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Spanglish as a Learning Tool

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by

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ABSTRACT

This essay will review Spanglish scholarship, its different geographic locations, and various academic discourses surrounding the breadth and possibility of its application in undergraduate course instruction. Spanglish intervenes and influences Latinx communities' lifestyles and choices outside the academic sphere of theory and concept. How citizenship, social status, race, ethnicity, politics, and power of language can be examined through the framework and pedagogical tool of Spanglish. I will identify and address the barriers that gender, race, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, and otherness may produce. Students' diverse backgrounds in higher education classrooms allow for communication and understanding through lenses that their fellow peers may have never experienced. I argue that Spanglish can be a useful pedagogical tool in multidisciplinary undergraduate courses.

INDEX WORDS: Spanglish, Latinx, Language in Contact, Spanish in the U.S.

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DEDICATION

I am happy to dedicate this to my husband and our growing family. Also, to my past, present, and future selves: I am so glad we persevered.

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I am happy to acknowledge those who have helped me. Thank you to Dr. Fernanda Díaz-Basteris for mentoring me and believing in me and my abilities. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Nichols and Dr. Bermúdez, and the WLC department at Georgia State. Thank you to my family, friends, and peers for sharing the good, the great, and the not-so-great times with me during this journey. Thank you to the University of Kansas Spanish and Portuguese department (2014-2018).

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1 INTRODUCTION

My undergraduate and graduate studies have focused on the Spanish language and the impact of canonical literary works—such as *Pecado de omisión* by Ana María Matute, *Los trapecistas* by Cristina Peri Rossi, *Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes, *Cien años de soledad* by Gabriel García Márquez, *Nuestra América* by José Martí, and poetry by Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, Federico García Lorca, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz—on culture and society, usually those of the respective author's Spanish-speaking country. However, it always felt distanced: as though it was an idealization of what I was experiencing learning Spanish in the United States. There was a juxtaposition in which I was learning and studying what Jennifer Leeman calls "standard Spanish" but not experiencing it in that way outside of academia. I was taught the Spanish variation from Spain in school, which is not where I learned the most significant lessons. It was not until later in my undergraduate studies that Spanish variations within the United States were touched on. Then, were there opportunities to explore Latinx works and the effects of these works through the lens of Spanglish, or Spanish in the U.S., where specific contexts were taking place. It finally made sense; the Spanish Standard variation I learned as part of my second language acquisition experience did not coincide with what the U.S. Latinx communities of my peers and friends were using as a linguistic code. While I do not consider myself Latina, Latinx literary texts, their scholarship, and the use of Spanglish assisted me in understanding these communities that I was invited into more profoundly. Spanglish was the opposite of 15 years of "proper" Spanish language studies; it made the Spanish I had been learning finally feel as othered as what it imposed.

My interest in Spanglish as a pedagogical tool fuels this research. This essay will review Spanglish scholarship, its different geographic locations, and various academic discourses surrounding the breadth and possibility of its application in undergraduate course instruction. I

now understand how Spanglish intervenes and influences Latinx communities' lifestyles and choices outside the academic sphere of theory and concept. Concepts like citizenship, social status, race, ethnicity, politics, and power of language can be examined through the framework and pedagogical tool of Spanglish. I identify how with the use of Spanglish, we can address the barriers that gender, race, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, and otherness may produce, especially in education settings. Students' diverse backgrounds in higher education classrooms allow for communication and understanding through lenses that their fellow peers may have never experienced. I argue that Spanglish can be a useful pedagogical tool in multidisciplinary undergraduate courses. In these courses, students can use Spanglish in conjunction with pre-established frameworks.

I propose to utilize the popular work of Dr. Jennifer Leeman and Dr. Janet Fuller, *Hablar español en Estados Unidos: la sociopolítica del lenguaje*, *Multilingual Matters* (2021); Chapter 10, "Variación y contacto entre lenguas: aspectos formales del español en Estados Unidos" when teaching written and spoken poetry. Dr. Ramón Martínez's study in a sixth-grade classroom, "Spanglish as a Literacy Tool: Toward an Understanding of the Potential Role of Spanish-English Code-Switching in the Development of Academic Literacy" (2010), will be used in further exploring Spanglish as a literacy tool and the strategies to assist students in gaining confidence in their bilingual abilities. Dr. Ana Celia Zentella's works "TWB (Talking while Bilingual): Linguistic profiling of Latina/os, and other linguistic torquemadas" (2014) and her chapter "Spanglish" in *Keywords for Latino Studies* (2017) will be utilized as well to problematize how Latinx Spanish speakers are under attack when practicing code-switch in the workplace or in educational spaces.

