examined and analyzed with the students. Students are then asked to reflect on what histories and structures position them within these emotions.

Within the field of literacy, researchers have begun to focus on how literacy involves the body, emotions and thought (Abdul & Lee, 2017; Amsler, 2001; Anwaruddin, 2016; Cole & Yang, 2008;). With second language education, there has been much discussion of affective factors in learning a new language such as anxiety, inhibition and self-esteem while speaking the target language but not a study of emotion, which is underpinned by a theoretical foundation (Plavenko, 2013). These affective factors are limited in nature and not reflective of affect, which examines what emotions do to the body.

Since then, Motha and Lin (2014) have researched desire within TESOL. They find the emotion, which is more theoretical in nature than affective factors, of desire drives the need to learn English: what will English unlock. Referring to Ahmed (2004), they find that desire is not our own but is shaped by history and structures. Likewise, Benesch (2012) highlights how Ahmed challenges the hierarchy of emotions and how Ahmed constructs emotions as circulating between bodies. Finally, Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) write about linguistic shame where social discourse denigrates students identities and language practices. In these ways, Ahmed's theories on emotion and affect are beginning to add to current literature in literacy and second language teaching.

This study views literacy as being framed by a translanguaging (García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014) lens that incorporates emotion (Ahmed, 2004, 2010). With García et al. (2017), language is a complex interrelated discourse that brings together all facets of multilingual lives; whereas, Ahmed (2004) is concerned with how emotions give shape to these facets. With translanguaging, García draws attention to the practices of using an entire language repertoire. Languages are a single array that is always activated. Ahmed on the other hand is concerned with emotion and how emotions circulate within histories and structures giving shape to identities and ideas. It is the emotions that become associated with a subject or idea that matter. These theoretical concepts connect in that they allow the students to examine the emotions that are associated with and give shape to their literacy practices. These emotions take us both further in and allow us to examine how histories and structures position our literacy practices.

Methods

My study predominantly focuses on qualitative work in the classroom. It is a series of three critical and collective case studies (Crowe et al., 2011) at three different schools. Each case study took place in one elementary school within a three to four month time frame. I spent a minimum of 20 non-consecutive half school days or 50 hours at each school site collecting data by working with the classroom teacher to implement our collaborative program. At times, I would work with the teacher in implementing their program and finding ways to incorporate translanguaging. At other times I taught the class myself, bringing in well researched ideas in second language education such as poetry and linguistic portraits, with the aim of incorporating students' entire linguistic repertoire into their writing. At the first school site, I worked in a classroom with eight children, all of whom were described as having emerging print literacy. At the second school site, most of the children were integrated into a Grade 4 homeroom classroom with approximately 25 students. One Grade 5 student participant was in a half day program for newcomer multilingual students. At the third school site, the English as a Second Language classroom where I researched had 15 students.

My research captures both the data that is unique to each case but also consistent across more than one time and place. The children worked collaboratively and individually using translanguaging to create oral and written texts. These texts included poetry and classwork as well as videos on *Flipgrid* in response to a series of prompts related to language, literacy and identities. These videos are not included in this article. However, the students viewed and analyzed them as part of their work as co-researchers. The poetry was

written in the style of George Ella Lyon’s (1999) *Where I Am From* poems and the students were encouraged to write them using their entire linguistic repertoire. The texts, which were part of their regular classroom work, allowed me to understand the emotions that were associated with the students’ identities and literacy practices in general and find ways to overtly translanguage with the students, specifically. The children then acted as co-researchers to analyze and code each other’s texts at the end of the case study. Where possible, they were paired up with same language peers, viewed each other’s work through videos on the application *Flipgrid*, and then through a focus group discussion used body maps (see Figure 1) to discuss the emotions they saw present in each other’s work. Themes were based on emotions as a way to capture how the children understood with their literacy practices.

