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Examining raciolinguistic struggles in institutional settings: A duoethnography

Christian Fallas-Escobar[a,*], Luis Javier Pentón Herrera[b]

[a] University of Texas at San Antonio 15651 Chase Hill Blvd 1002 San Antonio, Texas 78256 United States
[b] University of Warsaw, Poland

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ABSTRACT

In this duoethnography, we draw on the zone of (non)being (Fanon, 2010) and linguistic citizenship (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020) to examine the struggles that we—a high school teacher and a doctoral fellow/teacher educator of color—face in our institutional contexts. We illustrate the ways our language practices become excluded and the ways we are misrepresented as Latinos. Our analysis sheds light on how we engage with the raciolinguistic ideologies at the heart of these exclusions and misrepresentations. Our findings add to the existing literature on raciolinguistic ideologies by centering our struggles within institutional structures of inequity and marginalization, and illuminating the ways contextual factors shape our critical engagement with these structures.

1. Introduction

Language plays a key role in the (re)production of inequities (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) within and beyond institutional settings. To combat inequities perpetuated in U.S. schools, education scholars have proposed translanguaging (García, 2009) and linguistically responsive instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) as entry points to offset the hardships faced by culturally and linguistically diverse students such as Latinx youth. More recently, Rosa & Flores (2017) urged us to address the intersection of language, race, and ethnicity, in the study of the marginalization impacting Latinx students. They brought our attention to the ways particular language practices become constructed as emblematic of particular races/ethnicities (and vice versa), often resulting in negative symbolic and material repercussions for Latinx students. Following their cue, Daniels & Varghese (2020) argued that redressing the (re)production of inequities within schools requires that we center how teachers and teacher educators of color[1] experience their raciolinguicized subjectivities within and beyond educational settings.

In response to this call, we engaged in a duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012) to explore the *raciolinguistic struggles* or experiences of institutional oppression that we—a high school teacher and a doctoral fellow/teacher educator of color—have faced in our respective institutional settings: a public Hispanic-serving institution in Texas and a public high school in Maryland. Specifically, we focused on hardships we experienced around raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores, 2017), and which pointed to opportunities of speaking back to hierarchies materializing at our institutions. We relied on Fanon's (2010) conceptualization of the zone of (non)-being and Stroud & Kerfoot (2020) theorization of linguistic citizenship to answer the question: *How do we as teachers and teacher educators of color negotiate raciolinguistic ideologies in our professional/educational settings in the United States?* Our findings add to the existing literature on raciolinguistic ideologies by centering our everyday *raciolinguistic struggles,* and illuminating the ways contextual factors shaped our critical engagement with the raciolinguistic ideologies embedded in structures of institutional marginalization and inequities.

2. Review of the literature

Gal & Irvine (2019) recently reminded us that language ideologies are not just about language, nor are they just statements. On the one hand, language ideologies are connected to broader identity positions that we ascribe and are ascribed to (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, etc.), and to broader political and economic forces (e.g., neoliberalism, coloniality, etc.) (Philips, 2015). On the other hand, ideologies entail hegemonic

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: cristhian.fallasescobar@utsa.edu (C. Fallas-Escobar), luis.penton@gmail.com (L.J. Pentón Herrera).

[1] In this duoethnographic study, we use *educators of color* and similar terms (e.g., speakers of color, etc.) to reference our positioning as racialized individuals in the USA and in the world. We use the term to bring attention to the fact that as Spanish-English bilingual Latinos, we are construed as different from and inferior to the White European subject.

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ideological stances that often become institutionalized and have consequences in the material world (Gal & Irvine, 2019). Rosa & Flores (2017) expound that contemporary ideologies should be situated within a history of colonial logics that has framed racial others (e.g., Indigenous, African Americans, Latinxs) and their language practices (e.g., Indigenous languages, African American English, dynamic multilingualism) as inferior to the White European subject.

As a framework, the raciolinguistic perspective (Rosa & Flores, 2017) unveils how the privileging of White perspectives (e.g., White English monolingualism) produces a speaking subject who engages in the idealized linguistic practices of Whiteness (e.g., standard language), and a listening subject who interprets them as deficient based on speakers' racial positioning. Flores & Rosa (2015) clarify that the White listening subject is not a biographical person but an ideological mode of perception that construes racialized individuals' linguistic practices as deficient regardless of language proficiency. The raciolinguistic perspective makes evident that language ideologies play a double role in depicting racialized subjects as linguistic subalterns and also of stopping them from ever being able to claim legitimate speakerhood (Rosa & Flores, 2017). The raciolinguistic perspective also reveals the ways that the unequal value attributed to the language practices of White and racialized individuals continues to contribute to the reproduction of structures of marginalization and inequality along racial lines.

Rosa & Flores' (2017) work has prompted much-needed research on the pervasiveness of raciolinguistic ideologies within U.S. schools. For instance, scholars have examined the hegemonic listening subject positions at the heart of teachers' policing of Latinx students' language practices (Flores, Lewis & Phuong, 2018) and school categorizations of Latinx students as simultaneously English learners and English native speakers (Flores, Phuong & Venegas, 2020). They have demonstrated how the ways these students are raced and classed at school shape their perceptions of their own and their others' language and literacy abilities (Chaparro, 2019; García-Mateus, 2020). They have also explored Latinx students' experiences with raciolinguistic profiling (Zarate, 2018) and their awareness of the intersections of language and race in how they are seen and heard by others (Seltzer, 2019). By demonstrating the ways raciolinguistic ideologies shape Latinx students' educational experiences and the quality of education they receive, these scholars have made evident the need for teachers across the board to develop and nurture *raciolinguistic literacies* that challenge the listening subject positions embedded in institutionalized raciolinguistic ideologies (Seltzer & de los Rios, 2018).

Similar to these studies, our duoethnography examines the intersection of language, race, and ethnicity. However, in our study, we deliberately center instances of struggle with institutionalized raciolinguistic ideologies—*or raciolinguistic struggle*—in professional and educational contexts, to contribute to what we identify as an area in need of further theorization within the raciolinguistic perspective: the various ways multiple contextual factors shape how and the extent to which racialized individuals are able to push back against structures of inequality and marginalization in everyday life. Drawing on the raciolinguistic perspective (Rosa & Flores, 2017), we define *raciolinguistic struggle* as racialized individuals' ongoing and everyday experiences of having their subjectivities and professional/educational opportunities constrained by institutional listening subject positions that conflate racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency.