I understand Spanglish as the code-switching, bilingual interaction in the thoughts and speech of Latinx individuals in the United States, which are governed by certain linguistic rules and

utilized in daily life. I agree with the perspective of Dr. Ramón Martínez, who outlines that Spanglish is a "dynamic hybrid language practice."[1] Spanglish is a rule-governed[2], valuable linguistic resource that can be utilized for multiple purposes of communication and understanding, including historical facts of colonization, globalization, genocide, racialization, race and ethnicity, and political and social movements. Spanglish can be a literacy tool through meta-linguistic awareness and cultural modeling strategies. The meta-linguistic strategy utilizes students' bilingual decisions and experiences and teaches them how to view these examples in daily life as academically applicable and beneficial. According to Dr. Ana Celia Zentella, Spanglish is a graphic way of saying, "We speak both because we are both,"[3] reminding us that the power relations among languages, systemic oppressions, and hegemonic ideologies put Spanish in a powerless position when it comes to citizenship in the United States.

The social construct and politicalness of the linguistic hierarchy in the United States are used to justify exploitation and dominance, as it has done with Spanish. This has negatively impacted the lives of bilingual and multilingual Spanish speakers, and the acceptance of the truth and history of Spanglish in the United States has become embraced. Drs. Leeman and Fuller propose that languages are not static entities but undergo constant changes, which is neither good nor bad, although language purists look down on these changes as if they represent corruption and decay. It is usual for languages in extended contact (especially in settler States and nations) to influence the other and for speakers to use varying aspects from both in their speech. Spanglish and multilingualism require sophisticated knowledge of structure and form from both sides; this is why codeswitching shows linguistic creativity and mastery in communicative methods.

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[1] (Martínez 125-126).
[2] Rule-governed as in pieces of the language occur in systematically predictable and repeatable ways.
[3] (Zentella 212).

These understandings of Spanglish then fall under the umbrella of Latinx studies. Latinx, as Ed Morales proposes in *Latinx: The New Force in American Politics and Culture*[4], is the term that scholars and activists employ to represent an ethnoracial community in the United States. Latinx encompasses fluidity and inclusivity of the hyphenated experience: those with two or more systems of codes with which they may identify, speak, or self-characterize with. In the United States, systematic erasure in History textbooks and oppressive dynamics, like English only in schools, have been instilled through the politicalness of language hierarchy. These practices shame and underserve 60 million Spanish speakers inside the nation. Some purist scholars maintain that bilingual code-switching and forms of communication are against "la lengua pura" (my addition and quotations, Morales uses pure language). Though, the programs and marginalization through economic and educational disparities ravage opportunities for the idealization that the U.S. places on Latinx communities to have a strong command of both languages. Dr. Claudia Milian's introduction in her book *LatinX*[5] implores the reader to challenge the acceptance of vocabulary and representation for the Latinx community. The Latin and the X should be explored because they are not perfectly defined and because they encompass multiple functions and categories within.

There are three sections in this essay. Section 1 dives deeper into the frameworks of Zentella, Martínez, Milian, Morales, and Leeman & Fuller. Section 2 briefly analyzes classroom activities of Latinx literary works in Spanglish or about Spanglish: the short story *Pollito Chicken* by Ana Lydia Vega, *Spanglish* by Tato Laviera, and *III. Arena de México* by Ariana Brown, and then expands on the results of real classroom applications of the activities. Section 4 is a brief

[4] Morales, Ed. *Latinx : the New Force in American Politics and Culture*. Verso, 2018.
[5] 2020

conclusion on my academic journey of Spanglish as a learning tool and the purpose of this research.

2 FROM LEARNING TOOLS TO LATINX TERMINOLOGY

The following theoretical proposals will guide a higher-level collegiate course to assist students in their understanding of Latinx Studies and Spanglish. Through group discussions and critical activities, students will apply these frameworks to Latinx literary works to understand the nuances and density of how language struggles have impacted Latinx communities in the United States.