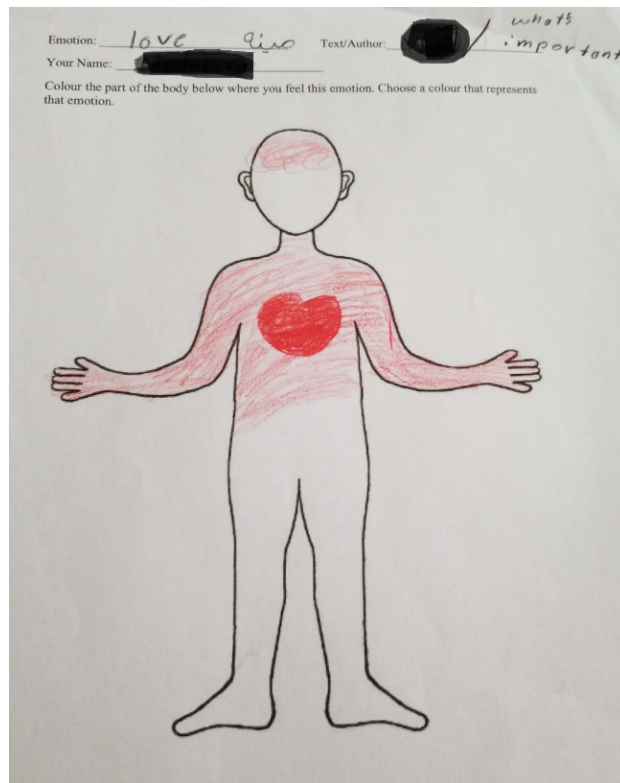


Figure 1. Body Map

By including child participants in the research process using a humanizing approach (Paris, 2011), I draw attention to how students view their own literacy practices and how we can work towards creating more inclusive environments where students’ prior learning and experiences are appreciated and respected. A humanizing approach is where “the researcher’s efforts must coincide with the students’ to engage in critical thinking about the problems and issues of interest as both the researcher and participants seek mutual humanization through understanding” (Paris, 2011, p. 137). Paris’ humanizing research is conceptualized to occur with marginalized populations. Humanizing research avoids

exploitation and colonization by having a reciprocal relationship of dignity and care where the researcher works with the participants as well as choosing them. One does not look for deficits but instead seeks to understand things within contexts. In conjunction with this approach, when asking for consent, I received written permission from guardians as well as oral permission through a translator, if needed. Throughout the study, I asked for the student participants' assent before taking pictures of their written work or recording their oral responses to questions.

Participants

At each of the three school sites, there was a teacher participant, whose interview provided context for the study and whose insights helped to triangulate the data. There were also between four and six child participants who were chosen in consultation with the teacher participants. The inclusion criteria being: newcomers, between Grades 4 to 6 and learning to read and write as a child would during the primary years (Grades 1 to 3). Generally speaking, all student participants had arrived in Canada within two years of this research taking place. One student, Karo, had arrived in Grade 3 when she was not eligible for the type of intense literacy program provided in this classroom. Alexandra, her teacher, felt that this had put Karo at a disadvantage, as this was an additional year where no one had taught Karo how to read. This is why she is included in this study.

Table 1
Thistle Meadow Participants

School 1: Thistle Meadow

| Pseudonym | Role | Language | Gender | Grade | Length of time in Canada |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Alexandra | ELD Teacher | Spanish, English | Female | Gr. 4/5 | Unknown (immigrated from Cuba) |
| Fatima | Student | Arabic, English | Female | 5 | 7 months |
| Karam | Student | Arabic, English | Male | 5 | 1 to 2 years |
| Amira | Student | Arabic, English | Female | 5 | 1 to 2 years |
| Yara | Student | Arabic, English | Female | 5 | 1 to 2 years |
| Karo | Student | Pashto, English | Female | 5 | 3 years |

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------|--------|------|---|---------------|
| Diyar | Student | Pashto | Male | 5 | New arrival * |
|-------|---------|--------|------|---|---------------|

* Diyar arrived one month into the case study.

Table 2

Smokey Glen Participants

School 2: Smokey Glen

| Pseudonym | Role | Language | Gender | Grade | Length of time in Canada |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Elitsia | ESL/ELD Teacher | Russian, Macedonian, Serbian, English | Female | Gr. 1 – 5 | Immigrated to Canada in the 1990s |
| Peter | Homeroom Teacher | English, Jamaican Dialect | Male | 4 | Born in Canada |
| Senait | Student | Eritrean, Arabic, English | Female | 4 | 2 years |
| Tenzin Rabten | Student | Tibetan, Hindi | Male | 5 | 2 months |
| Tenzin Aashi | Student | Tibetan, Hindi, English, French | Female | 4 | 6 months |
| Tomas | Student | Slovak, English, Polish, French | Male | 4 | 2 years |

Table 3

Valley Forest Participants

School 3: Valley Forest

| Pseudonym | Role | Language | Gender | Grade | Length of time in Canada |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------|---------|--------------------------|
| Gina | ESL/ELD Teacher | Greek, English, Italian | Female | Gr. 4–6 | Born in Canada |

| | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------------------------------|------|---|----------|
| José | Student | Spanish | Male | 6 | 4 months |
| Luis | Student | Spanish | Male | 5 | 4 months |
| Hunor | Student | Hungarian, English, Roma | Male | 5 | 1 year |
| Balinte | Student | Hungarian, English, Roma, French | Male | 5 | 2 years |