3. Theoretical framework

To examine our *raciolinguistic struggle* in institutional settings, we employed Fanon's (2008, 2010) notions of the zone of (non)-being and Stroud & Kerfoot's (2020) theorization of linguistic citizenship. We chose to combine these two constructs because both center the hardships racialized individuals face while also envisioning a new sociality beyond attempts at diversity and inclusion (Maldonado-Torres, 2017).

2.1. The zone of non-being: racialized languages and speakers

For Fanon, racism is a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of the human (Grosfoguel, 2012). Within this hierarchy, the line of the human, or the modern/colonial line, separates the zone of being—inhabited by individuals considered to be fully human—from the zone of non-being—inhabited by individuals framed as less human. The concept of the zone of non-being first appeared in the work of Fanon (2008) to refer to the metaphorical and social place of Black people in France and the French colonies. He described the zone of non-being as "an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born" (p. 2). Although he does not explicitly describe the zone of being, it can be understood throughout his work that it exists in direct opposition to his description of the zone of non-being.

Importantly, Fanon understands racism as a hierarchy of domination where the oppressor (i.e., the colonizer) relies on specific characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) to create ontological differences that condemn racialized individuals to a culture of inferiority (Grosfoguel, 2012). In Fanon's (2008, 2010) work, the hierarchy of superiority (i.e., the zone of being) and inferiority (i.e., the zone of non-being) separates human beings on the basis of these social constructions in ways that, for example, position heterosexual, White, male, European, and speakers of colonial languages as superior. In this hierarchy, individuals who are above the modern/colonial line are socially recognized as human beings with access to different rights (e.g., civil, human, citizen rights). Conversely, individuals who are below this line are considered sub-humans, and their humanity is both questioned and negated (Fanon, 2008).

Fanon's conceptualization of the zone of non-being was and continues to serve as a critique of the hegemonic Western views of the human/human rights that still make it possible to distinguish authentic humanity from lesser forms of humanity. As Maldonado-Torres (2017) expounds, from a Fanonian view, efforts at diversity and inclusion are forms of coloniality in that they leave the modern/colonial line separating the zone of being from the zone of non-being unaddressed, while determining "how and at what speed subjects marked as condemned can have access to which area of 'civilization'" (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p. 123). That is, Fanon's zone of non-being calls for the creation of a new concept of the human—one that arises from struggle—instead of seeking inclusion into existing hegemonic ideas of the (colonial constructs of) human and human rights.

2.2. Linguistic citizenship: an everyday politics of language

Akin to the Fanonian perspective, Stroud (2001) critiques the affirmative action approach of linguistic human rights movements, which often assume that the issues faced by minority language speakers are resolved by "positively affirming, or recognizing, the cultural uniqueness, identity and/or value of the collectivity in question" (p. 344). In its place, Stroud (2001) proposes extending the notion of citizenship to linguistic issues—*Linguistic Citizenship*—which construes language as a site of struggle in political terms and frames it as an important tool in the fight against inequality. According to Stroud and Kerfoot (2020), citizenship in linguistic citizenship is not to be understood as claims for recognition within

existing notions of human rights. Instead, citizenship implies "demands for the fundamentals of existence to be met… in ways not previously recognized or imagined possible by institutions" (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020, p. 9).

Stroud & Kerfoot (2020) define linguistic citizenship as "acts of language, frequently and of necessity, performed outside of the institutional *status quo*, that engage with voices on the margins to create conditions for transformative agency" (p. 10). The notion of linguistic citizenship is anchored on the premise that "ontologically 'refashioned selves' require 'refashioned languages', just as in like manner, the refashioning of languages needs new speakers" (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020, p. 10). When aware of how language is used to position them in society, minority language speakers can engage in acts that carve spaces for new ways of seeing and being in the world for those who have lived below the modern/colonial line (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020).

As an analytical tool, linguistic citizenship draws attention to language minority speakers' everyday linguistic struggles. To that end, linguistic citizenship seeks to capture the ways they use language to create alternative relationships with others, to give voice to the poor and marginalized, to craft new alternative selves, and "to move the linguistic center of gravity away from a constraining colonial construct of language" (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020, p. 10). Likewise, it acknowledges that, in the midst of structures of oppression, marginalized individuals may use language in ways that transform "the conditions for 'legitimate' political actorhood to repopulate the political arena and its priorities" (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020, p. 9).

2.3. Affordances of our theoretical framework

In our duoethnography, these two concepts helped us examine how we were positioned within a hierarchy of colonial difference, and how we spoke back to this colonial matrix by bringing forth the need to critically engage alternative ways of languaging and alternative representations of marginalized speakers. Overall, in looking at our acts of linguistic citizenship (or lack thereof), the zone of non-being reminded us that our capacity to engage in linguistic citizenship was mediated by the material and symbolic spaces we occupy.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

We approached the initial conversations about this collaboration with an open mind. Having both read each other's works before our communication, in our discussions, we sought to delve deeper into a common area of interest (i.e., nonnative/bilingual teachers' experiences in the United States). We had initially contemplated conducting more 'conventional' forms of qualitative research, like case studies or ethnographic inquiry where we would recruit participants and collect data. However, upon further dialogue, we realized that the topic we were interested in researching was ever-present in our (professional) lives. That is, the events we had endured as teachers and teacher educators of color in our institutional settings in the United States were the data we sought to collect and analyze. As such, we agreed that reflecting on our own lived experiences was vital to better understand how teachers and teacher educators of color negotiate raciolinguistic ideologies. In doing so, our inquiry organically evolved into a duoethnographic research.

We frame the present study as a *duoethnography*; a collaborative form of research that Norris & Sawyer (2012) describe as a multivocal text "presenting multiple perspectives on a phenomenon, [therefore] avoiding the metanarrative of a singular point of view" (*p*. 75). We engaged in a duoethnography because its polyvocal nature enables readers "to pick and choose aspects from each duoethnographer that they deem relevant and to use their choices to reinform their own beliefs and behaviors" (*p*. 75). In our study, "writing [was] simultaneously a form of data generation, data interpretation, and data dissemination" in ways that were not as linear as the finished product might suggest (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, *p*. 76). Behind what readers will find in this final product lie transcripts from personal communications, personal writing, collaborative writing sessions, and endless hours of collaborative dialogue, all of which constituted data for analysis.