As I explained before, I understand Spanglish as the code-switching, bilingual interaction in the thoughts and speech of Latinx individuals. For the purpose of this research, I ask, how can Spanglish be used as a literacy tool in a classroom? Dr. Ramón Martínez proposes Spanglish as a "dynamic hybrid language practice" [6] that is a rule-governed, valuable linguistic resource and can be utilized for multiple purposes of communication and understanding. Spanglish can be a literacy tool using cultural modeling strategies aiming at meta-linguistic awareness. Cultural modeling is an approach to instruct students to recognize the forms of literary reasoning they already engage in their daily use of language. For example, leveraging bilingual students' translating and interpreting skills for their parents can be converted into academic writing skills. Martínez outlines three steps on how teachers can use Spanglish as a resource: "(1) learning about how students use Spanglish in the classroom, (2) helping students cultivate meta-linguistic awareness with respect to their use of Spanglish, and (3) helping students extend the skills embedded in their use of Spanglish by applying them to specific academic literacy tasks". [7] Through the application of cultural modeling, the self-awareness of students' abilities to use Spanglish increases, and with the teacher's assistance in instructing students on how to apply Spanglish skills in a meaningful, aware way, the students can translate their skills into a usable and applicable tool in the classroom. Meta-

[6] (125-126) and more info for this citation….
[7] (141)

linguistic awareness utilizes cultural data sets[8] of the students' daily bilingual experiences to recognize explicit knowledge they already possess; students can see how the Spanglish they are using applies academically. In part, this would involve essentially saying to students, "Look at what you already know how to do! Look at what you're already good at!"[9]. By turning students into the experts of their own space and knowledge, the teachers assist in connecting students' ideas about their deployment of literacy skills through their explicit knowledge of Spanglish.

Dr. Jennifer Leeman and Dr. Janet Fuller[10] look at language contact phenomena as the idea that languages are distinct entities that influence each other. We understand that languages are not static entities but undergo constant changes. In contrast with this idea, language purists look down on these changes as if they represent corruption and decay in society and for those in it. It is usual for languages in extended contact (especially in settler States and nations) to influence the other and for speakers to use varying aspects from both in their speech. The social construct and politicalness of the linguistic hierarchy in the United States are used to justify exploitation and dominance, as it has done with Spanish and continues to do with Spanglish. Although Spanglish and multilingualism require sophisticated knowledge of structure and form from both sides, and codeswitching shows linguistic creativity in communicative methods, the opposing hegemonic ideologies, normative monolingualism, and standard variation language ideologies are still prevalent. Leeman and Fuller explain this power relation when stating that "Spanish that shows signs of contact with English is held up for ridicule, and multilingual discourse is often taken as a sign that a speaker cannot speak either language; that is, it is seen as a sign of linguistic

[8] Cultural data sets are pieces of data that instructors can use during this meta-linguistic awareness step of cultural modeling.
[9] (Martinez 142).
[10] Fuller Janet M and Jennifer Leeman. *Speaking Spanish in the US: The Sociopolitics of Language*. 2nd edition 2nd ed. Multilingual Matters 2020.

deficiency… nothing could be further from the truth; in fact, rather than a linguistic deficiency, the use of two languages in juxtaposition requires sophisticated structural knowledge of both of them."[11] Spanglish has specific features we can explore—first, the *préstamos*: borrowings or loanwords. *Préstamos* incorporate a word from one language into the other, preserving the phonological pronunciation: "*plis*" and please, "*disguacher*" and dishwasher. Second, is *calcos*, or syntactic calques, in which the literal translation is used with the structure or meaning integrated from the donor language into the recipient language. Idiomatic expressions often take the form of *calcos*: call back – "*llamar para atrás*"; run for president – "*correr para presidente*". Finally, the most common linguistic structure identifiable with Spanglish is *translenguaje*: translanguaging or code-switching, a dynamic form of multilingual communication. Leeman and Fuller explain that it is not a new idea, "There is a long history of its study; decades before the term translanguaging came into use, scholars studied the pervasive use of two or more languages in discourse… the use of elements of two (or more) languages as a frequent occurrence that is socially meaningful, with its own norms"[12]. Within the utilization of translanguaging, social identities and the performance of identities are involved in the practice of a language. While ethnoracial or national identities may correspond with language, no one-to-one movement exists. The tool of translanguaging can help contextualize conversations, and codeswitching may indicate different aspects of a conversation, like a change of topic or stance, or recounting an event or quote. In an excerpt from a Spanglish literary piece utilized later in classroom activities, we can see examples of translanguaging: "Por el camino observó nevertheless la transformación de Puerto Rico. Le pareció very encouraging aquella proliferación de urbanizaciones, fábricas, condominios, carreteras y shopping centers."[13]

[11] (Leeman & Fuller 231).
[12] (235).
[13] (Vega 1)

There are codeswitching sequences within this multilingual discourse; these repeatable patterns of juxtaposing combinations of language can be seen within the utilization of Spanglish discourse.

