TRANSLATING PEDAGOGIES
Leveraging Students' Heritage Languages in the Literacy Classroom

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We seek to understand how teachers that do not share a heritage language with their students can leverage these languages in literacy instruction. This study reports on 5 teachers' implementation of a literacy activity that uses strategic collaborative translation to facilitate middle school English language learners' (ELLs) understandings about texts, about reading comprehension strategies, and about language. Using a sociocultural perspective, we found that teachers drew on diverse pedagogical tools by participating in the activity as learners, collaborators, or experts. When teachers participated as learners, they were able to increase their understandings about students' language and cultural background. When teachers participated as collaborators, they drew students' attention to the importance of negotiating and constructing meaning in texts. When teachers participated as experts, they scaffolded student participation by sharing strategies for comprehending challenging vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. From this analysis, we then highlight how this activity can support ELLs' literacy achievement under the Common Core State Standards.

Thomas was a self-professed "stand and deliver" teacher used to a chalk-and-talk method for delivering literacy instruction in his 8th grade classroom. Though he acknowledged the importance of student interaction and leveraging students' heritage languages in instruction, he felt unprepared to tap into the linguistic strengths of his Kurdish, Mexican, and Somali students. After his first attempt to facilitate a bilingual discussion of a text, Thomas asked a question many educators working with English language learners (ELLs) are currently grappling with: *how can I help students when I don't speak their language?*

Heritage languages are languages that students use in their communities or with their families that are tied closely to their cultural heritage (Fishman, 2001). They are not necessarily the primary language in a student's home, nor are they necessarily the student's first language, as many bilingual students

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develop multiple languages simultaneously. Researchers and educators hold that effective instruction for ELLs should leverage these languages in literacy instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006); the cognitive and social benefits to students are too great to be overlooked in a time where ELLs continue to perform behind their mainstream peers in literacy (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

For any ESL or content area teacher, incorporating students' heritage languages into instruction can be a daunting task (Karathanos, 2010). Along with the challenge of leveraging a language that the teacher might not understand, this teacher must also find ways to integrate this language into instruction to promote student achievement. Furthermore, states like California, Massachusetts, and new destination states, like Tennessee, adhere to English-only language policies. We seek to shed light on how teachers that do not share a heritage language with their students can leverage these languages in literacy instruction. We examine five teachers' participation in a literacy activity that uses strategic collaborative translation to facilitate students' understandings about texts, about reading comprehension strategies, and about language. From this analysis, we then highlight how this activity can support ELLs' literacy achievement under the Common Core State Standards.

Heritage Languages in the Classroom

The Working Group on ELL Policy (2009) recognizes that "most schools fail to capitalize on (ELLs') linguistic resources" (p. 2) and points out that the "use of the home language can promote English language development and academic achievement, particularly in literacy" (pp. 3–4). Researchers have shown the advantages of leveraging heritage languages to promote literacy achievement. Hopewell (2011) and Jiménez (1997) show that students benefit from using bilingual reading comprehension strategies, such as using cognates, translating words within context, and discussing English texts in their heritage language. López-Robertson (2012) also argues that certain comprehension strategies, like making text-to-self connections, are better accessed when students have opportunities to use heritage languages in discussions about texts.

Leveraging heritage languages can also facilitate students' English language development. Scott (2008) shows that students benefit from talking about grammatical structures in a new language when they have these discussions in their heritage language. Pacheco and Goodwin (2013) argue that students use morphological knowledge in their heritage language to help derive meanings of unknown words in English. Furthermore, comparing two languages through multilingual activities like translating can build students' awareness of the forms and functions of language (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991). Bilinguals constantly use their heritage language as a resource for making meaning in the second language, and vice versa. Rather than thinking of the two as separate systems within the bilingual mind, Cook (1993) argues that both languages are part of one system that students access strategically to make meaning. Instead of driving a wedge between these languages, instruction should find ways of leveraging this multilingualism as a tool for learning.