4.2. Tenets of duoethnography

We followed the nine tenets of duoethnography (Breault, 2016, pp. 778–780). We started by first developing a bond of respect and trust for one another, considered a prerequisite for this intimate type of research (i.e., trust). While engaging in this duoethnography, we did not take the self as the topic of research but as the site for research, and used our experiences to better understand tensions arising at the intersection of language, race, and ethnicity (i.e., currere). We ensured that the voice of each of us was explicit in the narratives (i.e., polyvocality) by setting them in juxtaposition to one another, thereby guaranteeing that we did not create a single metanarrative (i.e., disrupting metanarratives). Also, we examined differences within our shared experiences in connection to our particular positionalities (i.e., difference), by leveraging our unique insights, engaging in the type of questioning that invited reconceptualization of our past experiences (i.e., dialogic change), and acknowledging that the final product would constitute knowledge in transition (i.e., trustworthiness) (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Similarly, we remained vigilant of our ethical stances, always making sure that we did not reify, trivialize, vilify or romanticize each other's stories (i.e., ethical stances). Finally, we wrote our duoethnography in ways that position our readers as active participants in the process of making meaning out of experiences at the intersection of language, race, and ethnicity (i.e., audience accessibility) (Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

4.3. Data collection and analysis

Data collection and analysis in our duoethnography consisted of three steps:

4.3.1. Step 1: Getting started

At the beginning of our collaboration, we considered all of our communications, interests, and storytelling as data. This means that, since the first time we met via Zoom, the information we discussed in reference to our previous experiences as bilingual speakers and teachers/teacher educators of color were annotated in a Google document and viewed as data. After three Zoom conversations and multiple online messages via text messages and social media, we agreed on the need to examine our own professional experiences by way of a duoethnography. At this point in the collaboration, we agreed to engage in solitary writing about instances of raciolinguistic struggle in various professional and educational contexts. The solitary writing process was unstructured—we could write whatever and however we felt was relevant, always keeping in mind the goal of re-telling our experiences and sharing them with one another.

4.3.2. Step 2: Sharing initial drafts and revisiting research goal

In the initial drafts we shared with one another, we realized that there were too many experiences and topics included. For example, Fallas-Escobar had included stories beyond his experiences

in the U.S. higher education system, and Pentón Herrera had included multiple experiences as a Spanish and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher in K-12. We acknowledged that the many experiences we had written about were too broad for a research article and that all of these experiences could not be fully explored within a typical manuscript of 8500 to 9000 words. As such, we each decided to focus on one particular location and the events experienced at that location; Fallas-Escobar chose to focus on the U.S. institution where he currently serves as a doctoral fellow, and Pentón Herrera chose to focus on his time teaching ESOL at a high school in Maryland. Once these locations were determined, we communicated again and revisited the goal for our inquiry, resulting in the research question *How do we as teachers and teacher educators of color negotiate raciolinguistic ideologies in our professional/educational settings in the United States?*

4.3.3. Step 3: Strengthening our narratives and identifying themes

At this step of the process, we read each other's narratives a second time, keeping in mind our research question. Different from the first time, during this second round of review, we envisioned to deepen our thinking and storytelling through peer feedback. We added comments and questions to each other's stories and began noticing some patterns across our narratives. Then, we shared our comments and inquiries with each other, revised or added more details to our narratives to respond to comments/questions, and re-shared with each other again. We repeated this process multiple times during a four-month period. At that point, we met again to talk about the salient codes we had noted across our narratives. Initial codes included: ethnoracial positioning, White public space, racialized bilingual, White bilingual, privilege, marginalization, challenging structures, raciolinguistic ideologies, misrepresentations, negotiating language practices, exploitation, and entitlement. Subsequently, using the constructs of the zone of (non)being and linguistic citizenship, we compared and contrasted these initial codes (axial coding) to identify the larger themes we discuss in this article: (1) racializing language/speakers in institutional settings, (2), explicit/implicit acts of linguistic citizenship, and (3) linguistic citizenship in the zone of non-being.

4.4. Researcher positionalities

4.4.1. Fallas-Escobar

I self-identify as a Latino (Costa Rican), bilingual (Spanish and English) speaker, and language instructor/teacher educator of color. I have worked as a language (English) teacher educator for over 12 years at Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, where I serve as Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics. Most recently, I have served as an English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual teacher educator, as part of my position as a doctoral fellow at the University of Texas at San Antonio. As a language learner in the past and bilingual speaker/language teacher educator in the present, I have experienced my bilingualism in ways that pressure me to embody a 'nonnative speaker' identity position and to compartmentalize my linguistic resources into the bounded categories of standard Spanish and standard English (Fallas-Escobar, 2020).

As a scholar, I adhere to interpretive and critical approaches of qualitative research, which implies that I understand reality to be fragmented, unpredictable, subjective, and filled with issues of power along the lines of social class, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and gender. My research centers on problematizing the language ideologies undergirding the practice of framing bilinguals in deficit-oriented ways. This interest has resulted in a series of publications around the pernicious effects of language ideologies on bilingual speakers in teacher preparation programs, both in the U.S. and Costa Rican context (e.g., Fallas-Escobar, 2019; Fallas-Escobar & Treviño, 2021). I have conducted these studies in the spirit of transforming classrooms into pluralistic spaces in which all students are perceived as legitimate participants and of conducting research that empowers marginalized communities.

4.4.2. Pentón Herrera

I am a Cuban-born and raised individual who identifies as Latinx and bilingual (Spanish and English). I have taught English and Spanish in the United States for over ten years at all levels in K-12, and also to adult learners in community organizations and higher education institutions. More recently, I have transitioned to teaching in higher education full time, and, at the time of writing this duoethnography, I was serving as Dissertation Core Faculty and as a teacher educator at three different institutions. The abrupt change of moving from K-12 to higher education has destabilized the professional identity I had constructed as a language teacher and I am currently reflecting on my positionality as a teacher educator. Part of the struggles I am experiencing in this new construction of my professional identity as a teacher educator emanates from past exchanges where my linguistic repertoire and my speech have caused me feelings of estrangement and alienation (see Pentón Herrera, 2021).