In contrast, there are oppositions to the term Spanglish and how its representation as a term is misleading. Dr. Ricardo Otheguy and Dr. Nancy Stern outline in their work[14] that Spanglish has a different, pre-established, better name—Spanish in the United States. They suggest the term is misleading for four outlined reasons: 1. Spanglish hides that the popular forms of Spanish in the U.S. are similar to those of Latin America and Spain; 2. It suggests that "popular Spanish in the USA is of an unusually hybrid character"[15]; 3. It implies incorrectly that Spanish in the USA is "centrally characterized by structural mixing with English."[16] 4. Separates U.S. Spanish speakers from those living elsewhere. The stated ideology of exceptionalism that Spanglish offers is a depravation from the mastery of a world language for those that speak it. Leeman and Fuller are aware of this critique. They replied that "for some people the term Spanglish does just the opposite – it indexes a celebration of the heteroglossic nature of linguistic performance and an attempt to normalize multilingualism."[17] The authors continue to state that Spanglish is not a new method of speaking nor a language, which the term misleads it to mean. Dr. Ana Celia Zentella and Dr. Ilan Stavans are mentioned for citing Spanglish as a specific communication strategy and as something more than language, which, Otheguy and Stern argue, is still misleading. Leeman and Fuller round out the debate surrounding the term Spanglish, "…the meanings of words and labels are neither unitary, fixed nor neutral. Instead, words can have multiple meanings, according to the context, the speakers, and the hearers. Spanglish can mean different things to different people, and these

[14] Otheguy, Ricardo, and Nancy Stern. "On so-called Spanglish." *The International Journal of Bilingualism*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2011, pp. 85-100.
[15] (Otheguy and Stern 86)
[16] (86);
[17] (233).

different meanings are tied up with ideologies about language and identity. Thus, these debates about whether or not to use Spanglish are about much more than a single word or what that word refers to".[18]

Dr. Ana Celia Zentella[19] proposes that the power of language in the United States influences Spanglish rhetoric: "Spanglish is a graphic way of saying, "We speak both because we are both."[20] The act of being both, or in a mixed area of not feeling enough of one identity, language, or space, as another, and being bilingual in the United States reflects the dual worlds within and challenges static notions of identity. This statement may serve as a reminder to us that the power relations among languages in the United States are integrated within anthro-political linguistics[21] and language hierarchies. In the activities portion of this research, we examine how Zentella's power of language concept is applied to diverse Spanglish Latinx literary texts. Spanish has been weaponized within anthro-political linguistics and the power of language. First, the use of both Spanish and Spanglish as an attack against the unofficial language of the United States, "…the "standard language" of the elite is considered superior to the disparaged ways of speaking of the working masses, and many believe that those who speak "correctly" are better prepared for life, even better people" (Zentella 209). Zentella discusses how linguistic profiling has shifted and how racism of the body has been remapped to the racism of language and culture. The racialization of language follows the same tropes as the racialization of the body, with a key difference, that Zentella notes, "whereas biology is considered beyond individual control, and therefore not anyone's fault, critics of language expect speakers to change their ways of speaking, or be subjected to external controls… you are expected to eliminate your non-standard dialect or accent,

[18] (233).
[19] *TWB (Talking While Bilingual)* and the chapter *Spanglish* in *Keywords for Latino Studies*
[20] (212).
[21] Zentella's anthro-political linguistics views language and its place in social and cultural structures

as evidence that you are a responsible and worthy citizen" (631). This racialization of language will continue to serve the language hierarchy and oppress those that do not adhere to specific political and cultural ideologies. Spanglish rejects and opposes both these ideologies and the negative labels placed upon them. "…it is not our way of speaking or the label that is holding us back, but the power imbalances that language enforcers end up concealing. We embrace Spanglish with open and frank appraisals of its roots and structure"[22]. Within this embracing of roots and structure, we can see how the term Latinx also embraces and represents roots: past and present. Latinx's sociolinguistic implications and contexts should be evaluated from a sociolinguistic perspective.