Research Tools

For each case study, the students produced a series of written texts such as poetry and video response questions that reflect their entire linguistic repertoire. For the poetry and other written work, I took pictures of the students written work upon completion. For the videos on Flipgrid, students were given ten different prompts. We did three together as a class on the topics of places they had lived, languages and what was important to them. They were then given choice and completed three or four more responses. For example, one prompt, which the students analyze in this article, asked students to reflect on how they feel about their writing. Each video was up to five minutes in length but were often one to two minutes long. Some students choose to respond to their prompts in English and others used different parts of their linguistic repertoire. At the end of each case study, through focus group discussions, these students analyzed each other's work, thus participating as co-researchers. I also conducted 60 minute pre- and post-interviews with the four teachers and wrote daily field notes.

For the focus groups, the children identified emotions that they saw or heard in the texts that each other created. They were encouraged to identify emotions using any part of their linguistic repertoire. After they coded each other's texts with emotions, I audio-recorded focus discussions on emotional themes, which become part of and even lead to my own analysis of the data. Emotions are complex and intense involving miscommunication (Ahmed, 2004) and we were already communicating using different languages. In order to prepare for their focus group discussions, the students used a body map while analyzing each other's texts. They colored where they felt the emotion is present in the body for each emotional code they produced.

Data Analysis

All of the data was analyzed thematically and deductively. Using my theoretical framework, I used concepts to understand the data by organizing it in the following categories: social positions (demographic information on who the students are); literacy practices (students' languages, translanguaging and literacy practices); and sticky emotions (emotional codes). Some of the following themes are student identified and other are identified by me.

Translanguaging Contexts.

I had hoped to create rich translanguaging experiences with my teacher participants and closely observe how the students interacted with translanguaging in their classroom and the emotions that shaped those interactions. However, due to the short time I spent at each school site, three months, my ability to complete translanguaging activities was dependent on the teacher participants' translanguaging stances and the environment they had already developed in their classrooms. All four teachers in this study approached incorporating students' entire linguistic repertoires into learning and the classroom from vastly different perspectives. In general, most of the teachers in this study taught content in the English-only contexts we have come to accept in a colonial nation such as Canada. Peter, the Grade 4 classroom teacher at Smokey Glen, had very little evidence of students' language repertoires present in his classroom on the walls and bulletin boards, as did Alexandra from Thistle Meadow, who worked with a class of only students with emerging print literacy at Thistle Meadow. With both Peter and Alexandra, this appeared to be connected to a lack of professional development within the area of second language acquisition, as both of them were dynamic teachers with strong relationships with their students.

At Valley Forest, however, the students were permitted to use their entire language repertoire during class time, which the students did with much confidence, but their teacher, Gina, also had writing samples in the students' languages to show me when I arrived to start the research process. Students used their languages to comprehend texts and content. This was mainly heard through the students' use of their own spoken languages to support their academic learning. There were also multilingual bulletin boards, iPads for Google translate, bilingual picture books and students' writing in exercise books. This may have been due to the school culture where Gina taught, but she also referenced different professional development experiences during her interview. There was still much room for finding ways to make written languages part the students' academic work, but there was an openness to moving away from an English-only pedagogy.

Findings

In the following section, I begin by discussing the following themes of language and desire, and print literacy humiliation. I end this analysis by discussing how translanguaging through writing can pull students away from a colonial, English only understanding of literacy to one where their existing literacy practices are recognized. In this way, the children begin to shape writing in their entire linguistic repertoire with desire. It should be noted that during the focus group interviews some of the students choose to focus more on emotions associated with identity over literacy practices. Although I have data from all of the student participants, not all of them identified themes that are relevant to this article.

Language and desire.

The students' linguistic repertoires are an important aspect of their literacy practices. The students had widely variant feelings towards their own language. Hunor, one of the boys in Gina's class, could often be heard using different parts of his linguistic repertoire. He spoke Hungarian freely with his classmates, feeling confident in using all of

his language practices in the classroom. Although Hunor did not identify specific emotions for his classmates during the focus group interviews, his feelings and experiences with languages came out during those conversations. Below is an excerpt from the co-researching session where Hunor explains how he prefers to speak English at home with his brother and Hungarian at school with his friend:

| | | |
|-------------|------|---|
| Hunor | 7:08 | Ummm. That's why I speak Hungarian because my brother's here. Like he talking to me and I don't want to talk to him like Hungarian. That's why I don't learn English. |
| Interviewer | 7:30 | Alright. So with your brother you try to speak English? But in school, with your friends, you speak Hungarian. |
| Hunor | 7:36 | Yeah. |
| Interviewer | 7:37 | Great. So why do you want to speak Hungarian with your friends at school but you want to speak English with your brother? |
| Hunor | 7:50 | But, you guys, ahhh, I play with my friend and my brother not here at school. So we going to him and his house and I speak to him like English more. He's here like five years old, five years. |
| Interviewer | 8:14 | Oh. Your brother's been in Canada for a long time. |
| Hunor | 8:16 | Yeah. |
| Interviewer | 8:17 | Does he know much Hungarian? |
| Hunor | 8:18 | Ahh. Yeah, but he's got perfect English. |