Inviting students' heritage languages into the classroom also holds social benefits that cannot be overlooked. Cho (2000) shows that ELLs' use and development of their heritage language helps with adjustment to English speaking environments. ELLs are often placed on the social margins of schools (Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003) and are relegated to "ESL ghettos" where there is little interaction with native speakers of English and an overemphasis on memorization and worksheet completion (Faltis & Arias, 2013; Valdés, 2001). A classroom that welcomes students' heritage languages can be a space where ELLs participate alongside their mainstream classmates and demonstrate their expertise. Martínez-Roldán (2005) shows that students actively participate in rich classroom discussions when they use their heritage

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languages, and Stewart (2013) argues that students with limited English proficiency take greater agency in their writing when they can access their heritage language. It is important to note that this linguistic diversity benefits not just ELLs, but all students that participate in this multilingual, multicultural, and multiperspectival classroom.

Heritage Languages "In the Cracks"

Cummins (2000) warns that the omission of students' heritage languages in instruction can have profound and negative consequences on ELL's academic achievement. This is particularly pressing in new destination states like Tennessee, Nevada, Nebraska and Washington where the ELL population has grown over 200% in the last 20 years (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). A major concern in these states is the shortage of trained ESL or bilingual teachers that can communicate effectively with ELLs, parents, and communities (Wepner & Changing Suburbs Institute, 2012). This communication can be especially challenging given that the vast majority of teachers do not share a cultural and linguistic heritage with their students (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and have little training in how to work effectively with ELLs (Sleeter, 2001).

Along with linguistic and cultural barriers, teachers must also contend with certain legal and dispositional barriers. English-only laws in many states have severely restricted the use of heritage languages in school settings (Valdés, 2001). Under Proposition 227 in California, for example, a state with about one in every three students identified as an ELL (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), instruction in a language besides English is welcome only for students who are already proficient in English or for students whose parents request a special waiver from the state (Monzó, 2005). While this affects the legality of language use, it can also impact teachers' dispositions toward heritage languages (for a review, see Pettit, 2011). Lee and Oxelson (2006), for example, found that teachers in such environments felt indifferent or negative toward heritage languages, stating that using them in the language arts classroom was "not my job."

Despite these challenges, Cummins (2000) argues that teachers can find ways of operating "in the cracks" of official policy to welcome heritage languages in the classroom. While teachers' language use may be legally constrained by state policy, students retain the right to use their heritage language in school spaces under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ricento, 1996). Furthermore, teachers have tremendous power in choosing how to enact language policy within their classrooms (Cole et al., 2012), and with the right instructional tools they can wield this power to learn about students' linguistic strengths and leverage these strengths in instruction.

THE CURRENT STUDY: HERITAGE LANGUAGES IN TRANSLATION

We present an instructional approach that allows students to access their heritage languages and use them as resources for literacy achievement. TRANSLATE (Teaching Reading And New Strategic Language Approaches to English learners) consists of small-group guided reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) that employs strategic collaborative translation (Jiménez et al., 2015). With groups of four or five students, the teacher begins by inviting students to make text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections to a poem, short story, or passage. The students then read the passage independently or as a whole group and collaboratively translate short sections of conceptually and linguistically rich texts from the passage into their heritage language (see Table 1 for sample lines of text selected by teachers in this study). Students then compare translations with one another and discuss meanings at the word, sentence, and text level in their heritage language and in English. At the end of this sequence, the teacher and students connect these translations back to impor-

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TABLE 1
Sample Sentences Used in Translation

Sentence and Text	*Importance for Comprehension*	*Linguistic Challenges*
"Suddenly I realized that there was dead silence except for our zipping. Looking up, I saw that the eyes of everyone in the room were on our family" (from *All American Slurp,* Namioka, 1987).	• Plot: visualizing an important moment in the life of the narrator • Theme: fitting in; embarrassment over cultural difference	• Figurative language (*dead silence*) • Unusual usage (*zipping*) • Synecdoche/unusual syntax (*the eyes of everyone …*)
"Can I last a whole month without eating during sunlight hours? That task is my own personal Mount Everest" (from *Bestest. Ramadan. Ever.* Sharif, 2011).	• Character: the narrator is not sure she can do it • Theme: overcoming personal challenges	• Rhetorical question • Figurative language (*My own personal Mount Everest*)
"Death made a threatening gesture, and I fled in terror. May I please borrow your horse?" (from *Appointment in Samarra*, traditional).	• Plot: visualizing what constitutes a "threatening gesture" • Character: relationship between servant and master • Plot: narrator shifts from telling about a past event to taking action in the present	• Personification (*Death*) • Rare word (*fled; terror*) • Register (*may I please …*)

Note: Teachers not only selected sentences that were linguistically challenging and/or important for comprehending an important aspect of the story (including plot, characterization, or major themes), but that also aligned with long term curricular aims.

tant features within the text, such as character, plot, setting, or theme.