When discussing Spanglish, we must also include the ethnoracial and linguistic categories of Latinx in the conversation. Ed Morales's popular book *Latinx: The New Force in American Politics and Culture*[23] explores how "*Latinx* intends to describe the in-between space in which Latinx lives, which allows us to cross racial boundaries more easily and construct identities, or self-images, that include a wide variety of racial, national, and even gender-based identities."[24] Morales explores this crossing of boundaries concerning language and race, "Although speaking "perfect" Spanish and English can be a formidable weapon on both sides of the border, enforcing nationalist ideals regarding the correct form of speaking reinforces the colonial system of elites… These Spanglish extravagances of speech employ various signifiers to suggest Latin American origins… but their greatest impact often occurs through evocations of race."[25] The globalization and transnationalism era in the United States will continue to expand, as will the bi- and multilingual and bi- and multicultural consciousness.

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[22] (Zentella 212).
[23] Morales, Ed. *Latinx: the New Force in American Politics and Culture*. Verso, 2018.
[24] (Morales 5).
[25] (Morales 145).

Dr. Claudia Milian's book, also titled *LatinX,*[26] extends the definition of the letter "X" and its representations. Milian begins this exploration with the audience in the introduction, "The LatinX moment invited us to think creatively, innovatively, and speculatively…LatinX tells us that things are no longer the same… that the X—an expounding concept—is bound to new bodies and new schools of thought."[27] Latinx is the representation of an ethnoracial community in the United States that encompasses fluidity and inclusivity of the hyphenated experience: those with two or more systems of codes with which they may identify, speak, or self-characterize with. However, these linguistic codes have been distilled through the politicalness of language hierarchy in the United States. Bilingual code-switching and forms of communication are denounced against "la lengua pura," which affects self-identity and further pushes racialization in Latinx communities; as Morales states, "Language's effect on Latinx identity stems from bilingualism's effect on consciousness."[28] However, in the United States, systematic erasure and oppressive shame over the command of languages will continue to be counterproductive for the growth of Latinx communities. The programs and marginalization occurring in the U.S. ravage opportunities for Latinx communities to have a strong command of both languages through economic and educational disparities. The Latinx hyphenated experience allows us to view, from a high level, the double consciousness within language and identity, which are being brought to the forefront in the countermeasures against the intolerance and oppression that has been imposed upon Latinx identities in the United States.

[26] Milian, Claudia. *LatinX*. University of Minnesota Press, 2019
[27] (Milian 3).
[28] (Morales 137).

3 ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

The following activities were practiced in the upper-level higher education course "SPAN 4462 Spanish in the U.S." at Georgia State University. The course I developed may be listed and cross-listed in departments such as language, sociology, creative writing, cultural studies, political science, and anthropology; the activities and content are versatile and interdisciplinary. These activities aim to provide the students with a basic understanding of the Spanish language and historical facts about Puerto Rican colonization, the emigration from Latin American countries, like The Dominican Republic, to the United States, and the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Over two classes during this spring semester, my research provided the following results. The specific questions for each class exercise will be found in the Appendix.

The first activity centers on students' understanding of Zentella's article "TWB (Talking While Bilingual)"[29] alongside concepts like Spanglish and Translanguaging to discuss Puerto Rico's colonization represented in Ana Lydia Vega's well-known short story "Pollito Chicken." The short story was initially published in 1994 and had the same title as the popular song[30] that taught Spanish-speaking children English vocabulary since the 1930s. The song originated in Puerto Rico, and new versions are still being posted to YouTube as recently as the 2010s. The lesson's objectives are to understand and recognize Puerto Rican colonization shown through Latinx texts; analyze, through sociolinguistics, the context of Spanish in Puerto Rico; develop critical awareness about linguistic practices such as Spanglish. The students prepare for class in advance by pairing Vega's short story and Zentella's article. Previous class discussion of Zentella's article includes topics such as an introduction to the author; the argument of the work; the intervention and the space the article takes in academia; how it may be related to other topics

[29] 2014
[30] https://youtu.be/nWOHmGtyHHY

or readings; concepts or methods found in the article; what about the work inspires you, what does the work inform you of and how does it do that; key ideas, questions, and comments you have after analyzing the article.