(Valley Forest, Focus Group Interview)

Here we can see how English is shaped by desire for Hunor. In their research, Motha and Lin (2014) found that ESL students desire language identities that are attached to particular accents, capital, power and what lies beyond the doors that English will unlock. Likewise, Hunor wants to learn English and he wants someone who speaks it 'perfectly' to practice it with. However, what is different about Hunor is that he sees school as a place of play where he can use his Hungarian and the home as a place to practice and learn English.

Later, using his analysis of a peers Flipgrid video on writing to further our discussion, Hunor uses the word *happy* to describe how he feels about his writing:

| | | |
|-------|------|--|
| Hunor | 5:09 | But more, more, more writing. I don't know but when the teacher and he help me and said "doing this". And I do and that's why I learn writing about that. |
| Hunor | 6:17 | The, my classroom, some people like writing but not really good and my teacher said. I writing and my teacher said, "good for you". And I said, "thank you". And he said, and he said, and he said, "your feel good writing". And I said, "yes". |

(Valley Forest, Focus Group Interview)

Ahmed (2004) writes that "whether I perceive something as beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something" (p. 6). Hunor felt good about his writing despite having only just learned to read and write in English. His teacher affirms his writing by saying 'good for you'. In addition to this, in many ways his teacher and school have adopted a translanguaging approach where Hunor's language can be seen and heard in the classroom. Despite feeling good about his writing, however, Hunor still believes he must learn perfect English suggesting that regardless of how much a school adopts translanguaging as its philosophy there is still an external, societal pressure that makes one desire English. Hunor did desire English but, more importantly, this desire did not make him feel shame towards his Hungarian or his print literacy practices, which he used proudly.

Print Literacy Humiliation.

At Thistle Meadow, in order to get access to the classroom for research, I agreed to help out with their existing guided reading program. This meant half of the time that I was completing research, I was teaching the students using a formalized reading program and the other half of the time I could have the students engage in activities I had prepared. Montero et al. (2014) have found that the use of guided reading and running records (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) can have a tremendous impact on the acceleration of secondary school refugee children's emergent print literacy. They suggest that the students need literacy instruction and not just language instruction. They also focus on the socio-cultural aspect of book choice finding that non-fiction texts are much more effective. Instead of purchasing a complete Grade level program for guided reading, they selected books that had some socio-cultural context for students. In fact, researchers and teachers involved in Montero et al.'s (2014) project have created a free [online repository](#) of leveled readers written by students (ERGO, 2020), as they found it difficult to find texts that were culturally relevant.

Looking back at my field notes, the first day of guided reading, Alexandra placed me with Karo and asked me to teach a scripted lesson based on the Fountas and Pinnell (1996) reading program at the Grade 2 level. One book was non-fiction and about dog sledding. Both Karo and I had to learn new vocabulary: *mushing*. The program then required her to write three sentences about dog sledding as evidence of her learning. Afterwards, we read another book about birds. There was a phonics activity where we

learned about different long *u* and *o* forms. The final book was fiction and about two kids being babysat by their grandfather and making popcorn together. There were then some comprehension questions for me to ask. Karo was able to decode about half the words correctly and was able to demonstrate comprehension of the story at the end when I asked questions. The program was entirely in English. On the one hand, while completing the guided reading program, Karo felt confident. Having access to print literacy in English was something that was stuck with desire for Karo, as it was the other students in the class. She was able to accomplish the tasks assigned and see herself progress through the different literacy levels set up by the program and her teacher. On the other hand, this program was highly prescriptive and not responsive to Karo's multilingualism, forcing her into an approach to reading that did not value her literacy practices.