As a scholar, I am inspired by decolonizing and humanistic ideologies in the field of education. These paradigms have motivated my research interests and have significantly moved my scholarship into the affective realm. More recently, I have begun to gravitate toward the topic of social-emotional learning (SEL) in second language (L2) learning (see Pentón Herrera & Martínez-Alba, 2021; Pentón Herrera, 2020) and toward decolonizing, story-based forms of qualitative inquiry, including portraiture and autoethnography. These lines of scholarship have allowed me to engage in deep, critical reflection about my priorities as a teacher-scholar, and about the type of work I hope to continue pursuing in the future. At the same time, I have also become increasingly aware of the emotional labor involved in using language as a medium of communication in our daily lives and at work, and of the negotiations and tensions bilingual speakers confront on a daily basis in the spaces they inhabit.

5. Instances of raciolinguistic struggle

5.1. Fallas-Escobar

As a doctoral fellow in the United States, I experienced the struggle of navigating institutional spaces construed as English only. In the fall semester of 2019, I took a graduate seminar with classmates from Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. As part of this seminar, we were tasked to reflect upon our linguistic and professional identities. At the end of the semester, I presented my reflection to the best of my ability, all the while feeling overwhelmed that I was not communicating my ideas clearly due to my status as a nonnative speaker of English. The irony was that I had reflected upon ideologies of native speakerism but still felt hesitant and insecure talking about it in a space that felt English-only. A classmate from Asia presented next. She stumbled upon her words, her voice breaking, and her hands slightly shaking. At some point, she stopped, took a deep breath, and apologized for her being nervous, to which the professor—a White bilingual speaker of English and Spanish—responded: *"Don't be nervous. This is a safe space."* In retrospect, the class could have felt like a safe space since we knew each other and the professor had always been supportive. However, there is something about English-only spaces that makes racialized bilingual speakers feel unsafe and vulnerable.

I also struggled with circulating expectations for English native speakerism. In fact, on several occasions, I confessed to one of my

mentors—also White and bilingual in English and Spanish[2] —that I lacked confidence in my English, to which she always responded: *"Your English is great!"* While I really appreciated her feedback, I did not feel great in English. At times I felt like I needed to use Spanish to escape from the pressures of speaking English only. Months forward, I spoke to her again about my fears, to which she responded: *"You need to get over your insecurities!"* I went home and thought about her comment. Two weeks later, I pulled the courage to tell her that neither of her feedback was helpful. From there on, we agreed to include both English and Spanish in our one to one meetings, which enabled both of us to experience what it feels like to navigate academic spaces in a second language. And yet, I am aware that as a White scholar, my mentor experiences her bilingualism from a position of privilege, with it always being celebrated and interpreted as surplus. As a bilingual speaker of color, I do not have that privilege. Instead, I need to tread institutional spaces carefully, always catering to the ever-present White English monolingual speakers in the audience.

While I considered my negotiation for bilingual meetings with my mentor to be a win, another incident took place on campus that compounded my struggle around issues of native speakerism and accent: the international students office started offering an accent modification course. They targeted this course to *"advanced nonnative speakers of English who use English in professional settings,"* and advertised it as *"the roadmap to clear speech and confidence."* At this moment, it became clear to me that accents did matter at the institution where I was and that the speech of multilingual students such as myself was framed as lacking and in need of remediation. Not knowing what to do about it, I grabbed a copy of the flier that was being circulated to promote the course, showed it to faculty that I trust, and brought the ideologies of native speakerism, accentism, and Whiteness as standard implicit in the course to their attention. They unanimously agreed with me and showed sympathy, but to this day the course is still being offered.

As a teaching assistant, I also struggled with contentious representations of racialized bilingual speakers in the United States. In the fall semester of 2018, I taught an English as a Second Language (ESL) methods course to a group of mostly Latinx teacher candidates. On one occasion, I overheard teacher candidates (one White and three US Latinxs) talk about cultures around the world. I chimed in and shared what I know about Latin American cultures and Indigenous languages. They showed interest, which made sense to me because the course revolved around how to teach content classes (history, science, etc.) in ways that accommodate linguistically and culturally diverse students. At the end of the conversation, I told them that for the upcoming class, I would prepare a Kahoot game on interesting culture/language facts about Central and South America. A few days later, I ran into one of the Latinx teacher candidates in the hallway as a White colleague and I were walking to our corresponding classrooms. I asked him if he was ready for the Kahoot game. To my surprise, he responded, *"Well, ask me questions about the USA. I am from Texas. You ask questions about Central and South American states [sic] and I won't even ever go there."* Another teacher candidate joined the conversation and said, "*Never say never. You could vacation there."* To which he responded, "*Not even! I like cold places like Colorado or Alaska."*

I just smiled and made my way to my classroom, feeling troubled by this awkward encounter. At first glance, this teacher candidate's comment appears to be packed with ideologies constructing Latin America as a hot place and Texas as disconnected from Latin America. And thus, my initial reaction was to frame his comment as an attempt to render my experiences irrelevant. However, upon further reflection, it also becomes clear that my plan for a Kahoot game on Latin American cultures and languages was anchored on one-sided notions of Latinidad. And so, this teacher candidate may have interpreted my Kahoot game as a test to his ethnolinguistic authenticity. And therefore, by pushing back, he may have been challenging raciolinguistic ideologies that construe authentic Latinidad as connected to Latin American and erase the experiences of US-based Latin/as/os/xs. While I am glad that this teacher candidate's reaction challenged my one-sided perceptions of Latinidad, why did I not seize the opportunity to also challenge his ideas about Latin America in a way that we both learned and grew? At the time, I simply buried the event in the back of my head and never retrieved it again until the writing of this duoethnography.

In the spring semester of 2019, towards the end of term, a similar incident took place. I came to class early and overheard a few teacher candidates talking about the English learners (ELs) they were tutoring as part of our course. They seemed to be excited with their students, so I paid attention. One White female teacher candidate was talking about the ways she had been helping students who had trouble with writing in English. A Latinx male teacher candidate immediately jumped in and said that he had been assigned an awesome student who spoke English just like all other students in the class. His comment was met with puzzled looks, which I interpreted as his classmates wondering why the student had been categorized as an EL if she did not need any help. To this, the male Latinx teacher candidate responded by saying: *"She does have an accent, but she is a great student."* It is not surprising that undergraduate students need time to shift the ways they describe their students and problematize deficit-oriented framings (e.g., having an accent as a deficit). However, what struck me was that I did not leverage this incident as an opportunity to challenge them to think more expansively. In hindsight, I think I felt afraid that teacher candidates would think that if I stepped in, it was because I have a foreign accent that is considered by many as nonnative English. But why did I feel like that was a bad thing to do at the moment? A good cause is a good cause, regardless of who defends it, right?

