“Welcome to Salón 110”: The Consequences of Hybrid Literacy Practices in a Primary-Grade English Immersion Class

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the literacy practices in a primary-grade English immersion class in California during the first year of implementation of Proposition 227, the initiative that mandated English immersion education for a majority of the state’s linguistically diverse students. The data issue from a yearlong qualitative study of Room 110, a class consisting of 20 native Spanish-speaking children. The author utilizes the notion of hybrid literacy practices to conceptualize the blending of Spanish and English and home and school registers that permeated the class’s reading and writing activities. Findings illustrate the dynamic contexts of development created by these practices and ways that the linguistic hegemony operating within the school eclipsed the practices. A discussion of the findings emphasizes the ambivalence of hybridity as a conceptual tool and as a guide for instructional practice. The paper concludes with three interrelated principles gleaned from the analysis of Room 110’s literacy practices that elaborate dimensions of effective literacy learning environments for Latina/o children.

A hand-painted sign proclaiming “*¡Bienvenidos!* Welcome to Salón 110” hangs on the door of Ms. Page’s primary-grade English immersion classroom throughout the school year.

A letter from Karen, a native Spanish-speaking student, is pinned to the wall behind Ms. Page’s desk; it reads: “*Me pueden disir Lorena o Karen/My neyn es Karen. I like mae teshr.*” [You can call me Lorena or Karen / My name is Karen. I like my teacher.]

> During a guided reading lesson, Ms. Page and the students share stories about their dads and discuss strategies for decoding problem words in Spanish before reading a book in English about a father's daily routine.
>
> Ms. Page reads aloud to the children from an English language storybook. They eagerly offer predictions, life-to-text connections, and interpretive comments in Spanish that are translated into English at the request of monolingual English-speaking students.

In light of the uncertainty among U.S. educators regarding optimal instructional approaches for Spanish speakers and of Latina/o children, Room 110 stands out as a classroom in which many of the native Spanish-speaking Latina/o students successfully took up literacy in two languages (Manyak, 2000). As illustrated by the preceding collage of images, in Room 110 the children's broad linguistic repertoires functioned as resources for their participation in the class's literacy activities and thus for their acquisition of reading and writing. Following Gutiérrez and her colleagues (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999), I have utilized the construct of hybrid literacy practices to conceptualize the blending of Spanish and English, home and school registers, and "formal" and "informal" knowledge that characterized these activities (Manyak, 2000, 2001). Like Gutiérrez, et al. (1999), I assert that "hybrid literacy practices are not simply code-switching as the alternation between two language codes," but rather "a systematic, strategic, affiliative, and sense-making process" (p. 88) undertaken by participants in linguistically and culturally diverse learning environments. However, in contrast to the cases discussed by Gutiérrez et al., the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 constituted the core of the literacy curriculum for an entire class of native Spanish-speaking students. In addition, the practices I observed in Room 110 occurred during the first year of implementation of Proposition 227, the California initiative that effectively eliminated many of the state's bilingual education programs. These two factors give particular significance to the emergence and effects of the hybrid literacy practices in this classroom.

In this paper I focus expressly on the consequences of hybrid literacy practices for the language and literacy development of the children in Room 110. In doing so, I seek to give greater depth to the notion of hybridity and thus to render it a more adequate theoretical tool for analyzing culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. In the following section, I establish a framework for understanding the data from Room 110 by discussing some of the uses and critiques of the construct of hybridity within literary and cultural studies and considering how these perspectives contribute to its use as a lens for examining classroom practices.

The Ambivalence of Hybridity

While the concept of hybridity has a long history within cultural and literary studies (see Young, 1995, for a discussion of the evolution of theories of hybridity), I am interested in its use as an analytic tool for understanding classroom practices. Thus, I refer selectively to the scholarly treatment that hybridity has received outside of education, drawing on those discussions that I find helpful in furthering its use for understanding classrooms as complex social spaces. As befits a term that at its basic level connotes heterogeneity and mixture, theorizing on hybridity has produced a contested conceptual terrain. In this brief account, I emphasize the ambivalence of hybridity as a theoretical construct, juxtaposing contrasting views on the notion and considering the different concerns that these views raise in regard to classroom practice.