It was not surprising for me to hear Karo express frustration and anger towards her written literacy practices later in the study when it became the topic during the focus group discussion. When working as co-researchers and examining a Flipgrid video on Writing, Amira had pointed out that a student did not appear to like their writing, which led to the two girls reflecting on why writing makes them angry and why they do not like to write:

| | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| Amira | 6:05 | So, when I read, I feel happy, but when I write, I don't feel that happy. I don't like it that much. |
| Karo | 7:31 | No. Not so much sentence. So much sentence my finger hurts when I write it in this hand. This, I can't write it and I'm so mad. Angry. |
| Amira | 13:55 | Cause if we get good marks we umm, we, we like ahh we will be good and we will know how to read and write and that's important because when we want to work at a job, we need to know how to read and write and do everything and talk in English, so ahh |

(*Thistle Meadow, Focus Group Interview*)

English, here, is seen as a *sticky object* (Ahmed, 2010): a desirable thing to which much emotion is attached. But this desire for English and a job as well as access to print literacy, writing, leads to anger. Karo's hand even starts to hurt. She erases and rewrites her work. Amira and Karo's classroom is one where English is the medium of instruction. The children are told not to use their languages and to learn to read in English. Writing becomes stuck with the emotion of anger or feeling mad or not feeling happy. They are presented with the standardized way to write a language through the books they read, but then must reproduce it. When they cannot, they feel anger, *قه الغضب*.

The students' frustration towards and even humiliation from print literacy was clearly apparent during the guided reading session with Karam, Karo and Fatima. We read two of the same books from the previous guided reading sessions and then introduced a

new book that combined fiction and nonfiction and was about visiting a dairy farm. Karo made quite a few errors but continued on as usual and demonstrated comprehension of the story. Karam and Fatima, on the other hand, did not want to read and took some encouragement to join in. Karam was able to decode a quarter of the words. I followed along with my finger and read a lot of words he could not decode. Fatima could decode almost none of the words. I would help her with all of them and used a lot of encouraging language. Not surprisingly, Karam and Fatima were more focused on talking, laughing, and making jokes. They were also focused on laughing at each other when not knowing how to read a word. They were humiliating each other over their reading ability. The embarrassment the students felt about not being able to use the English found in the texts prompted them to laugh at each other and attach print literacy with humiliation.

Many years ago, when I had first started teaching and was not as adept at creating a translanguaging environment, a similar thing had happened with my students. They mocked each other's literacy practices. If, as a larger school system and as individual teachers, we do not create translanguaging environments in our classrooms where all students' literacy practices are included and respected, we add to the denigration of students' identities. Moreover, a program that uses an autonomous approach to print literacy instruction, where decoding texts is emphasized over social context, ignores students' individual lives and the power imbalances within structures such as schools (Wiley, 1996). Once again, English only colonial practices connect with anger, shame and humiliation. Print literacy humiliation reveals the deep emotional impact these structures have on the student.

Incorporating translanguaging into guided reading.

How does one make the translanguaging corriente more overt in an English only classroom? Teachers must do more than go with the translanguaging corriente flow but must also carefully plan activities that draw on students' existing literacy practice making them a central part of learning in the classroom (García & Kleyen, 2016). Knowing that Thistle Meadow was a predominantly English only space, I had to think creatively about ways to plan on bringing students' literacy practices into the learning. One way to do this was to build some vocabulary around emotions. During an initial class interaction on the idea of sticky emotions, I introduced the word *proud* to the class. I asked the students to write the word proud on the board for me. There was lots of shouting and discussion in Arabic as the students agreed on how to spell the word. The Pashto speaking students did not know what the word for proud was in their language. I told them to ask their parents and tell us next class. However, they wanted me to look it up on Google translate. I did and then wrote it on the board for them. I heard an "ohhh" of recognition from the class as I wrote the Pashto word for proud (Figure 2):

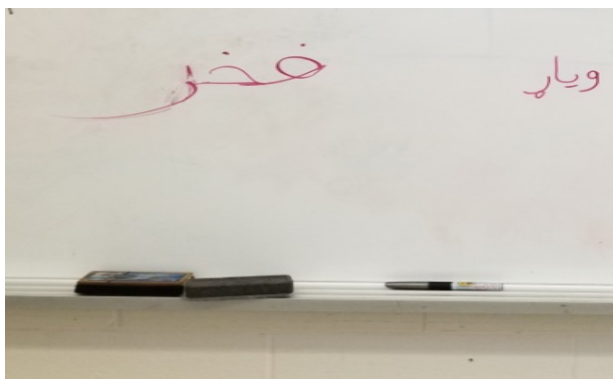


Figure 2. Translanguaging on white board

Here, I had planned a simple way to incorporate written Arabic and Pashto into the class. The students collaborated to write the word in Arabic. The two Pashto speaking students in the class chose to use Google translate and were intrigued by how the word proud was spelt in their language, reading it and recognizing it once I had written the word. Despite the children having emerging print literacy in Arabic and Pashto, they were still able to rely on each other and classroom resources to collaboratively construct the word for proud. In this moment, it was their literacy practices, and not written English, that became stuck with desire.