5.2. Pentón Herrera

As a K-12 language teacher in the United States, I experienced struggles related to the constraints imposed on me by the majority monolingual listening subjects at my institution. I taught ESOL for five years in a medium-size high school in a suburban area of Maryland (from 2015 to 2019). Our high school educated over 2000 students and had over 200 staff members. The student body represented a diversity of languages and countries from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. On the other hand, the teaching staff primarily identified as monolingual Black or White, with only a handful of teachers identifying as either bi/multilingual Asian or Latinx. During my first year of teaching at this school, I was one of only two Latinx teachers in the entire school. The other Latinx teacher, Margarita (pseudonym), was also Cuban and taught Spanish classes, primarily Spanish for heritage speakers and advanced placement (AP) courses. From the moment we met, Margarita and I bonded, and we would often sit together during teacher workshops and other in-school activities. Every time we were together, we spoke in Spanish, our native language.

One day at an in-school teacher workshop, the teaching staff was walking into the school theater to begin our training. Margarita and I were talking—in Spanish—about our students and how the quarter was going so far for us. Suddenly, a teacher-colleague I did not know walked past us and told us, "in this school, we only speak English," and walked away with a grin on her face. Margarita

[2] Both the professor and my mentor have more nuanced language practices/linguistic repertoires, but what stands out in these moments of tension for me is their position as White bilinguals against my position as a bilingual speaker of color.

saw the stunned look on my face and attempted to make the situation better, "no te preocupes, Pentón, no estamos cometiendo ningún delito por hablar español" (don't worry, Pentón, we are not committing any crime for speaking Spanish). That incident was not the first time I had been told to "speak English" by someone in the United States. However, what surprised me was that this was the first time experiencing this type of incident in a professional teaching environment. In my mind, being a teacher—a professional with a graduate degree—would place me in a position of privilege and respect; I was wrong.

While Margarita tried to comfort me, I stood there speechless. Seconds later, the administrators announced that we were about to start the training, so Margarita and I just sat on the chairs and finished the in-school workshop without further talking about this incident. In the next couple of days, Margarita and I met in one of the school hallways, and I asked her how she was feeling about this event. "¡Ay, Pentón, eso me ha pasado un millón de veces en esta escuela y en la oficina principal del distrito! Incluso cuando hablo inglés, por mi acento, no pueden creer que soy maestra." (Oh, Pentón, that has happened to me a million times in this school and in the central office of the school district! Even when I speak English, because of my accent, some people cannot believe I am a teacher); replied Margarita. At that moment, it became clear to me that, regardless of the position we held (i.e., teachers) and the preparation we had earned (i.e., graduate degrees), individuals like Margarita and I (i.e., speakers of colors, and 'accented individuals') were not perceived as professional educators. Further, it became clear to me that not all teachers at our school (and district) held the same level of privilege and that racialized individuals, like Margarita and I, were considered less respectable and, therefore, inferior.

At the end of our conversation I felt a deep sense of sadness, partly due to my colleague's experiences and also because I was reminded, once again, that some people will always 'other' individuals like my colleague and me—immigrants, English learners—regardless of the professional contexts we inhabit or the hardships we have overcome to become professional educators. Reflecting back, I believe that I was also sad because I did not stand up for Margarita, myself, or our native language (Spanish) during that incident. *Why would anyone feel so privileged and entitled to come to our conversation and space, uninvited, to demand that we speak their language?* This is a question I still grapple with knowing that I missed an opportunity to stand up for what I believe in, but I also recognize I was, in many ways, in a position of less privilege. I was a new teacher at that school, I was speaking a language deemed 'illegitimate' in that context, and I was also a minority, only one of two Latinx individuals in that entire environment.

After that conversation with Margarita, the months continued to pass by, and quickly, everyone in the school knew about me (Mr. Pentón, as they called me). My bilingualism became an often-requested commodity for all-EL-related matters. If administrators or other teachers needed to communicate with our ELs' parents, I was called. If the school counselors needed interpreting services in parent-teacher-counselor meetings, I was called. Even if the school police needed interpreting to solve incidents in the school, I was called. Interpreting (and translating) for Spanish-speaking ELs and their families gave me visibility in our school, but it also gave other teachers who did not know me the opportunity to build assumptions about who I was. For example, everyone began to request "Mr. Pentón, the Spanish teacher," to interpret without realizing that I was not a Spanish teacher at that school. Somehow, my bilingualism and the fact that I was Latinx made school staff assume that I was only qualified to teach Spanish. At the same time, others felt entitled to define me—personally and professionally—simply because I am Latinx and a Spanish speaker. I continuously struggled with these and other misrepresentations and assumptions about me. Initially, I would correct the school staff but, after a while, it became emotionally exhausting, and I just decided to stop correcting them.

In my second year of teaching, a Latinx EL student and his family were summoned to our school for an official meeting with a district administrator, Dr. T. (pseudonym). This student had been having behavioral issues in our school, and the district administrator was there to determine whether this student would remain in school or not. At the time of the meeting, I was teaching an ESOL class. Still, the school administrators sent a substitute teacher and requested that I serve as interpreter because the student and the family could not communicate in English. I joined the meeting and began interpreting. At the end of the meeting, the district administrator thanked me for serving as interpreter and asked me, "for how long have you been working with the cleaning crew here?" with a smile on his face. "I am a teacher here, Dr. T.," I responded. "Oh, you have a bachelor's degree?" Dr. T. asked in surprise. "Yes, I have a bachelor's degree, three masters' degrees, and I am finishing my doctoral degree next year," I replied. Dr. T. and my school administrator were speechless at my sharp response and, before anyone could say anything, I excused myself, reminding everyone that "my students are waiting for me in our classroom."