Celebrating and Critiquing Hybridity

Many scholars have employed the construct of hybridity to conceptualize new cultural forms, practices, spaces, and identities created from a synthesis of diverse elements (Anzaldúa, 1987; Arteaga, 1996; Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990; Werbner & Modood, 1997). This work often celebrates such hybrid configurations and their potential to transcend oppressive essentialisms and identity positions and to foster dialogue amidst difference. For instance, Bakhtin (1981) defines linguistic hybridity as the encounter between "two different linguistic consciousnesses" (p. 358) and states that hybrid utterances bring together and promote dialogue between diverse worldviews. With matching optimism, Anzaldúa (1987) and Arteaga (1997) discuss the phenomenon of hybridity in relation to Chicanas/os living at the juncture between different cultures, classes, and languages. Anzaldúa (1987) envisions a vanguard "new mestiza consciousness" emerging from the "racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization" (p. 77) of borderland regions. Similarly, Arteaga (1997) suggests that linguistic hybridity nurtures uniquely fluid identities by allowing for the "active interanimating of competing discourses" (p. 95). Both authors view hybrid identities, practices, and languages as affirmations of a determined presence of heterogeneity capable of disrupting hegemonic cultural discourses. For example, citing the hybridity of Chicana/o discourse, Arteaga (1997) asserts that "inasmuch as [it] is specifically multilingual and multivoiced, it further undermines the tendency toward single-language and single-voiced monologue, that is it undermines Anglo-American monologism" (p. 73).

Recently, a number of incisive critiques have problematized this type of positive theorizing on hybridity. Two points articulated by these critiques have important consequences for the use of hybridity in conceptualizing classroom practices. First, scholars such as Ahmad (1995), Nederveen Pieterse (1995), and Joseph (1999) argue that many optimistic readings of hybridity neglect the relations of power and domination that circumscribe and structure hybrid practices. In a concise statement of this concern, Joseph (1999) cautions that hybridity is always "mediated through censoring modes such as religious, political, legal, and psychic regulatory regimes" (p. 20). This recognition questions the assumption that the elements that commingle to form hybrid practices and products do so on equal terms and in equal measure and suggests the need for a careful consideration of "the terms of mixture [and] the conditions of mixing" (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995, p. 57) in situated instances of hybridity. Second, Dirlik (1999) argues that the use of the term hybridity "blurs . . . significant distinctions between different differences" (p. 109). In other words, conceiving of identities, spaces, or performances as hybrids may obscure the distinctiveness of each specific hybrid phenomenon. Thus, while often utilized to disrupt narrow social and cultural categories, ironically, hybridity can become a gloss that reduces all differences to a generic condition of mixture.

Hybridity and Classroom Practice

In appropriating the construct for research on diverse learning environments, Gutierrez and her colleagues draw upon positive conceptions of hybridity that underscore the dynamic possibilities for human development resulting from the interaction of multiple cultural and linguistic codes (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999). Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, and Tejeda (1999) suggest that hybridity functions "as a theoretical tool for understanding the inherent diversity and heterogeneity of activity systems and learning events, as well as a principle for organizing learning" (p. 288). The authors posit that while all classrooms contain a variety of spaces, practices, and linguistic codes, many teachers suppress or ignore the hybrid moments or activities created by the interaction of diverse "scripts." However, Gutiérrez et al. demonstrate that this hybridity, when embraced, creates fruitful contexts for development. Their study describes a "hybrid learning context" that occurred in an elementary-grade classroom when the teacher and students developed an instructional unit on the human body as a result of the students' name calling. The hybrid language practices, or "commingling of, and contradictions among different linguistic codes and registers" (p. 289), of this learning community redefined the lexicon, humor, and local knowledge of the students' informal discourse as important meaning-making resources for classroom learning. In previous papers, I have made similar assertions about the literacy activities

that I observed in Room 110 (Manyak, 2000, 2001). Specifically, these activities, which I have referred to as hybrid literacy practices, incorporated the following elements:

1. Students felt free to participate in the practices in either Spanish or (several varieties of) English and the two languages often mingled as a result of code switching and translation.
2. Students drew upon interaction patterns, manners of speech, and lexical items originating in the "unofficial worlds" of home and playground while participating in classroom literacy practices.
3. The teacher and students used Spanish consistently and strategically to make English texts and discussion comprehensible.
4. Students utilized knowledge that indexed out-of-school communities, experiences, and identities as a resource for engaging in classroom literacy practices.

A more thorough analysis of the hybrid literacy practices in Room 110, and their consequences for the students' language and literacy development, follows.

Method

Setting and Participants

The pastiche of images that begins this paper serves as a rudimentary introduction to the children and practices of Room 110, a first- and second-grade English immersion in a large urban elementary school in Southern California. The class consisted of fifteen first-grade and five second-grade native Spanish-speaking Latina/o children. While several of the students had spent the prior year with the teacher, Ms. Page, others arrived from Mexico or Central America just before or during the course of the school year. Since all of the students had previously been in bilingual classes emphasizing primary language instruction or had attended school in Spanish-speaking countries, Ms. Page's class represented its initial formal instruction in English literacy. And, since school administrators had placed the children with the lowest levels of English proficiency in Room 110, the students that were observed faced the unenviable task of learning to read and write in a language they were just beginning to acquire.