Puzio, Keyes, Cole, and Jiménez (2013) have shown that collaborative translation can be useful for deepening students' understandings about texts and language. When students translate, they actively construct meanings within the English text and reconstruct these meaning into their heritage language, all the while paying attention to differences in the two languages' systems of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. It is worth noting that the kind of translation experience we are describing is more cognitively demanding than the simple reformulation of a word into another language (such as *gato* for *cat*). When conceptually or linguistically challenging pieces of text are selected, translation becomes a process of interpretation and reinterpretation during which the students must consider the context in which a word or phrase is used, whether it is used literally or figuratively, and who is writing the text and for whom it is written (Hall, Smith, & Wicaksono, 2011). The rich peer-to-peer interaction used in this process can support ELL literacy and language achievement (for a review, see Cole, 2013) as students negotiate meanings in both English and their heritage language using specific evidence from the text.

A Sociocultural Framework

To guide our understanding of teacher and student participation in TRANSLATE, we use sociocultural theory that argues that learning occurs when an individual participates in goal-directed activity with a more knowledgeable peer or teacher, or with a tool (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Interaction and participation are essential for learning, and we frame TRANSLATE as an activity in which both students and teachers interact and participate. At times, the teacher is the more knowledgeable person in the activity, scaffolding the students' understandings about language or literacy. At other times, the student is the expert, teaching the teacher about their heritage language or cul-

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ture. As teachers interact with students, they have the opportunity to learn more about students' heritage languages, expertise, and background knowledge. As students interact with the teacher and their peers, they have the opportunity to learn more about the text, language, and the tools needed for comprehending both.

Rogoff (1994) holds that learning is change in participation over time. Our first goal is to understand how teachers participate, or learn, when using TRANSLATE. Sociocultural theory also emphasizes the importance of tools used or appropriated in a goal-directed activity (Wertsch, 1991). These tools can be physical, such as a piece of chart paper, or can take the form of instructional strategies, techniques, or language itself. Our second goal is to identify the pedagogical tools that teachers use to promote student participation in TRANSLATE. For our study, we ask the following two research questions:

1. How do teachers that do not share a heritage language with their students participate in TRANSLATE?
2. What pedagogical tools do teachers use to encourage student participation in this activity?

Data Sources and Methods

We report on 5 teachers' implementation of TRANSLATE with eighth grade students in a middle school in a new destination state (see Table 2). Twenty-five percent of the school's students are ELLs and over 90% receive free or reduced lunch (TDOE Report Card, 2011). Two of the teachers in the study are the authors of this article (hereafter referred to as Mark and Sam), and they worked with 3 students of Somali descent and 5 students of Kurdish descent respectively. Mark and Sam are currently graduate students but each taught for over 5 years in middle and high school. Rachel, a teacher with 8 years experience, worked with 5 students of Kurdish descent. Thomas, a teacher with 5 years experience, worked with 4 students of Mexican descent. Zara, a teacher with 7 years experience, worked with 4 students of Mexican descent. All students in the study were ELLs or former ELLs. None of the teachers in our study shared a heritage language with their students. All names of students and teachers in this study (with the exception of the authors) are pseudonyms.

Data were collected for this study in two phases. Mark and Sam each worked with students on 10 separate occasions during the students' study period during the fall of 2011. Rachel facilitated this phase by helping to select student participants, but she did not participate or observe the instruction at this time. The following year, the authors returned to the school to conduct a professional development series aimed at supporting ELL instruction through the TRANSLATE program. Rachel assisted the researchers in a snowball sampling

TABLE 2
Teacher Participants

Name	*Years Teaching Experience*	*Language Proficiency*	*Students' Languages*	*Texts Used*
Rachel	8	English, German	Bahdini, Sorani (Kurdish)	*Bestest. Ramadan. Ever.*
Thomas	5	English	Spanish	*Appointment in Samarra*
Zara	7	English, Arabic	Spanish	*Concrete Jungle*
Mark	5	English, Spanish	Mushunguli (Somali)	*All American Slurp*
Sam	7	English, Spanish	Bahdini, Sorani (Kurdish)	*All American Slurp*

Note: All students that participated had varying levels of proficiency in English and their heritage language.