The subtle, uninvited comments from my colleagues at school continued to pile up with every passing year, at times becoming overwhelming. At the same time, my colleagues began to feel entitled to receive my help and interpreting and/or translating services, stamping my name for all EL-related services in our school. One day, I was teaching my students, as I usually did, and one of my teacher-colleagues burst into the classroom and demanded that I call a parent, "Mr. Pentón, call this parent now and interpret what I need to tell her." My colleague did not realize (or did not care?) that she was interrupting our instruction or that she was in front of a class demanding, in a pointed tone, interpreting services. Ms. M. (pseudonym), I replied in stupefaction, "please, I am teaching my students; I am in the middle of a class." In response, Ms. M. looked at my students, said "hou-la," and left. I apologized to my students and tried to compose myself for the remainder of the class.

The event with Ms. M., which made me feel deeply embarrassed in front of my students, gave me the strength to speak up. At the end of the day, I talked to the administration team and explained what I felt was happening in our school. "I feel the fact that I am Latinx is somehow making my teacher-colleagues feel entitled to use me and my skills. I am an immigrant, but I am not a slave." I remember saying these words to my administrative team. A couple of months later, serendipitously, the school district leadership sent a district-wide email stating that interpreting services could only be requested through a specific agency. No one in our schools (i.e., school staff) could be asked to interpret anymore.

6. Findings

Although we had many realizations throughout our data analysis, three salient themes emerged from the examination of our raciolinguistic struggles: (1) the racialization of language and speakers in institutional settings, (2), explicit/implicit acts of linguistic citizenship, and (3) linguistic citizenship in the zone of non-being.

6.1. Racializing language and speakers in institutional settings

Our stories of raciolinguistic struggle illustrate the ways our own and others' language practices were often situated in the zone of non-being (Fanon, 2008). As a doctoral fellow, Fallas-Escobar navigated institutional spaces that were English-only, notwithstanding the linguistic and cultural diversity on campus. This was

particularly salient in his experience during the seminar, within which communication took place exclusively in English despite the rich linguistic repertoires available in the classroom. We also see in his narrative that using his first language (Spanish) did not feel like an option but appeared to be a privilege of White bilinguals. This was evident in his interactions with his White bilingual mentor, with whom he initially spoke mostly in English despite the fact that they were both bilingual in English and Spanish. Upon further reflection, Fallas-Escobar could not remember a single occasion in which Spanish was used in institutional settings. Instead, Spanish was mostly employed for informal interactions outside of the classroom, which indicates a particular institutional framing of Spanish, English, and bilingualism.

Further, Fallas-Escobar also struggled with the conflation of racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency, especially with the creation and circulation of flyers advertising a course on accent modification. As he recounted, the uncomfortable climate created by ideologies of language separation was only complicated by institutional messages construing the speech of international students as unclear, and therefore in need of remediation. However, raciolinguistic ideologies are in circulation beyond the ESL services department, as evidenced by Fallas-Escobar's story of a teacher candidate's framing of having an accent as a rationale for a student to be labeled as an EL. Further, the circulation of raciolinguistic ideologies was also present in his experience with a teacher candidate's framing of Latin American cultures as having no connection to the United States. Fallas-Escobar himself also embodied raciolinguistic ideologies in that he unconsciously construed Latinidad as connected to Latin America, erasing the experiences of Latinidad of US-based Latinos.

Similarly, Pentón Herrera struggled with Spanish being placed in the zone of non-being. He navigated spaces where the use of Spanish was reprimanded in a tongue-in-cheek manner by racially hegemonic listening subjects with the institutional power to silence Spanish and perpetuate the hegemony of English. His colleague's remark ("Oh, Pentón, that has happened to me a million times in this school") suggests that harsh reactions to the use of Spanish are not an uncommon occurrence. Pentón Herrera's struggles bring to our attention the ways in which the unequal value attributed to the language practices of monolingual English speakers and racialized individuals continues to reproduce social inequality in educational spaces. Similarly, Pentón Herrera's experience reminds us that contemporary ideologies of language and race must be situated within a history of colonial logics framing racial others and their language practices as inferior to the monolingual English-speaking subject (i.e., monolingual English-speaking individuals control and manage the use of minoritized languages and assign value to them).

Another point emanating from Pentón Herrera's narrative is that, due to his native language, race, and ethnicity, he was imagined as a teacher of Spanish or as part of the cleaning crew, but not as the ESOL teacher that he was at the time. This reflects that language ideologies are connected to broader identity positions and to broader historical and contemporary forces placing racialized individuals in positions of less privilege (i.e., the zone of non-being). Simply put, others positioned Pentón Herrera, a Spanish-speaking Latinx working at the school, in job positions and socio-economic status they deemed historically appropriate based on his native language, race, and ethnicity. Pentón Herrera's bilingual skills were consistently exploited at his institution and, yet, he was not framed in a position of privilege as a bilingual speaker. Instead, his interpreter and translation skills were demanded in ways that interrupted his teaching and made him feel embarrassed and enslaved. This commodification of Spanish stood in stark contrast to the incident in which his and his colleague Margarita's use of Spanish was silenced.

An important additional, salient finding from Pentón Herrera's narrative, specifically in his interaction with Dr. T., was the racialization of Latinx professionals in educational spaces. Pentón Herrera's efforts to clarify that he was part of the teaching staff, not the cleaning crew, hints that he was aware of Dr. T.'s racialization of him as a Latino speaker of color. At the same time, in reaction to Dr. T.'s inquiry of "Oh, you have a bachelor's degree?", Pentón Herrera's sharp response about his educational achievements became a way to push back on Dr. T's preconceived assumptions of him. As an educator and doctoral fellow at the time, Pentón Herrera had been attempting to navigate—and be part of—elite, professional spaces (i.e., the field of education). Yet, due to his native language, race, and ethnicity, he continued to be pushed into the zone of non-being by individuals residing within those elite, professional spaces—like Dr. T. This particular finding highlights the social class struggles Latinx professionals may encounter in elite, professional spaces, affecting their constructions of Latinidad. We invite scholars to delve deeper into this finding as it remains an unexplored area of inquiry that needs more critical interrogation.