Ms. Page, a European Jewish American, was in her second year teaching. She spoke fluent Spanish, partly as a result of spending a year at a Chilean university, and had taught a combined kindergarten and first-grade bilingual class her first year at Adams School. When I asked about her experience teaching bilingually, Ms. Page said, "I felt it was the best way to [educate] language minority children. I bought into the philosophy behind primary language instruction." Ms. Page's perception of her students' achievement

during her first year reinforced her position: "The kids had a lot of success academically. With the exception of one student, all, including my kindergartners, became competent readers in Spanish. I really believed in what I was doing." As a result of this experience, Ms. Page opposed Proposition 227 and was deeply disappointed when it passed.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data in this paper issue from my yearlong study of the literacy practices in Room 110. In order to describe and interpret the actions of the members of the classroom community, I utilized an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis. Data collection occurred during the full 10-month school year and included participant observation in the classroom on the average of two times a week, a number of individual and focus group interviews with Ms. Page and the children, and the ongoing collection of samples of the students' writing were observed. Four literacy activities were observed and audio-recorded: Daily News, guided reading, literature study, and author's chair. For a three-month period beginning in January, were also observed Ms. Page's students during the 45 minutes that they integrated with children from Ms. Jones's English-only first-grade class. As a participant observer I occasionally helped the teacher and the children in small ways when asked. However, I primarily sat beside the students, writing notes and audio-recording their interactions. In addition to these observations, I interviewed Ms. Page three times and Ms. Jones once. I taped the hour-long interviews and simultaneously took handwritten notes. In the last interview I shared findings from the study with Ms. Page and invited her to respond to my analyses. During the second half of the year I conducted five focus group interviews with the students to elicit their thoughts about the classroom activities, reading and writing, and the relative merits of using English and Spanish. Each focus group was made up of four students and was gender specific. Since I generally found that the children had difficulty articulating their views on reading, writing, and language use, I tried to make the focus group experience as comfortable as possible and thus formed the groups in accordance with the patterns of friendship that I had observed in the class. Additionally, in late February I led a class discussion with Ms. Page present, asking the students directly about their feelings regarding the integration period, reading and writing in Spanish and English, and the possibility of being in an English-only class the following year. To supplement my highly contextualized ethnographic data sources, I administered an assessment of English proficiency to all of the students at the beginning and end of the school year and conducted monthly miscue analyses of six focal children's reading in English and Spanish.

I coded all field notes and lesson and interview transcripts using methods of constant comparison and then created broader conceptual categories from these codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this paper I returned to the data and

developed a more comprehensive understanding of those conceptual categories that addressed the hybrid nature of the literacy practices in Room 110. First, attending specifically to the use of English and Spanish, I considered the discourse patterns that characterized these practices. These patterns included (a) oral and written responses in Spanish to stories read in English, (b) the use of Spanish in preparing to read books in English, (c) answers in Spanish to questions asked in English and questions in Spanish to English speakers, (d) complex code-switching during collaborative activity, (e) bilingual utterances by the same child, (f) translation, (g) oral narratives in Spanish transcribed in English, (h) the use of Spanish resources (i.e., environmental print) for writing in English and vice versa, and (i) the production of bilingual texts. After enumerating these types of discourse, I then focused on how they affected the children's participation in the class's literacy practices and their language and literacy learning. Finally, I examined those points in the data that exposed the relationship between the hegemony of English at the school and the hybrid practices of Room 110. Based on these analyses, I now present findings that detail the consequences of the class's hybrid literacy practices and that situate those practices within the hegemonic environment of Adams School.

Hybrid Literacy Practices as Learning Environments

California's Proposition 227 mandated one year of structured-immersion education for English language learners and made teachers who did not follow this dictate liable for damages and legal fees. Ms. Page described her district as implementing the proposition "in the most by-the-book fashion." In a meeting with district officials, she was told explicitly that Spanish could "only be used for support and not for instruction" and that literacy activities could not be done in Spanish. Despite the difficulties this created in a class of children with limited previous exposure to English, Ms. Page was committed to providing a full range of research-based, meaning-centered literacy activities for her students. Throughout the year she implemented writing workshop, shared and guided reading, word study, interactive writing, and literature study units. With regard to the language of instruction, Ms. Page described her approach as striking a "funny compromise" between the mandate of Proposition 227 and the needs of her students. She also allowed the children freedom to choose between English and Spanish during independent reading and writing tasks. To facilitate this choice, an equal amount of Spanish and English books lined the shelves of the class library and the children possessed charts of Spanish letter sounds to help them if they chose to write in that language. By defining the participants' "larger linguistic repertoires" (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999, p. 89) as resources for engaging in reading and writing, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 allowed for the children's increasing participation in a sophisticated literate community

regardless of their level of English proficiency. In this section I describe four positive dimensions of the learning environments created by these hybrid practices. Far from being exceptional, the examples that I use to illustrate these dimensions typify the interactions that I observed throughout the year in Room 110.