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process (Morgan, 2008) to identify other teachers within her school who worked with ELLs and wished to improve their ELL instruction. The professional development series included instruction on the TRANSLATE procedures, including video examples from previous research, after which the teachers were observed using TRANSLATE on 3 separate occasions during their regular literacy instruction in the spring of 2013. It is important to note that TRANSLATE was not presented as a highly scripted curriculum, but rather as a set of procedures that teachers could adapt based on their teaching styles and larger curricular goals. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes. We conducted follow-up interviews with each teacher after each session to probe teachers on specific strategies used in instruction. We also conducted semistructured interviews with each teacher to learn more about their philosophies of instruction, their working environments, and their approaches to working with ELLs. All observations and interviews were video recorded and transcribed, and field notes were taken during each observation.

Our analysis of classroom observations stemmed from a sociocultural framework that views participation as the interaction between individuals and tools in goal-directed activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1991). Two independent coders went through the data chronologically using constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1968), generating descriptive codes relating to the ways in which teachers participated in the TRANSLATE activity and the specific pedagogical tools they employed. Subsequently, descriptive codes were grouped into categories through axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Interviews were coded using discourse analytic methods (Gee, 2010), paying special attention to how teachers constructed identities and how they positioned these identities in relation to their students and their practice. Understandings from these interviews were used to triangulate findings from the classroom observations, and we member checked with the participating teachers to ensure validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the first and second authors of this paper were participants in this study, we attempted to limit bias by working with two peer debriefers during data collection and data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

FINDINGS

We observed teachers participating as learners, collaborators, and experts in TRANSLATE. Within each of these categories, we observed teachers using specific pedagogical tools that encouraged student participation. We will also show how these tools scaffolded students' understandings about the text, about language, and about strategies for comprehension.

Teacher as Learner

Teachers participated as learners when they positioned students as authoritative knowers and asked students to share their understandings about language and culture. Rather than teachers' lack of knowledge being an impediment to student learning, it sparked important discussions about texts and language.

Sam worked with two pairs of Kurdish students reading the short story, *All American Slurp* (Namioka, 1987). In this story, a Chinese American teenager describes the difficulties of integrating into small-town America. After students translated the line, "Meg was the first friend I had made after we came to America," Sam had no way to know exactly what the translations meant in Bahdini, the Kurdish dialect spoken by the students. However, he recognized that the two translations proposed by students were different (see Figure 1). Sam asked students to explain the location of *aweli/awooli,* meaning *first*, and *havala*, meaning *friend*, in their translations. During the ensuing discussion, students identified Translation #2 as "more correct" because it used Bahdini noun and adjective order, whereas Translation #1 imitated English syntax. Using the pedagogical tool of writing the translations on chart

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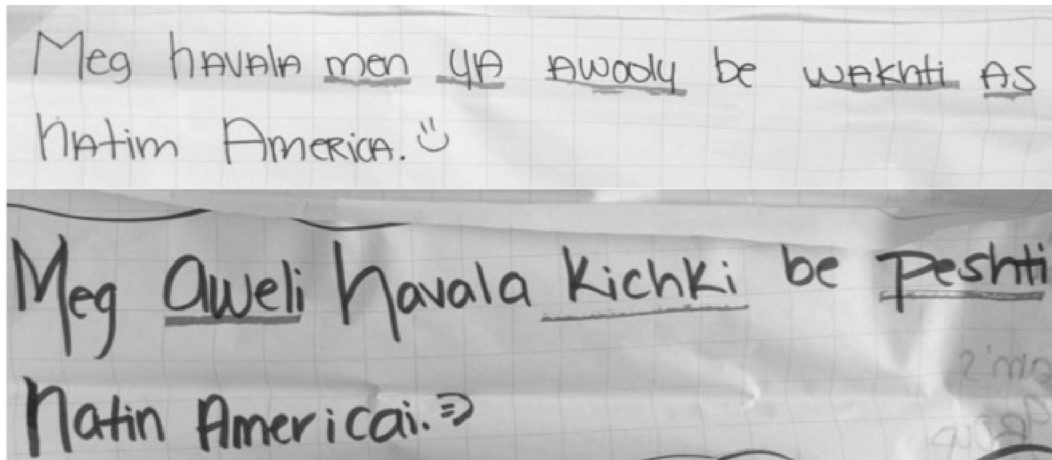

"Meg was the firs friend I had made after we came to America."