We start the class listening to the song "Pollito, Chicken" on YouTube. We discuss whether students have heard it and in what contexts. This begins our movement into the sociolinguistic applications of bilingual education between Spanish and English, specifically in the context of Puerto Rico and the United States. Students who grew up in a monolingual English household and attended monolingual education programs are less likely to have heard the song than those who grew up in a Spanish-speaking country or went through bilingual education in English Language Learner programs in the United States or Spanish-speaking countries. This is because of the sociolinguistic power of English versus Spanish in the U.S.; English is considered a more "worthy" language to speak because of the politically established language hierarchies, as noted in "TWB." In the next portion of the class, students will volunteer to read portions of Vega's "Pollito Chicken" aloud. It will be a note to discuss how the movement between Spanish, English, and Spanglish affect reading the short story aloud. We ask: are these authentic ways in which bilingual individuals speak? Why or why not, and what evidence backs up the reasoning? Then in pairs or groups of no more than three, students are asked to identify three favorite, or best, examples of translanguaging in the short story.

After the students have shared some examples, I ask them to discuss in the same pairs/groups the ethnoraciality of Suzie Bermudez in the story: how does Suzie believe she is different from her *compatriotas*? What does the story tell us about Suzie's self-identity? What is the difference between Suzie's version or image of Puerto Rico and the "authentic" Puerto Rico in the story? Finally, the class discusses how to understand "Pollito Chicken" through Zentella's

"TWB": Does Suzie's view of herself problematize the languages used in the story? What does Suzie's self-identity tell us about the in-betweenness represented through language in the story? In the excerpt included in the class activity, we see Suzie's juxtaposition, "… a pesar de que no pasaba por el Barrio a pie ni bajo amenaza de ejecución por la Mafia, a pesar de que prefería mil veces perder un fabulous job antes que poner Puerto Rican en las applications de trabajo y morir de hambre por no coger el Welfare o los food stamps como todos esos lazy, dirty, no-good bums que eran sus compatriotas…[31]" There was a good discussion about the ethnoracial identity of Suzie and how she differs from her compatriots. Some of the discussion and notes taken included that Suzie's internalized colonization and proximity to whiteness have affected her identity, citing her internalized racism towards Black and Puerto Rican communities in New York. The final activity for Vega's "Pollito Chicken" will be a homework assignment in which each student identifies one example in the text that illustrates Zentella's statement in "TWB," "We must also challenge the erroneous view of a bilingual as two monolinguals stuck at the tongue with an off/on switch…"[32] and two examples from the text that illustrates, "Linguistic prejudices based on ethnicity, race, and class are part of the baggage that immigrants bring with them to the United States." This exercise should have one paragraph per example.

To diversify the teaching materials, another activity includes written traditional poetry. The lesson objective of this activity is to analyze and explore the racialization of Spanish in the United States from the perspective of a Nuyorican poet. The first poem utilized in the course is "Spanglish" by Tato Laviera. The class reads Leeman and Fuller's Chapter 10[33] to understand the nuances of Laviera's code-switching and use of *préstamos* and *calcos* to better understand the

[31] (pg 1)
[32] (Zentella 632),
[33] 2020

racialization of Spanish through using Spanglish in the poem. The class will have already prepared by reading and working through an academic analysis of Leeman and Fuller's chapter and The Poetry Foundation's overview of the Tato Laviera[34]. The in-class activity begins by watching a spoken word poetry video of Laviera's poem "Spanglish." Then, the students identify three moments in the poem where Laviera utilized translanguaging. To engage students in the discussion, the instructor will highlight translanguaging features on the board and ask them to share their examples of *préstamos* and *calcos* found in the poem. Some translanguaging examples found included "condimented cocina lore," "corner soul enmixturando," and "baraja chismeteos social club." To close this activity, the class discusses the poem's final line, "Which u.s. slang do you speak?" Identifying the various "slang" in the United States and the communities in which they are used. In the discussion about Laviera's final question, students explored how the racialization of language affects code-switching and the presentation of the various types of slang in the United States.