Bilingualism as an Emblem of Academic Competence

The emphasis on translation during Room 110's hybrid literacy practices established bilingualism as a highly esteemed ability in the class. While Ms. Page drew attention to the children's displays of bilingualism during practices such as the Daily News, these displays were particularly necessary and notable when the students from the English-only first grade entered Room 110 for integration. During this period, Ms. Page's students eagerly demonstrated their linguistic flexibility in performances that elicited admiration from their monolingual English-speaking peers. After reading storybooks to her integration students, Ms. Page often called on individuals to take on the personas of the main characters of the story and to answer the class's questions from the characters' perspectives. The interaction in Transcript 1 occurred after Ms. Page had read a book featuring Diego, a Latino boy whose family members were migrant workers.

Transcript 1

Ms Page: Is there anybody who would like to come up to the front of the room and be Diego, the boy in the story who goes around with his family? I know that Juan was doing a really good job listening to the whole story. So Diego (pretending that Juan is now Diego), would you please come and sit here. Diego, you speak both Spanish and English, right?

Juan: Yes.

Ms. Page: So, it's okay if you ask him questions in Spanish because Diego knows both. Is there anyone with a question for Diego? (Many students raise their hands.)

Antonio: *¿Por qué tu estabas agarrando el radio?* [Why did you grab the radio?]

Juan: *Por que a mi me gusta cargarlo*. [Because I wanted to take it.]

(Several students turn toward Ms. Page and ask what he said.)

Ms. Page: They want to know-

Juan: I like to carry the radio.

Andrew: Why did you pick the fruit?

Juan: My family – my mom, my dad – they are farmers.

Karen: Does David– *¿David te estaba persiguiendo?* [David, was he bothering you?]

Juan: *No, por que el vive en Washington.* [No, because he lives in Washington.]

In this brief example, Juan fielded questions in English and Spanish and gave a bilingual answer in order to meet the needs of his audience. This performance not only contributed to the class's appreciation of the story, but also represented a public display of Juan's unique linguistic competence. Such displays inspired the bilingual students from the English-only class to use Spanish when they visited Room 110. Ms. Page reported that these children frequently announced, *"Hablo español también"* [I speak Spanish too] and asked her in the hallway, "Can we speak Spanish today [in your class]?" Significantly, the monolingual English-speaking students also developed an interest in Spanish. Thus, although children's bilingualism often passes unnoticed in English-only classrooms, the hybrid language practices of Room 110 created an atmosphere in which this ability was universally acknowledged as a distinctive asset.

Collaboration Across Languages

In addition to positioning bilingualism as a valued skill, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 also fostered the children's collaboration across languages. In an earlier paper (Manyak, 2001), I illustrated the dense, web-like pattern of collaboration that epitomized the reading and writing activities in Room 110. Discussing a lengthy transcript from the Daily News, I emphasized how the children drew upon their broad linguistic repertoires to complete their shared task. Here I focus on the collaboration that occurred between monolingual English and Spanish-dominant speakers during the integration period literacy activities.

Integration time brought together Ms. Page's Latina/o students with the predominately African American children from an English-only first-grade class. For most of the year, Ms. Page utilized the integration time to conduct literature study units involving discussions of, and written responses to, stories that she read aloud. While the books that she read were in English, Ms. Page's students regularly made interpretive comments in Spanish. While Ms. Page often translated these comments into English, when no translation was given, an English-speaking child frequently inquired, "What did she say?" In this way, the English-speaking students evidenced their investment in a joint meaning-making process that solicited and valued the contributions of all participants irrespective of language. The following transcript depicts the serendipitous affiliations between children that frequently resulted from

this process. The interaction occurred while Ms. Page read the story, *Something Special for Me,* and the children discussed what the character would choose for her birthday.

Transcript 2

Michael: Oo! She gonna want that chair.

(Ms. Page turns the page)

Terry: She not gonna want that either.

Michael: She gonna want that chair.

Marisol: *No va a querer ese tampoco.*

Ms. Page (translating): She said, "she's not going to want that either."

Terry: That's what I said.

Sandra: *Quiere un vestido bonito.*

Ms. Page (translating): She wants a pretty dress.

Sergio: She thinks all that is ugly and- (he hesitates, waving his hand in the air)

Michael: Wacky.

Sergio (smiling): Uh-huh.

Ms. Page: Thanks Michael. Ugly and wacky.

While this excerpt suggests the fervent negotiation of meaning that characterized the integration time literature study, it also manifests two connections made by children from different language backgrounds. First, Terry, an African American boy, voiced the fact that Marisol, a Latina girl, concurred with his prediction about the story. Second, Michael, an African American boy, assisted Sergio, a Latino boy, when Sergio was unable to find an English word to complete his statement. Sergio seemed delighted by Michael's contribution, which issued from an informal playground or home register, and Ms. Page endorsed the boys' joint construction, "ugly and wacky." While these connections may seem minor, they take on added significance in light of the tense relations between the Latina/o and African American children that existed at Adams School. In an interview, Ms. Page mentioned "climate of racism at [the] school. It's there. The Latinos are bigoted against the African Americans and vice versa. There are a lot of really negative stereotypes, a lot of misunderstandings." Given this climate, Ms. Page stated that one of her main goals for the integration was "to bridge the two different cultural worlds that exist at the school." By utilizing the children's diverse linguistic resources as tools for collaborative meaning making across languages, hybrid literacy practices appeared to advance this goal.