Figure 1. Student's Bahdini translations.

paper and making comparisons between them, Sam deepened not only his own knowledge of Bahdini vocabulary and syntax, but prompted a student discussion about differences in Bahdini and English syntax. From this discussion, he then drew students' attention back to the text, considering why it was so important that Meg was the narrator's *first friend* in the story.

Rachel also worked with five Kurdish students reading the novel, *Bestest. Ramadan. Ever*. (Sharif, 2011), a story about a 15 year-old Muslim girl living in Florida. During one TRANSLATE session, Rachel learned that Kurdish is not a single language, but a group of dialects spoken by Kurdish people. When she placed student translations side by side on chart paper and asked students to explain word choices, she learned that two of her students had written in Sorani and the other three had written in Bahdini. While these students said they could understand some common vocabulary words shared by Bahdini and Sorani, they were unable to understand each other's dialect. This moment opened a discussion about the dialects' relationships to geography, and the students told Rachel about their hometowns in Iraq. Nilufer, a recent immigrant, said that she spoke Sorani and could write its script in Arabic, whereas Hana, a student with a stronger command of English, said she could understand Sorani but could not write it. This information helped Rachel form groups for future TRANSLATE sessions. By pairing Nilufer and Hana, Rachel was able to leverage each student's expertise as a pedagogical tool to support one another in the translation process.

Sam and Rachel's experiences show how teachers can learn about their students through a bilingual activity and how this learning can open doors to student learning. By asking students to compare and contrast translations, Sam engaged students in a discussion about syntax and word choice, and then connected this discussion to students' understandings about characters in the story. Rachel's TRANSLATE experience gave her the opportunity to learn about her students' linguistic backgrounds, which then informed future group configurations.

Teacher as Collaborator

When students translate for parents or family members outside of school, a parent might collaborate by giving information about a text's register, such as a legal register, or by

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summarizing the purpose of the text (Orellana & Reynolds, 2008). This collaboration scaffolds the child's understanding of English and lessens the cognitive and linguistic demands for the translation. We observed similar types of teacher and student collaboration that scaffolded students' participation in TRANSLATE, leading to student understandings about the text and comprehension strategies. Rather than acting as a "sage on the stage" or a "guide on the side," teachers often worked with students as cocreators or collaborators in producing translations.

Mark used two important tools for collaborating with Zed and Moheeen, two Somali students who were unsure of how to translate the phrase *western guests* from *All American Slurp* (Namioka, 1987) into Mushunguli, a Somali dialect. Mark first drew students' attention to the text, asking specific questions to help students understand what *western* meant in the story's context:

Mark: What do we know about the characters in our story?

Moheen: They are from two different places.

Mark: Okay. Where are they from?

Moheen: China.

Mark: Who is from China?

Zed: The family.

Mark: Okay. What about the Gleasons? Where are they from?

Zed: The west.

Mark helped students infer the meaning of *western* by drawing on their understandings of where the characters were from in the story. Using the text to support translation mirrors what good readers often do when they summarize or clarify what they have read in order to identify possible meanings of new vocabulary words or predict outcomes in a story.

While this strategy helped Moheen and Zed understand the meaning of *western* in English, they were unsure how to say this word in Mushunguli. Clearly, Mark could not tell them how to translate the word, but he was able to help them identify possible synonyms in English:

Mark: Okay, right here. So, what does that tell us? What could *western* mean?

Moheen: America.

Mark: Why do you say that?

Moheen: Because people in China, they say, like, to the other side of the map, it's the west side.

Mark: And who's on that side?

Zed: USA.

Mark: So what can we put for *western*?

Moheen: Um, USA, or American. American guests. That makes more sense now.

When students learning another language wish to express a concept for which they do not have a vocabulary word, they might use a paraphrasing strategy to "talk around" the word (Atkinson, 1987). This paraphrasing strategy is also useful when there might not be a word in the students' heritage language that directly corresponds with the English word. Mark prompted Moheen and Zed to try this strategy, and they decided that *American* worked as a translation given the context of the story.