Scholarship on Latinx Studies by Claudia Milian[35] assists in students' understanding and exploration of the poem "Arena de México" by Ariana Brown from her sophomore book of poetry, *We Are Owed*[36]. The lesson objective is to explore Brown's poems' themes of belonging, race, ethnicity, and migration which will be explored through Milian's challenging of socially established ideas of Latinx-ness and, in Brown's applications, Latinx-ness through Mexicanness and Blackness. Milian asks the reader to think critically about where the "X" came from and where it may go, "The LatinX moment invites us to think creatively, innovatively, and speculatively, building from the centrality—excessiveness even—of X. If we thought we knew all too well the

[34] https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/tato-laviera
[35] book *LatinX*, 2019
[36] 2021

o/a of the familiar Latino/a, LatinX tells us that things are no longer the same, that there is no secure footing, that the X—an expounding concept—is bound to new bodies and new schools of thought.[37]" The invitation to challenge the pre-established, and sometimes unquestioned aspects of LatinX, is extended to explore creatively and without bounds the experiences that may encompass the future and possible trajectories for the themes presented in Brown's *We Are Owed,* specifically our poem "III. Arena de México." In the activity, students alternate reading lines and stanzas from the poem aloud, then discuss how the poem's tone changes when read aloud versus mentally. The instructor invites students to answer why Brown chose not to italicize the Spanish in the poem and how the author utilizes translanguaging. By finding and expanding on the translanguaging of the poem, students will then discuss what the implications of code-switching (translanguaging) can add to the poetic form. The imagery in the poem is powerful, so the following discussion is to identify symbols and note what images come to mind when reading and hearing the poem. Student discussion noted that having both languages assisted in the power of the imagery. Students also expanded on the idea of colonization in the mind: how in certain situations, especially those with more significant social pressures (like a sporting event with an entire crowd chanting the same thing) there are no second thoughts given to the more significant implications of words and how they affect individuals. The placement of spaces at the end of the poem visually shows the "quiet after defeat" in both the match that is being watched and, in Brown's mind, in which she has been transported back in time to high school, being called the same slur:

[37] (pg 7-8)

"inhales slow levanta sus manos muy despacio raises crow to top of their lungs

& exhales in a blink thrusting the famous slur onto the loser's

chest

same chord pulled from high school hallways mouths of violent men…

cued from putrid memory the line fed & delivered quick the diss

curving la arena the crowd a machine thumping

I look over see the güero mouth *MÁS P—!* with the others

picture homeboys goofing before class &

learn the meaning now in the quiet after defeat[38]"

The final Latinx literary work for this set of in-class activities is the poem "Autobiografía"[39] by Manuel Colón. This is paired with Ed Morales' book *Latinx*[40]. Chapter 5, "Border Thinking 101; Can La Raza Speak?" focuses on Latinx identity through the hyphenated experience of a bilingual, bicultural poet. From this chapter, Morales' examination of boundary crossing through language and race can be utilized in garnering a deeper understanding of Colón's theme of the hyphenated experience in the United States in his poem "Autobiografía." In chapter 5, while examining Anzaldúa's *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Morales says this, "…border thinking involves moving away from narrowly defines patriarchal nationalisms to mixing spaces that are

[38] (Brown 57).
[39] N.d.
[40] 2018

vaguely defined yet brimming with possibility."[41] First, in the activities, the class will watch a video clip from El Show de Cristina,[42] where Manuel Colón reads his poem. After listening, the students are invited to discuss what the final three questions evoke for them, "¿Quién fui? / Quién soy? / ¿Quién seré?". Topics like belonging, finding identity, and dealing with cultural displacement in spaces prioritizing English and whiteness were recalled and discussed. The questions are meant to be answered, but by whom and for whom? The students discussed the external pressures of answering the questions proposed by Colon in manners that comply with the external pressures of whiteness and fitting in to appease society. It is crucial to identify social issues found in the poem that have been previously discussed in class, such as ethnoraciality, bi- and multilingualism, linguistic displacement, and any others that may come to mind. In this discussion, students found topics such as direct and indirect displacement, both linguistically and culturally, were found in the poem, as well as the struggle between multicultural and multilingual pride in white and English-prioritized spaces: for example, in lines 10-14, "Cuando la T.V. me grita, "White is right." / "White is beautiful!" / Y yo me siento / Como una mancha oscura"[43]. During this discussion of themes previously discussed in their Spanish in the U.S. course, one student cited Sofia Vergara's character, Gloria Pritchett,[44] in Modern Family when the character says, "Do you know how frustrating it is to have to translate everything in my head before I say it? Do you even know how smart I am in Spanish? Of course, you do not.".