At Smokey Glen, my second school site, finding ways to have the children write in Tibetan was particularly difficult, as the children had almost no print literacy practices in Tibetan. However, many of the Tibetan speaking children also knew Hindi. This made communicating orally with them easier, as there were more Hindi resources for me to access. One student, Tenzin Rabten, had recently arrived in Canada and was only beginning to incorporate English into his linguistic repertoire. As neither of us were able to understand each other's literacy practices, communicating was something that took time. Many of the children spoke Tibetan and Hindi like Tenzin Rabten. They were happy to translanguague with him. With me, we ended up using the oral component of Google Translate in Hindi.

While Tenzin Rabten was learning about print literacy in English, I had hoped to utilize his Tibetan to make his print literacy practices more meaningful and relevant. However, he was able to write very little in Tibetan or Hindi and appeared to be learning about print literacy for the first-time using English only. This made it challenging for me to work with him using print literacy practices that incorporated his entire linguistic repertoire. Nearing the end of our research time together, when Tenzin Rabten knew me better, I tried writing out some Tibetan phonetically with him. This was a novel idea and I wanted him to know me and feel safe trying out written Tibetan before I attempted something like this. We incorporated translanguaging into his writing through the *Where I Am From* (Figure 3):

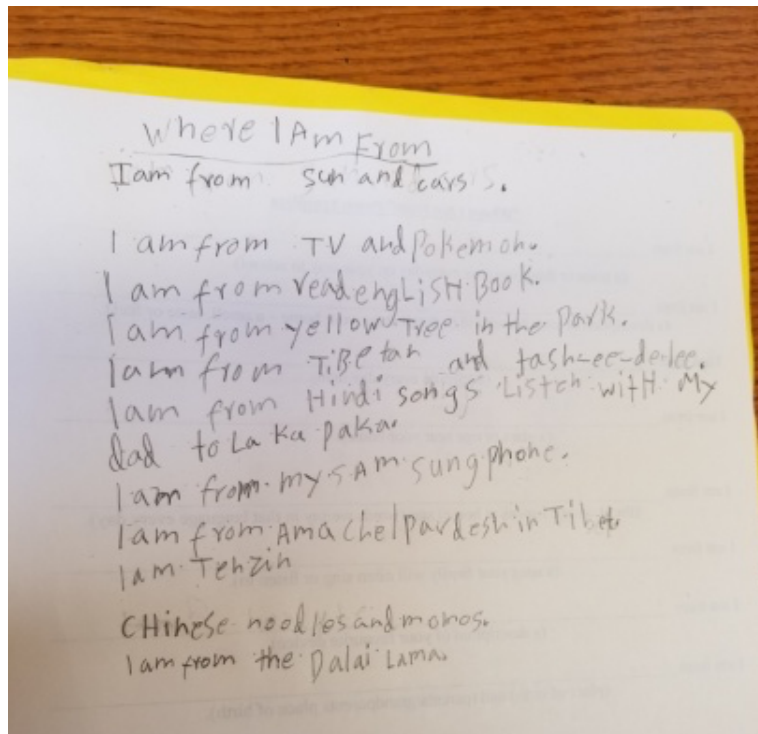


Figure 3. Rabten's Where I Am From Poem

As can be seen in the fifth line of the poem, Tenzin Rabten has included the phonetically spelled word *tash-ee-de-lee* in his poem. On the seventh line, he has written *Laka Paka* and finally the ninth line includes the word *Amachelpardeshin*.

Normally when I was working with Tenzin Rabten on his writing in English, he would work hard almost as if he had to persevere through something he had to learn. This was the first time I saw him smile about his writing. Therefore, although learning to write in English was stuck with much desire, there was some awe about his phonetically written Tibetan. Tenzin Rabten did not desire to write in his language. I had to encourage him to do so. I think this is what might discourage many teachers from moving forward with translanguaging in writing: it is not how they are used to teaching, so it is difficult, and their students might not react well at first. However, written Tibetan in this instance became something to be desired. The children began to move the boundary of what their written literacy practices could include and began to desire to learn to write in something other than English.

Conclusions

My aim with these humanizing collective case studies was to engage the students as co-researchers in order to better understand the emotions that were associated with and shaped their literacy practices. At Thistle Meadow, an English-only space with a prescriptive guided reading program, students expressed feeling anger towards their print literacy practices to the extent where Karo associated writing with pain in her hand and Karam and Fatima laughed and humiliated each other while reading. At Valley Forest,

Hunor showed us how a translanguaging classroom does not necessarily correlate with a reduction in desire to learn English. At Smokey Glen, Rabten demonstrated how writing incorporating students' entire linguistic repertoire can become stuck with desire when brought into academic settings. The students, through these case studies, both show us how incorporating a translanguaging stance can have a tremendous impact on the structures that influence the emotions students associate with their literacy practices. Moreover, co-researching with children can be done not only with privileged monolingual children, but also with multilingual children, and even extended to include those who do not know English and have had little exposure to print literacy.