In these examples, Mark encouraged students to use the text and to use a paraphrasing strategy to assist with translation. In doing so, Moheen and Zed not only honed their understandings of the text, but also developed important reading comprehension strategies. When they struggled to understand what *western* meant in English, they used context clues within the story. When they then needed to consider what *western* meant in their heritage language, they used a paraphrasing strategy that can support ELLs to express difficult concepts orally and in writing.

Teacher as Expert

While the teachers in our study were by no means experts in students' heritage languages, they used other areas of expertise to facilitate

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student translations and deepen students' understandings. Specifically, we noted teachers using their knowledge of language and literacy as scaffolding tools. To be clear, teachers also used their knowledge of language and literacy when they participated as collaborators, but the goal in those instances was to provide support and guidance during student translations. Teachers participated as experts when they used their expertise to achieve larger learning objectives, such as scaffolding student comprehension prior to translation, or connecting the translation activity to meta-cognitive understandings about the text, reading strategies, or language structure.

For example, when working with Spanish speaking students, Thomas recognized the importance of distinguishing between literal and figurative language within texts. He predicted his students might have difficulties understanding how the author personifies death in the folktale, *Appointment in Samarra*, and he chose to focus his instruction on this literary element. Thomas first asked students how death might look as a person, eliciting from students that death might have "no face, no feet, and just bones for hands." After two pairs of students then translated the phrase, "I saw Death in the market," Thomas asked them to compare their different translations. Sandra pointed out that the translation "Yo vi a la muerte" was more correct than "Yo vi la muerte" because *a* denotes that the subject is viewing a person, and not an inanimate object. Thomas confirmed this choice by asking if seeing a person might be different from seeing a dead squirrel. Another student, Miguel, then added that if death were a person in the story, *la muerte* would need to be capitalized as *La Muerte*. Thomas prepared his students to better comprehend the story by working on challenging language before reading the text. He then facilitated a discussion in which students made several connections to their knowledge about language (how personification changes the syntax of a sentence in Spanish) and text (capitalization of proper nouns). This discussion shows how Thomas' expert understandings of an English text not only facilitated student translations, but also deepened Sandra and Miguel's understandings of figurative language and the folktale.

Whereas Thomas had only his knowledge of English to draw on, Rachel applied her expertise in learning German as a second language to support her Kurdish students. Rachel reported the challenges she faced understanding idioms when learning German, and the embarrassment she suffered when she used them incorrectly. Knowing the difficulties that idioms pose to language learners, Rachel scaffolded students' understandings of the uncommon expression *Miami mama* from *Bestest. Ramadan. Ever.* (Shariah, 2011).

Rachel: Have you ever watched any TV shows set in Florida or Miami?

Nilufer: Yeah.

Hana: Sure.

Sepan: Miami what? Miami two-point-something.

Rachel: What do the women look like in that show?

Sepan: Pretty.

Nilufer: Anyway, um, the mom, they wear, like, big dresses, that's what it (the text) says.

Hana: And the other ones wear like, teenager clothes.

Rachel: So, if I, if you say that woman is a mother, or if you say, man, she is one hot mama …

Sepan: She looks more attractive. She looks really attractive.

Though Rachel could not read Bahdini or Sorani and could not understand student heritage language discussions about the text, she predicted that students might have difficulty translating *Miami mama* accurately. Rachel initiated this discussion by tapping into students' background knowledge, in this case, their familiarity with television shows set in Miami. Nilufer then used a textual detail to support her understanding. By combining

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background knowledge with new knowledge in the text, she and Sepan made inferences about the meaning of *Miami mama*, and thus, both came to a new understanding about a character in the story. It is important to note that sexuality can be a sensitive topic for any middle school discussion, but Rachel chose this line because of its linguistic difficulty and its centrality to understanding one of the book's main characters.

Thomas and Rachel show that teachers can use their expertise in language and literacy as tools to help students learn about literary elements like personification, and reading comprehension strategies like making inferences. Leveraging this expertise can also afford opportunities for further discussions about language. Thomas, for example, could invite students to give examples of figurative language in Spanish as a follow up activity. Similarly, Rachel could ask students to identify idiomatic expressions in Kurdish. How might these expressions translate, if at all, into English? By making cross-linguistic comparisons, students can begin to question how languages vary in both form and content, and can examine the relationship between language and culture.