The final activity for the class is to create a poem altogether; each student will create a verse (one line) using a maximum of five to six words. The verse should have elements of

[41] (141)
[42] 1989-2010
[43] (Colón n.d.).
[44] A bilingual woman and Colombian immigrant

translanguaging and pertain to the topic of Spanglish. When performed in SPAN 4462 in-person course, we created the following poem:

Un recurso profundo, abundant

Un puente donde se intercambia information

Una herramienta: to use & hone.

The students found creating their own Spanglish stanzas challenging, even after examining multiple Latinx texts and Spanglish examples and utilizations. The intentionality of selecting words and their meanings differed from speaking or reading Latinx works with these same translanguaging features.

4 CONCLUSION

In this brief research, Spanglish has been explored as a literacy tool for Latinx literary texts. It has shown the breadth of available space in which Spanglish can be utilized. From Latinx and Spanglish scholarship to geographic and sociopolitical implications, Spanglish can help undergraduate students learn in higher education classrooms. The course curriculum has the potential to be included in cross-listed instruction and is not limited to language learning classrooms. Exciting and advanced topics can be examined under the proposed frameworks of Leeman and Fuller, Milian, Morales, Zentella, and Martínez. In future research, more frameworks will be utilized to assist in teaching Latinx topics in conjunction with Spanglish as a literacy tool. A future of in-class activities would be to expand the materials and to allow students to find their own examples that they would then present to the class. This would allow students to show their understanding and exploration of Spanglish as a tool for understanding their Latinx or Spanglish example. The future of linguistic hierarchy and social construct surrounding languages such as Spanglish and Spanish and bi-and multilingualism requires continued research and teachings of these topics in the higher education curriculum. The sophisticated knowledge and mastery of communication methods within translanguaging will continue to be explored and expanded upon by utilizing Latinx and Spanglish literary texts. Student-centered and instructor-led in-class activities will continue to be utilized in higher education academic settings to merge high-level critical thinking exercises and analyses with authentic texts. It will be imperative to continue encouraging growth and understanding of the communities in which biculturalism and multiculturalism are being threatened by monolingualism and linguistic and cultural hierarchy.

APPENDICES

4.1 Questions from In-Class Activity 1 & 2: Ana Lydia Vega and Tato Laviera

Spanglish by Tato Laviera

1. Identifica tres momentos en el poema Spanglish/Espanglish donde se use el translenguaje
2. Find préstamos y calcos (enmixturando = no es préstamo)
3. Yuxtaposición y combinación de idioma
4. Inglés latinx

Pollito Chicken de Ana Lydia Vega

1. Identificar un ejemplo de translenguage - code switching
2. Etnoracialidad de Susie Bermudes and how is she different from her compatriotas?
3. ¿Cuál es la idea de PR que se vende en el poster?

4.2 Questions from In-Class Activity 3 & 4: Ariana Brown and Manuel Colón

Arena de México by Ariana Brown

1. Read through the poem
    a. Why isn't the Spanish italicized or differentiated?
        i. term used in sociolinguistics- translanguaging- and its context in the poem
2. ¿Cuáles son las implicaciones de cambiar de código en una forma poética?
3. ¿Cómo es diferente un texto escrito a un discurso hablado en spanglish?
4. ¿Qué hace Brown cuando no traduce las palabras?
5. ¿Qué figuras o imágenes vienen a tu mente cuando lees el poema?
6. ¿Qué signos o símbolos identificas?

Autobiografía por Manuel Colón

1. El *Show* de Cristina clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=at-Aj3if5to
2. What do the last three questions evoke after listening and reading the poem?
3. ¿Qué problemas sociales se identifican en el poema que hemos discutido en las semanas de clase?
    a. Etnoraza, clase, bilingüismo, desplazamiento lingüístico, etc.
4. What are similar feelings found in Brown and Colon's poems?

4.3 Directions for In-Class Activity: Create a Poem Together

Actividad - crear un poema en Spanglish entre todas. (5 minutes)

Topic = Spanglish as a learning tool

1. Escribe un verso (5 words max) en code switching ESP/ING
2. Juntamos todos los versos
3. Leemos en voz alta el poema

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