Incorporating translanguaging into the students' writing offered the students an opportunity to rely on each other's expertise. This involved a process of letting go of some of my authority as a teacher, and also allowed the children to act cooperatively in a more democratic manner. When children do not have a lot of knowledge of print literacy, it can be counter-intuitive to have them write in any language other than the language where the teacher is the expert: English. The teacher will not have any direct skills in showing the children how to write in other parts of their linguistic repertoire. However, one would hope that a teacher would expand the sources of authority that are consulted – translation tools, parents, other adults in the building/community who know the language, for example. We can see in these examples how incorporating the students' entire linguistic repertoire can be done even when the teacher does not have the expertise necessary to support that writing process. Moreover, we can see why moving away from an English-only classroom is important. It sees students' existing literacy practices as an integral part of their learning by building on them in the learning about print literacy process. Learning to read and write does not have to mean a complete devaluing of how the students use language orally. Their oral language practices can become integrated with their writing. Even single words written in different aspects of the students' linguistic repertoire place value on who they are and how they use language.

Although the emotion in this research is very personal in nature, it is also political. Canada has situated itself as multicultural within a bilingual country (Haque, 2012), thereby negating all literacy practices that are not English or French. The students' associations of print literacy with humiliation and language with shame are located within a Canadian colonial history that led to the violent and colonial destruction of many indigenous languages and cultures by white settlers. Unlike the secondary students, who directly note racism as a key problem in their schools (Kanu, 2008; Stewart, 2011), these younger students internalize their English-only programming through feelings of shame and humiliation. We see how the desire to learn English, which is already circulating in Canada before the students arrive, shapes how the students understand their own literacy practices. Writing in English becomes a sticky object creating a boundary that the students' languages cannot cross. In this way, the desire to learn English shapes what literacy is. The children have already learned that they must move away from their own linguistic repertoire when writing and towards this English object of love. An object that is shaped by histories of colonialism. Through the anger the children associate with their writing, we see the beginning of resistance. At other times, the children turn to self-hatred participating in print literacy humiliation. This object of love is so far outside of themselves that they

begin to associate embarrassment and shame with their own identities. By bringing emotion and translanguaging together, we go deeper into the histories and inequitable structures that effect how the students' shape themselves and their literacy practices. English only structures are not just about rights and resources. They are violent and exclusionary practices that deeply harm how the students understand themselves as writers and literacy users. They bind the children with shame. I hope that by framing a translanguaging stance with emotion, teachers can better understand the harm their pedagogies can bring to the classroom when so much of who the student is, is excluded.

References

- Abdul Rahim, F., & Lee, S. C. (2017). Proposing an affective literacy framework for young learners of English in Malaysian rural areas: Its key dimensions and challenges. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction (MJLI)*, 14(2), 115-144.
- Ahmed, S. (2010). Happy objects. In M. Gregg & G. J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 29–51). Duke University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.
- Amsler, M. (2001). Affective literacy: Gestures of reading in the later middle ages. *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18(1), 83–110.
- Anwaruddin, S. M. (2016). Why critical literacy should turn to ‘the affective turn’: Making a case for critical affective literacy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37(3), 381-396.
- Benesch, S. (2012). *Considering- emotions in critical English language teaching*. Routledge.
- Bigelow, M., Vanek, J., King, K., & Abdi, N. (2017). Literacy as social (media) practice: Refugee youth and native language literacy at school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, 183-197.
- Blanchet-Cohen, N., Denov, M., Fraser, S., & Bilotta, N. (2017). The nexus of war, resettlement, and education: War-affected youth’s perspectives and responses to the Quebec education system. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, p. 160-168.
- Cole, D. R., & Yang, G. Y. (2008). Affective literacy for TESOL teachers in China. *Prospect*, 23 (1), 37-45.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge UP.
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K. Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A. & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *Medical Research Methodology*, 11 (100), 1-9.
- Dávila, L. T. (2015). Diaspora literacies: An exploration of what reading means to young African immigrant women. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(8), 641-649.
- ERGO. (2020). *ESL/ELD resource group of Ontario – Classroom resources*. <https://www.ergo-on.ca/Classroom-Resources.htm>

- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Heinemann.
- García, O., & Kleyn, T. (2016). Translanguaging theory in education. In O. García & T. Kleyn (Eds.) *Translanguaging with multilingual students: Learning from classroom moments*, (pp. 9-33). Routledge.
- García, O., & Kleifgen, J. O. (2010). *Educating emergent bilinguals: Policies, programs and practices for English language Learners*. Teacher's College Press.
- García, O., Johnson, S.I., & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning*. Carlson Publishing.
- García, O., & Otheguy, R. (2020). Plurilingualism and translanguaging: Commonalities and divergences. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 23(1), 17-35.
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). Language, bilingualism and education. In *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education* (pp. 46-62). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guo, Y., Maitra, S., & Guo, S. (2019). "I belong to nowhere": Syrian refugee children's perspectives on school integration. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 14(1), 89-105.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: Who needs 'Identity?' In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-17). Sage Publications.
- Haque, E. (2012). *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: Language, race and belonging in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.
- Helm, F., & Dabre, T. (2018). Engineering a 'contact zone' through translanguaging. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18(1), 144-156.
- Horowitz-Kraus, T., Schmitz, R., Hutton, J. S., & Schumacher, J. (2017). How to create a successful reader? Milestones in reading development from birth to adolescence. *Acta Paediatrica*, 106(4), 534-544.
- Kanu, Y. (2008). Educational needs and barriers for African refugee students in Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31(4), 915-940.
- Lenters, K. (2016). Riding the lines and overwriting in the margins: Affect and multimodal literacy practices. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 48(3), 280-316.
- Liyanage, I., & Canagarajah, S. (2019). Shame in English language teaching: Desirable pedagogical possibilities for Kiribati in neoliberal times. *TESOL Quarterly*, 53(2), 430-455.
- Lotherington, H., & Jenson, J. (2011). Teaching multimodal and digital literacy in L2 settings: New literacies, new basics, new pedagogies. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 226-246.
- Lyon, G. E. (1999). *Where I am from: Where poems come from*. Absey and Company.
- Miles, J., & Bailey-McKenna, M. C. (2016). Giving Refugee Students a Strong Head Start: The LEAD Program. *TESL Canada Journal*, 33, 109-128.
- Montero, M.K., Newmaster, S., & Ledger, S. (2014) Exploring early reading instructional strategies advance the print literacy development of adolescent SLIFE. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(1), 59-69

- Montero, M. K., Ibrahim, H., Loomis, C., & Newmaster, S. (2012). Teachers, flip your practices on their heads!: Refugee students' insights into how school practices and culture must change to increase their sense of school belonging. *Journal of Multiculturalism in Education*, 8(3).
- Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-racist practice*. Teachers College.
- Motha, S., & Lin, A. M. Y. (2014). “Non-coercive rearrangements”: Theorizing desire in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48, 331–359.
- Nunan, D., & Bailey, K. (2009). *Exploring second language classroom research: A comprehensive guide*. Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W. (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), 281-307.
- Paris, D. (2011). ‘A friend who understands fully’: Notes on humanizing research in a multiethnic youth community. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24(2), 137-149.
- Pavlenko, A. (2013). The affective turn in SLA: From ‘affective factors’ to ‘language desire’ and ‘commodification of affect’. In D. Gabryś-Barker & J. Bielska (Eds). *The affective dimension in second language acquisition*, (pp. 3-28). Multilingual Matters.
- Rossiter, M., & Rossiter, K. (2009). Diamonds in the rough: Bridging gaps in support for at-risk immigrant and refugee youth. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 10(4), 409-429.
- Schroeter, S., & James, C. E. (2015). “We’re here because we’re Black”: The schooling experiences of French-speaking African-Canadian students with refugee backgrounds. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(1), 20-39.
- Schmitz, S., & Ahmed, S. (2014). Affect/Emotion: Orientation Matters. A Conversation between Sigrid Schmitz and Sara Ahmed. *FZG–Freiburger Zeitschrift für GeschlechterStudien*, 20(2), 97–108.
- Stewart, J. (2011). *Supporting refugee students; strategies for educators*. University of Toronto Press.
- Stille, S. V. V., Bethke, R., Bardley-Brown, J., Giberson, J., & Hall, G. (2016). Broadening educational practice to include translanguaging: An outcome of educator inquiry in multilingual students’ learning needs. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 72(4), 480—503.
- Van Viegen, S. (2020). Translanguaging for and as learning with youth from refugee backgrounds. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 60-76.
- Wiley, T. G. (1996). *Literacy and Language Diversity in the United States. Language in Education: Theory and Practice* 87. Delta Systems Co.

Author Biography

Katie Brubacher is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. She has been an elementary teacher for over fifteen years in Ontario schools. Her research interests include the experiences of newcomers in elementary schools especially those who arrive in middle and upper elementary not having learned about print literacy in any language. Approaching research from a humanizing perspective where participants are included in the research process is of particular interest to Katie. Her research is supported by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.