Implementing TRANSLATE in the Classroom

Thomas, Rachel, Mark, and Sam show specific ways that teachers can use TRANSLATE to scaffold students' understandings of texts, strategies for comprehension, and language. We understand that their specific experiences with TRANSLATE cannot be replicated directly in other classrooms as student populations and areas of teacher expertise will vary. We do wish to emphasize, however, that our findings highlight the different ways that teachers, despite language constraints, can find ways to leverage students' heritage languages in the classroom (for a review of the key pedagogical tools used, see Table 3).

We have also uncovered some instructional features that we believe could be transferable to other classroom contexts and we will share some illustrative examples from Zara's instruction to make general recommendations for implementing TRANSLATE in the literacy classroom. Unlike her colleagues who used TRANSLATE with a single small group, Zara divided her class into multiple groups of students that shared a heritage language. While some groups spoke languages other than English, others were composed entirely of mono-

TABLE 3
Teachers' Pedagogical Tools

Teacher Participation	*Pedagogical Tool*	*Teacher/Student Outcomes*
Teacher as learner	• Compare student translations on chart paper and attend to difference in translations • Ask students about heritage language knowledge (i.e., dialects and proficiencies)	• Teacher learns about student language; discussions of syntax, vocabulary, and textual themes • Teacher learns about student linguistic strengths; uses this info to configure work groups
Teacher as collaborator	• Direct students to textual clues to infer meaning of English vocabulary • Guide students in paraphrasing/finding synonyms for English words that they don't know how to translate	• Students comprehend specific vocabulary and practice a comprehension strategy • Students successfully complete translation and practice a comprehension strategy
Teacher as expert	• Scaffold figurative language comprehension through direct instruction • Scaffold figurative language comprehension by tapping student background knowledge	• Students avoid comprehension difficulties; discussion centered on linguistic features • Improved comprehension of English idiom; revised translation based on this knowledge

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lingual English speakers. As a result, Zara had students either translate a line from a poem into another language, or paraphrase that line into the English that students might speak in the hallway or when sending a text message. In both cases, students had the opportunity to discuss meanings for challenging vocabulary, defend their choices of translations, and use translations to construct meaning in the poem. Zara's approach shows how TRANSLATE can be used as a whole class activity for mainstream students and ELLs alike.

Zara also used TRANSLATE as a supplement, rather than a replacement, for her regular literacy instruction. She said that in her normal teaching practice she chose to circulate to small groups to facilitate discussions, thus giving students more autonomy in their learning and more opportunity for collaboration. She said she also regularly focused her instruction on students' backgrounds, saying she didn't "want to be the teacher that refused to let students be who they want to be." Prior to using TRANSLATE, she said she welcomed other languages into the classroom by using her knowledge of Arabic to model the ways in which knowing another language is a benefit, and not a hindrance, in any classroom.

We recognize that Zara's experience with TRANSLATE is unique because of her teaching philosophy, her student population, and her linguistic expertise, just as we recognize the uniqueness in her colleagues' experiences. Across the five teachers who used TRANSLATE, however, all encouraged students to openly discuss understandings of texts in English and their heritage languages. By focusing more on facilitating discussions and less on producing perfect translations, teachers could offer strategies, such as making inferences or paraphrasing, to assist students. By focusing on the process and not the product, they drew students' attention to perhaps the most important goal for reading, that of negotiating and constructing meaning in texts.

This act of constructing meaning in texts is an approach to reading that is sometimes overlooked by struggling bilingual readers (Jiménez, 1997). TRANSLATE encourages students to read and reread texts, and take into account important elements for comprehension to facilitate their translations, such as vocabulary, syntax, speaker, audience, and context. This careful examination of textual elements has been linked to deeper levels of text comprehension (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

IMPLICATIONS: TRANSLATING THE COMMON CORE

A major challenge for implementing any new instructional activity is fitting it into an already jam-packed curriculum. At the time of our study, Thomas, Rachel, and Zara were simultaneously preparing students for the year-end state language arts exam, implementing district-based literacy initiatives, and finding ways to help students meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Rather than seeing TRANSLATE as a replacement for any of this instruction, we see it as an approach that supports teachers in leveraging ELLs' strengths in literacy instruction. In particular, we believe TRANSLATE can support ELLs in achieving the CCSS. All students, regardless of language ability, need to be "college and career ready" in the 21st century (CCSS, 2010, p. 7), and researchers and policy makers have just begun finding ways to support ELLs in accomplishing these standards (Hakuta & Santos, 2013). Below, we highlight how TRANSLATE can support ELLs' achievement of the 8th grade English Language Arts standards.