Resources for Literacy Learning

As a result of Room 110's hybrid literacy practices, the children's knowledge of Spanish served as an important resource for acquiring English literacy. For instance, while the key practice of guided reading focused almost exclusively on English texts, Ms. Page and the children constructed a densely hybrid discourse that served to make the instruction and the texts comprehensible. Early in the school year, Ms. Page emphasized that "some kids will not understand if I explain about reading strategies . . . and get [the children] ready to read the book in English." To ensure the students' comprehension during these important stages of the activity, Ms. Page stated that she engaged in complex code switching in which she was "always trying to speak in a way that the most kids are going to understand at that time." In Transcript 3 Ms. Page and a group of children prepared to read a book in English about a dad's daily routine.

Transcript 3

Ms. Page: Can anyone tell me anything about their dad? What does your dad do? Diana?

Diana: *Cocinar*. [Cook.]

Ms. Page: Your dad cooks?

Diana: Yeh. [Yeah.]

(Several students share in Spanish about their dads cooking.)

Carmen: *Mi papi siempre deja las cosas tiradas y yo las tengo que recoger*. [My dad always leaves things all over and I have to pick them up.]

Ms. Page: Okay, let's look at the pictures. What is the dad doing here? Carmen?

Carmen: *Durmiendo*. [Sleeping.]

Ms. Page: He is sleeping. (reads) Dad is sleeping. What is dad doing here? Nancy?

Nancy: He put a *corbata.* [tie.]

Ms. Page: *Uds. van a leer el libro que se llama "Dad." ¿Qué van a hacer si no saben una palabra?* [You are going to read a book titled, "Dad." What are you going to do if you don't know a word?]

Juan: *Es-ti-rar las palabras*. [Str-e-tch out the words.]

Ms. Page: *Muy bien. Pueden estirar. Pueden hacer todos los sonidos bien despacio.* [Good. You can stretch. You can make all the sounds very slowly.]

Diana: *Mirar el dibujo.* [Look at the picture.]

In this lesson from the second month of school, Ms. Page asked several questions in English but welcomed the children's answers in Spanish. Relying on their primary language, students with limited knowledge of English participated confidently in the pre-reading discussion. The discussion served to activate the children's prior knowledge and to make the book's English vocabulary comprehensible to them. Performing the code switching that she described in the interview cited above, Ms. Page then switched to Spanish herself when facilitating the students' rehearsal of reading strategies. Thus, while the practice culminated with the students reading in English, Ms. Page and the children's broad linguistic repertoires provided the children an entry way into the text and scaffolded their developing knowledge about print.

Biliteracy Development

Beyond supporting the acquisition of English literacy, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 spurred the children's biliteracy development. As the children read and wrote throughout the school day, Ms. Page largely gave them the freedom to do so in the language of their choice. The students clearly enjoyed and exercised this freedom. In formal and informal interviews, the children inevitably informed me that they liked to read and write in both Spanish and English. During the class's writing workshop, many students alternated daily between the two languages or composed bilingual books. As Ms. Page moved around the class holding writing conferences with individual students, she provided instruction in whichever language the children used. Over the course of the year students who initially read and wrote only in Spanish began to write English texts. Similarly, Susan, an English-dominant second-grader, entered Room 110 in May reading and writing only in English but quickly demonstrated an interest in Spanish literacy (Manyak, 2001).

Moreover, despite time spent cultivating their Spanish reading ability, six of the nine first-grade students in Room 110 who took the SAT 9 scored above the national median in English reading and on average the group scored at the 63rd percentile nationally. These scores were particularly impressive given that the children were placed in Ms. Page's class because of their low levels of English proficiency. In summary, hybrid literacy practices facilitated the students' literacy acquisition in both English and Spanish and also proved capable of preparing at least some of the children to succeed on an exam of English reading often considered a crucial measure of academic achievement.

Hybrid Literacy Practices and the Challenge of Hegemony

The preceding findings demonstrate that the hybrid literacy practices in Room 110 provided native Spanish-speaking students access to highly beneficial forms of participation and to a wide spectrum of resources for acquiring language and literacy. By utilizing the children's broad linguistic repertoires, valuing bilingualism, and supporting biliteracy development, these practices challenged the hegemony of English at the school. However, as the latent ambivalence in the construct of hybridity would suggest, this positive view does not represent the full range of consequences produced by the interplay of hegemony and hybridity in Room 110. Thus, in this section I present findings from a final stage of analysis that aimed at situating the hybrid practices more thoroughly within the context of Adams School. These findings manifest the inability of the practices to fully withstand the effects of the linguistic hegemony operating within the school. First, I consider the relative status of English and Spanish at Adams School and within the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110. I then unveil some of the pedagogical and personal costs that resulted from these hybrid practices.