Overall, in between the lines of our stories of raciolinguistic struggle lies the idea that language practices such as ours can be perceived by those inhabiting the zone of being (i.e., those in a socially and linguistically-privileged position) as being too heterogeneous, too hybrid, too heteroglossic, and too chaotic. That is, the language practices of individuals who reside in the zone of non-being become parsed as having the potential to disrupt the imagined order of monoglossic, English-only institutional spaces (i.e., zone of being). Our analysis of the zone of non-being that we inhabited across institutional settings was reminiscent of Hill's (1998) notion of White public space, or that space where White listening subjects constantly monitor/survey the language practices of racialized individuals for signs of linguistic disorder (e.g., speaking languages other than English and/or mixing languages). However, as we discuss below, the borders that the zones of being and non-being created for us did not go uncontested.

6.2. Implicit and explicit acts of linguistic citizenship

Despite the pressures of raciolinguistic ideologies, we pushed back against the zone of non-being by foregrounding alternative ways of speaking and being (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2020). In Fallas-Escobar's story, we see that he challenged his mentor about her feedback, which resulted in the inclusion of Spanish and even Spanglish in subsequent mentoring meetings. In doing so, Fallas-Escobar invited her to experience academia in her second language while also bringing heterogeneity, multilingualism, hybridity to academic spaces often enmeshed with monolingual practices. Yet, he is aware that this isolated victory will not rupture the broader structure of inequality, in that his mentor will continue to experience her bilingualism from her White privilege while he will have to continue to fight for the creation of spaces for his language practices everywhere he goes. However, rather than framing Fallas-Escobar's act of linguistic citizenship as inconsequential, we can see it as having a ripple effect over time. In fact, after a year of holding meetings in Spanish and Spanglish, his mentor confessed to him that his challenge has gradually changed how she mentors Spanish-speaking Latinx doctoral candidates.

In Fallas-Escobar's story, we also witness him seizing the opportunity to create spaces for Latin American cultures and languages within a teacher education course delivered to a Latinx teacher candidate population. This is commendable for two reasons. On the one hand, he carved a space for his cultural experiences as a Latino in institutional spaces where Latinidad is experienced from the zone of non-being. On the other hand, the population of Lat-

inx youth in US schools is composed of both US-born Latinxs and Latinx youth who arrived in the United States in their childhood and adolescent years. Thus, he brought to bear knowledge and experiences that may be leveraged to educate the latter population. However, we also see how Fallas-Escobar's connection of Latinidad strictly to Latin America was met with resistance against the erasure of the experiences of Latinidad of US-based Latinxs. These two acts of linguistic citizenship stood in opposition to one another and resulted in, at last for Fallas-Escobar, critical reconsiderations of the complexity of Latinidad as experienced within and outside of the United States.

In Pentón Herrera's story, we witness two acts of linguistic citizenship. We see how he confronted the administrative team at his school about his bilingualism being exploited. This confrontation led to e-mail correspondence that removed the onus of providing interpreting services from Spanish-speaking school faculty. This change of policy at the school district alleviated some of the interpreting and translation demands imposed by school staff on Pentón Herrera, but did not change his positioning within that space. Even after the school administrators shared with the staff that interpreting services required a formal request to an interpreting agency, many teachers continued to come to Pentón Herrera and asked for interpreting and/or translation services. Requesting interpreting services through an agency became too overwhelming for some teachers and, as a result of this policy change, some eventually began sending ELs who were enrolled in their classes to Pentón Herrera's classroom demanding that I "fix them" or "teach them English." This 'new' practice reflected, once again, how Pentón Herrera's bilingual skills were seen as a resource to be used and exploited by the monolingual school staff as they deemed appropriate.

In his narrative, we also see how Pentón Herrera transcribed the words of the teacher who walked into his classroom demanding interpreter services as "hou-la." Reminiscent of Mason Carris's (2011) work on Latinx's enactments of 'la voz gringa' as a way to push back against linguistic oppression, his depiction of the teacher's Spanish as heavily accented framed her as incapable of legible speech forms in Spanish. That is, Pentón Herrera momentarily—if only discursively and indirectly in the narrative—challenged the power and hegemony of his monolingual co-worker by depicting her as incapable of engaging in Spanish and as comical, at best. For Pentón Herrera, writing provided a cathartic space where he could engage in acts of linguistic citizenship by flipping the script (Mason Carris, 2011)—from his purview as a native Spanish speaker. In this space, Pentón Herrera contested his monolingual colleague, who has historically been assigned power to police the language practices of racialized individuals, while remaining immune to criticism on their 'broken' and pejorative use of Spanish (i.e., *mock Spanish*; Hill, 2008). While mocking as an act of linguistic citizenship may be seen as trivial, we believe that it constitutes a basal practice of contesting hegemonic power that, repeatedly, could contribute to challenging the status quo within educational institutions.

Overall, there is evidence that we both are aware of the consequences of marginalizing representations of Spanish and Spanish speakers. There is also evidence that we are willing to engage in efforts to enhance our voices in our corresponding institutional settings. Although our implicit and explicit acts of linguistic citizenship may have a rather limited impact on the broader structures of marginalization, they point to the need to re-signify circulating representations of Latinx Spanish speakers in the United States and to create institutional spaces for their expansive language practices. Nonetheless, it is also evident that at times we did not always seize the opportunity to negotiate raciolinguistic ideologies, for reasons that we discuss below.

6.3. Linguistic citizenship in the zone of non-being

During analysis of our raciolinguistic struggles, we often returned to the same inquietude; *What influenced our engagement with raciolinguistic ideologies in our stories?* During initial discussions, we concluded that emotions were connected to our decisions not to respond to structures of inequity. However, upon closer examination, we noticed that emotions were also present even on those occasions in which we agentively responded to raciolinguistic ideologies. For instance, frustration led Fallas-Escobar to challenge his mentor to speak both English and Spanish in their individual mentoring meetings. Also, excitement in his search for equity motivated him to share his knowledge of Latin American cultures with Latinx teacher candidates in his class. In the case of Pentón Herrera, outrage motivated him to confront the school administration about their exploitation of his bilingual skills and the district administrator's framing of him as part of the cleaning crew. We both recall strong emotions being always present in our raciolinguistic struggles. It was these emotions that alerted us to structures of inequity, and so we examined the contextual factors mediating our engagement with raciolinguistic ideologies.