Reading Literature

Under the Reading Standards for Literature, students need to "cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says" and "analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision" (CCSS, 2010, p. 36). In TRANSLATE, students use evidence from

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texts to support their decisions for choosing particular translations. When Somali students translated *western guests*, for example, they leveraged knowledge about characters in the short story, specifically that the Gleasons were from America, to support their decision to translate *western* as *American*. By focusing on this line of text, Mark then prompted students to consider how having *western guests* over for dinner propels the conflict in the story. Why, for example, does the narrator of the story, a Chinese American, choose to highlight this feature of the dinner guests? And what might this important line of text reveal about the narrator's own feelings about being *western* or American?

Speaking and Listening

Under the Speaking and Listening Standards, students must be able to engage in a range of collaborative discussions where they "pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers" and "qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented" (CCSS, 2010, p. 49). When Rachel worked with Kurdish students translating, "She looked like a typical Miami mama in makeup and high heels" (Sharif, 2011, p. 5), the discussion involved issues of sexuality within culture. One female student, Hana, argued that *Miami mama* could be translated as a mother who "wears big dresses," while a male student, Sepan, argued that the term implied that she was attractive. Thinking Sepan was joking around, Hana did not take his argument seriously. As the discussion's facilitator, Rachel recognized the truth in Sepan's argument, and encouraged him to cite support for his claim. When Sepan described that makeup and high heels might make the character "look attractive," Hana changed her translation from "mother in Miami" to "attractive woman." Both Sepan and Hana not only used evidence within the text to support their arguments, but presented these arguments in a logical way, evaluated each other's arguments, and adjusted their arguments in light of classmates' opinions.

Language

One of the richest areas for student learning in TRANSLATE is the opportunity to learn about language and its functions. Thomas' example with *Appointment in Samarra* showed how translation could be used to support students' understandings of figurative language and nuances in word meanings. We suggest that students can also use translation to tackle new grammatical concepts emphasized in the Language Standards, like the active and passive voice, and verbs in the imperative, conditional and subjunctive tenses (CCSS, 2010, p. 53). When students translated the line "lend me your horse" into Spanish, for example, Thomas could have used this as an opportunity to discuss the imperative versus the declarative tense in English. Is this tense used similarly in Spanish? And would a servant speak to his master in such a commanding tone? How might the line be translated into Spanish using the more polite conditional tense instead?

CONCLUSION

Our work with TRANSLATE stems from a desire to promote ELLs' literacy achievement by leveraging their linguistic strengths. Rachel stated this desire best when she told us "my students know a lot of things, just not English." By focusing on students' linguistic resources and giving teachers an approach to become confident learners about their students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, TRANSLATE offers one avenue for teachers to invite students' heritage languages into the classroom.

To rephrase Rachel's statement, we found that "teachers know a lot of things, just not their students' heritage languages." We saw Rachel leveraging her awareness of students' abilities to strategically group students,

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Thomas leveraging his expertise in English to push students' understandings of language, and Zara leveraging her mastery of small group differentiated instruction to weave the translation activity into her daily practice.

Of course, we also observed moments when teachers did not know some linguistic information that could have better facilitated student comprehension. A teacher who shares a heritage language with his or her students certainly has greater ability to assess what students know about language and to make connections to students' prior knowledge. However, even a teacher who can speak the heritage language of his or her students must use that knowledge strategically to support student learning. We have seen examples of teachers who know students' heritage languages but who missed opportunities to let students take ownership of their learning and make strong connections to English literacy skills because they focused more attention on the accuracy of the final product than on the strengths that students revealed while engaging in the translation process. In any case, we believe that engaging students in meaningful discussions about language and literature has benefits for student and teacher alike.

We must reframe the way we think about our students, our teachers, and their bilingual interactions and participation in the classroom. The Kurdish, Somali, and Mexican students in our study accessed their bilingual linguistic knowledge to deepen their understandings of grade level texts. Similarly, our teachers leveraged their pedagogical knowledge to skillfully implement a bilingual literacy activity. And lastly, students and teachers worked together to communicate across the language barrier, creating new opportunities for learning about language, texts, and strategies for comprehension.

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