The Conditions of Mixing

To contextualize the hybrid literacy practices in Room 110, it is necessary to distinguish the prevailing language ideology at Adams School. The hegemonic status of English was manifest in numerous ways at the school and the children in Ms. Page's class frequently confronted it. Through disinformation and intimidation, school officials discouraged parents from pursuing the legal option of signing waivers to have their children placed in bilingual classes (Manyak, 2000). Consequently, there were no waivers acknowledged at the school and no classes officially used Spanish for instruction. In addition, Ms. Page complained that the majority of the school's plentiful collection of Spanish books remained locked up and unavailable for use throughout the year. Ms. Jones, the first-grade teacher whose class mixed with Room 110, expressed views consistent with the superior status given to English at Adams School and the corresponding inferiority ascribed to Spanish. In an interview, she shared that "old world" families who spoke only in Spanish curtailed the success of some of her students:

> If everything is in Spanish, the family is saying that English is not the important language. How well do you want your child to do in an English dominated society? The more they hear it— if the family uses it—the better off they will be.

In one case, Ms. Jones described an English learner in her class who struggled with writing despite being a "really good student." She attributed his difficulty to the fact that he had not heard enough English: "The father will only speak Spanish in the home. So I am seeing that [as] a hindrance."

When Ms. Page's students entered Ms. Jones' class for integration, Ms. Jones described her primary objective as modeling "proper English" for them. Significantly, she placed the burden on the children to adapt to her delivery, "I have not geared what I am doing toward anything unique. It has been my understanding that this is the children's chance to try to integrate when somebody is not speaking Spanish to them." In stark contrast to the enthusiastic participation they exhibited in the hybrid literature discussions in Ms. Page's integration class, the children from Room 110 rarely responded to Ms. Jones' questions during read aloud. On one occasion, I tabulated the children's speech turns during a five-minute portion of Ms. Jones' storybook reading. While her students spoke 20 times, Ms. Page's students did not make a single utterance. In light of such experiences, it is unsurprising that the children from Room 110 occasionally verbalized the relative value ascribed to English and Spanish at the school. For example, Tito, a recent immigrant from Honduras, told me, *"Aquí vale más el inglés porque aquí hablan mucho inglés"* ["Here English is more valued because the people speak a lot of English."]

The Terms of Mixture

While hybrid literacy practices represented Ms. Page's attempted to resist the hegemony of English at Adams School, an accounting of the "terms of mixture" for Spanish and English points to the differential roles and status of the two languages in these practices. For instance, while the structure of the Daily News enabled the children to participate by sharing news in Spanish, English served as the language in which their narratives were encoded and preserved throughout the first semester (Manyak, 2001). Similarly, although Ms. Page and the children utilized Spanish during guided reading, they did so to prepare to read in English. Ms. Page's integration time literature study units also featured only English-language texts. And, while comments in Spanish during the literature discussions were often translated into English for the benefit of monolingual English-speaking children, English comments were rarely translated into Spanish. Expressing her awareness of the subordinate status that Spanish often held in the hybrid practices of Room 110, Ms. Page poignantly explained that "my resistance to 227 [was] met by so much intimidation and harassment that I was scared to do what I knew was right. . . . Spanish, although honored and valued, was not given equal treatment in our classroom."

The Cost of Hybrid Practices

As I evidenced earlier, hybrid literacy practices facilitated the successful acquisition of literacy in two languages for many of the students in Room 110. However, due to the unequal mix of English and Spanish, these practices did not meet the needs of all of the children in the class equally. In particular,

students who had recently arrived from Spanish-speaking countries with no knowledge of English and those who had attended bilingual kindergarten but did not enter first grade as conventional readers in Spanish appeared unprepared to benefit as fully as their peers from the class's hybrid practices.

The experience of Antonio, who arrived from Mexico after the start of the school year, epitomized the predicament of the extremely limited English speakers in Room 110. He entered reading haltingly in Spanish and was eager to participate in the class's literacy practices. Although Antonio could work in Spanish during activities involving independent reading and writing, the majority of Ms. Page's explicit instruction centered on English literacy. Thus, while the class's hybrid literacy practices provided Antonio the opportunity to use Spanish, they were not designed to improve his literacy skills in that language. And, although Antonio was a plucky participant in those activities featuring English texts, he struggled to contribute in ways acknowledged by the community. For instance, while he often raised his hand to share during the integration period literature studies, his comments rarely pertained to the content of the book or the direction of the discussion and were seldom translated into English. Occasionally, Antonio exhibited his frustration at the challenge of reading or writing in a language that he was just beginning to understand. Once, I observed him during a guided reading session in which the group prepared to read a repetitive book on snakes. Antonio was animated throughout the pre-reading discussion and enthusiastically shared a story in Spanish about an experience that he had with a snake. Then, as Ms. Page began to pass out the books for the children to read, Antonio asked, *"¿Es en español?"* [Is it in Spanish?] When Ms. Page responded, "It's in English," Antonio slumped to the table, putting his head down on his arms with a look of despair. In summary, as an oppositional response to the mandate of Proposition 227, hybrid literacy practices ameliorated some of the harshness of English-only instruction for children like Antonio with very limited knowledge of the language. However, in terms of literacy development, this group would have benefited from a more traditional bilingual approach that provided explicit instruction in Spanish reading and writing while they gained a basic level of English.