Fallas-Escobar reasons that the physical/symbolic space that he occupied and his positioning as a racialized individual (zone of non-being) within that space mediated his engagement with raciolinguistic ideologies. For example, in the doctoral seminar, Fallas-Escobar could have leveraged his anxiety around having a non-native accent to employ his bilingualism during his presentation. However, he interpreted the classroom as a White institutional space that is largely English monolingual. Similarly, Fallas-Escobar believes he did not leverage his frustration at the Latinx teacher candidate's deficit-based framing of accent to save face in front of his students. Although he could have introduced more expansive views of accents, he remained quiet because within the White institutional space (i.e., the classroom), he can easily be framed as not able to objectively discuss accents, given his position as a racialized individual.

Contrarily, Fallas-Escobar's challenge to his White bilingual mentor took place under different circumstances. For one, he and his mentor never met in the classroom and office spaces. Instead, they held their meetings in cafeterias, which created an ambiance of friendliness. Second, his mentor had always proved to be an advocate for bilingualism. Thus, the change of physical space and his mentor's demeanor created a safe space that enabled him to leverage his feelings of frustration to challenge her to bring bilingualism to their meetings. And yet, although his incident with the Latinx teacher candidate took place in the hallway, he did not challenge his ideological framings of Latin America and Texas. Fallas-Escobar speculates that there were two reasons for his lack of critical engagement. First, while the incident took place in the hallway, in his relationship to the Latinx teacher candidate, he imagined himself as still occupying a White institutional space where education tends to be US-centric and dismissive of the experiences and knowledges of racialized individuals. Therefore, he felt that the teacher candidate was right in challenging him. Second, the incident took place in the company of a White colleague who Fallas-Escobar interpreted as a potential overseer of transgressions to US standards to teacher education.

Pentón Herrera had two experiences in which he did not engage in acts of linguistic citizenship: when he and his colleague were 'jokingly' reprimanded for speaking Spanish, and when he was initially requested to interpret and translate for ELs. In both incidents, Pentón Herrera disclosed that he did not feel safe to push back for fears of disrupting the status quo of the school and because he did not want to jeopardize his teaching position as a new teacher and racial minority within the school. In Pentón Her-

rera's view, engaging in linguistic citizenship in response to his colleague's demands to speak English might have resulted in conflicts with other colleagues who may have felt that speaking Spanish befouled the space. His status as a new teacher, coupled with a lack of representation of Latinx staff at the school, placed him in a position of vulnerability during that particular incident. As a new teacher and one of only two Latinx teachers within the entire school staff, he felt that engaging in linguistic citizenship would make him vulnerable to retaliation, so he chose to withdraw and accept demands that silenced his native language (Spanish).

The ways contextual factors mediated our engagement with raciolinguistic ideologies call attention to how educational institutions (both K-12 and higher education) continue to enforce structures of inequity and marginalization, notwithstanding institutional efforts at promoting diversity. At Fallas-Escobar's institution, a Hispanic-serving university in Southwest Texas, diversity is a common topic of discussion, with Hispanic heritage month being an important celebration. At Pentón Herrera's high school, diversity is celebrated throughout the year in ways that do not render any substantial changes to support Latinx students and staff.

7. Discussion and implications

Similarly to previous studies, our duoethnography has demonstrated the need for raciolinguistic literacies (Seltzer & de los Rios, 2018) not only in K-12 settings but also in higher education, where faculty and students may be enacting listening subject positions that contribute to the marginalization of racialized individuals (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Our duoethnography has illustrated our struggles navigating U.S. institutions as racialized individuals. With our identities and language practices often situated in the zone of non-being, we have experienced our institutional settings as English monolingual sites, despite the rich linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of fellow colleagues, students, and classmates. Likewise, we have borne witness to the ways our bilingualism is framed in racialized ways while White bilingual colleagues experience it from a position of White privilege. In addition, we have also experienced how 'foreign' accents are framed as needing remediation, and our status as Spanish-speaking Latinx is incompatible with professional identities. Our experiences shed light on how we, as racialized individuals, experience our culture and language from the zone of non-being; a zone where our Spanish, bilingualism, and Latinidad can be seen as chaotic, one-sided, unimportant, undesirable, and even dismissible.

Regarding our research question—How do we as teachers and teacher educators of color negotiate raciolinguistic ideologies in our professional/educational settings in the United States?—our study has documented that, despite the raciolinguistic ideologies that push our experiences and practices to the zone of non-being, we have also pushed back against structures of inequality and marginalization. We have challenged mentors, colleagues, and the administration in an effort to carve spaces for our language practices and to make visible alternative representations of ourselves as Spanish-speaking Latinos. It was also evident in our study that our critical engagement with raciolinguistic ideologies was largely mediated by the material/symbolic spaces we occupy and the structures placing us in positions of vulnerability and disadvantage (zone of non-being). However, we argue that rather than framing these acts of linguistic citizenship as inconsequential, they should be seen as important small-scale instances of agency against structures of inequity that can result in important transformations over time.

Our findings have implications for policy and practice in doctoral programs, with special regard to the creation of mechanisms that allow national and international doctoral fellows who may share a history of exclusion and marginalization to discuss their experiences. These mechanisms should not be limited to attempts at simply affirming their diversity in ways that leave the structures of inequity unchallenged. Instead, doctoral fellows should be given the space to propose and implement—with the help of faculty and the administration—more radical changes to challenge the hegemony of English monolingualism and Whiteness as the norm. Calling a classroom space safe does not make it so, nor does simply encouraging culturally-linguistically diverse students to use their language practices in informal spaces reflect any significant changes to whiteness in higher education. We need to disrupt material/symbolic spaces on campus, and engage in critical discussions around the positions we each occupy, since these may be shaping our choice to engage in linguistic citizenship in our daily lives.

Our findings also have implications for K-12 settings. Current structures and practices in K-12 schooling continue to favor monolingualism, which automatically places ELs and nonnative bilingual teachers in spaces of less privilege (zone of non-being). As such, native English speaking-staff perceive or assume their positioning as the standard/norm (i.e., zone of being), granting them the privilege of using nonnative bilingual teachers' linguistics skills as a commodity as they deem necessary for interpreting and translation services. K-12 settings in the United States should continue to reevaluate the positioning, racialization, and treatment of nonnative bilingual teaching staff who are often the minority in school settings and who continue to be placed in situations where their bilingualism is either silenced or used for the benefit of the monolingual majority at the school.

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