Similarly, several children who entered Room 110 nearly reading in Spanish appeared to suffer from the lack of focused instruction in that language. Diana and Omar were two of the six children whose progress in English and Spanish reading I tracked through monthly miscue analysis. While both were active participants in the class's hybrid literacy practices and manifested steady growth in oral English and in English writing, their reading ability did not improve at the same pace as that of peers who entered the class already reading in Spanish (Manyak, 1999). When I assessed the children during the first month of school using a predictable book reading task in Spanish (Rhodes, 1993), Diana and Omar were able to decipher some words, but both faltered

frequently and often switched to inventing a text based on the illustrations. Nevertheless, their attempts demonstrated that they possessed a high level of knowledge about print, and each one appeared on the verge of reading conventionally. However, without focused instruction in Spanish reading, the two children experienced a lengthy struggle to "break the code" and begin to read conventionally.

While Diana and Omar started the year just behind peers like Ana and Sandra, children who were able to read the basic three-word sentences on the predictable book reading task, by the end of the year a wide gap separated the two pairs of children. For the last miscue analysis in June, Diana and Omar struggled to read book number 20, an emergent level reader, from the Houghton Mifflin reading series the school used. This text was one number above the book that they were reading with Ms. Page during guided reading. In contrast, for the same assessment period, Sandra read book number 42 and Ana read book number 37 in the same series. A similar gap existed between the levels of Spanish texts that the two pairs were able to read for the June assessment. Thus, while Diana and Omar entered first grade slightly behind peers who were able to read in Spanish, they ended the year far behind these children in both English and Spanish reading despite having nearly identical scores on a test of oral English proficiency. Thus, for Diana and Omar, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 appeared to delay their initial reading acquisition by failing to allow them to consolidate their reading ability in Spanish before confronting the additional task of reading in English.

Finally, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 also exacted a cost from Ms. Page. During the school year she suggested that her resistance to the school's implementation of Proposition 227 led to unfair treatment from her administrators, and at the end of the year, Ms. Page moved to a new school district. Looking back on her year with the first- and second-grade children at Adams School, she struggled with the fact that they had not been as universally successful in acquiring literacy as the students had been the previous year in her bilingual class. To conclude this section, I present an excerpt from a speech that Ms. Page prepared for a conference on bilingual education that articulates her appraisal of the costs of her class's hybrid practices. A sense of profound personal turmoil emerged as she discussed the hybrid language practices that:

> Resisted the mandates of the law, yet still did not leave me satisfied. . . . The compassionate compromise I had devised was in the end, just a compromise made under duress. . . . I haven't resolved my feelings about last year. Sometimes I tell myself to be proud of my students' successes, and other times I lament the successes they were denied. In those last few weeks of school, I seethed at the right wing politics that had invaded my love for teaching, invaded the delight children take in learning, and invaded the excitement that comes from pride in discovering and expanding one's own identity.

The Limits of Hybridity and Hybrid Practices

My own early exposure to theorizing on hybridity, limited to sources such as Anzaldúa (1987), Arteaga (1997), and Bhabha (1990), provided an optimistic introduction to the notion and led me to focus on the positive consequences of the mixing of languages and codes that I observed during literacy practices in Room 110. However, informed by recent scholarly critiques leveled against hybridity (Ahmad, 1995; Dirlik, 1999; Joseph; 1999; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995), I have also recognized the limitations of the notion both as a conceptual tool and as a guide for instructional practice.

Initially, my theorizing of the literacy practices in Room 110 as hybrid failed to recognize the power relations that structured these practices and to account for the unequal roles they ascribed to English and Spanish. Focusing on the way that children's broad repertoires of linguistic and cultural knowledge served as resources for participation in the social practice and acquisition of literacy, I often forgot that the hybrid nature of literacy practices in Room 110 reflected a "compromise made under duress." Prevented by the law from pursuing the Spanish literacy instruction that she had found highly successful the previous year, Ms. Page nevertheless struggled to make Spanish a viable tool for participating in the literacy practices in her English immersion class. In many ways her struggle was successful. Unlike the students described by Commins (1989) who believed that "English was the language for school," and thus "[opted] for a less well-mastered code even though the possibility existed to work in Spanish" (p. 35), the children in Room 110 consistently used Spanish in literacy activities. Still, despite Ms. Page's opposition, the hegemony of English often infiltrated the practice of literacy in her class and occasionally manifested itself in the silencing of her students. I am concerned by how my conceptualization of these practices as hybrid can render this dimension of struggle and domination transparent, attributing a false sense of serendipity to the mingling of languages that occurred in Room 110.

In addition to the theoretical shortcomings of hybridity, the evidence that I have presented also testifies to the limitations of hybrid classroom practices in effectively meeting the needs of all children. While students who entered Room 110 reading at a basic level in Spanish and possessing a modicum of English manifested impressive biliteracy development, children who began the year with no previous exposure to English or not yet reading appeared to suffer from the lack of focused Spanish literacy instruction. Thus, despite drawing upon a wider range of linguistic resources than is recognized in many English-only classrooms, the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 did not provide a "one size fits all" instructional solution. In particular, hybrid practices did not adequately substitute for a principled bilingual approach featuring consistent primary-language literacy instruction for children unprepared to benefit fully from instruction in English reading and writing.

Lessons from Hybrid Literacy Practices

While recognizing their limits, I have also demonstrated that the hybrid literacy practices of Room 110 produced dynamic contexts of development that proved fruitful for many students' language and literacy growth. To conclude this paper, I discuss three interrelated principles gleaned from my analyses of Room 110's literacy practices that elaborate dimensions of effective literacy learning environments for Latina/o children.

1. Children's broad linguistic repertoires should serve as resources for their participation in classroom literacy practices and thus for the acquisition of reading and writing. This principle echoes the conclusions of other socioculturally based investigations on the literacy learning of diverse children (Dyson, 1993; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Moll & Díaz, 1987). For instance, after observing a group of bilingual students as they participated in Spanish and English reading instruction, Moll and Díaz (1987) revealed that these students demonstrated fuller comprehension of stories read in English when they were able to discuss them in Spanish. Viewing these findings from a Vygotskian perspective, the authors suggested the existence of a "bilingual zone of proximal development," indicating that bilingual children's acquisition of new knowledge and skills depends on their opportunity to draw upon their two languages to mediate their learning in interaction with others. My analysis of Room 110 has emphasized the crucial role that the children's broad linguistic repertoires played in enabling them to gain access to legitimate participatory roles in classroom literacy practices. The children's participation resulted in many beneficial insights into written language and to their developing sense of competence as readers and writers (Manyak, 2001).
2. Bilingualism should be utilized to promote collaborative negotiation of meaning across languages and thus be positioned as a special emblem of academic competence. Within scholarship on bilingual education, discussions of the linguistic resources of children becoming bilingual have emphasized the prominent role of a well-developed first language in acquiring a second language (Cummins, 1981). However, less attention has been given to the students' situated displays of bilingualism and the potential of these displays to contribute to classroom learning communities and to linguistically diverse children's development of viable academic identities (see Moll & Whitmore, 1993, for a notable exception). While Latina/o children develop the ability to act as language brokers and to carry out "intercultural transactions" in their homes and communities (Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994), this powerful capacity is frequently ignored in classrooms. In Room 110 a number of

the literacy practices encouraged the children to use English and Spanish concurrently. In particular, the act of translation played a key role in fostering interpretive discussions of children's literature among students of different language backgrounds. Furthermore, students who fulfilled the role of translator often elicited the admiration of their peers. Thus, hybrid practices established the children's bilingualism as a valuable intellectual and social resource within a literate academic community.

3. Developmental biliteracy should be the goal of literacy instruction for language minority children. The evidence that I have provided in this paper both supports and qualifies recent studies demonstrating that children can develop literacy in two languages simultaneously from an early age (Moll & Dworin, 1997; Reyes & Costanzo, 1999). For those students who were on the verge of reading independently in Spanish, the focus on English during formal reading instruction appeared to complicate their entry in conventional reading. However, the children that began the year literate in their primary language eagerly exercised the freedom they were given to read and write in either English or Spanish during independent work time. These students seemed to benefit from the bi-directional transfer of reading and writing skills across languages (Verhoeven, 1994), as many achieved high levels of proficiency in both English and Spanish literacy by the end of first grade. Given these results and the benefits of biliteracy as a powerful cultural tool that extends children's communicative repertoire and access to knowledge (Moll & Whitmore, 1993; Moll & Dworin, 1997), supporting anything less than biliteracy development for Spanish-speaking children, after their initial obtainment of literacy in Spanish, represents a narrow-sighted, subtractive goal.

Taken together, these principles produce a compelling vision of classroom communities in which native Spanish-speaking children's cultural resources and special linguistic competence are recognized, extended, and used as bridges to new learning in two languages. Sadly, the monolingual mandate of California's Proposition 227 and of similar legislation across the country currently prohibits the realization of this vision in countless schools brimming with Spanish-speaking Latina/o students.

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