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Between Languages, Between Worlds: A Family's Narrative of Love, Language, and Resistance

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Abstract:

This manuscript explores the transformative power of translanguaging in raising bilingual children, positioning bilingualism as both an act of love and resistance. Rooted in the lived experiences of a bilingual immigrant mother, a multilingual, English-speaking father, and their three children in a predominantly English-speaking community, it blends autoethnography, narrative inquiry, and child-centered perspectives to examine how language flows through everyday life. Drawing from translanguaging theory, funds of knowledge, and critical language policy, the study highlights how children's multilingual practices strengthen identity, sustain cultural heritage, and push back against societal pressures that privilege English. Through parental reflection and children's voices, the manuscript illustrates the emotional labor of multilingual parenting and the tensions between home and school language ideologies. It argues that raising bilingual children is not only a personal choice but a political one. Ultimately, it affirms the need to create inclusive spaces that honor and celebrate the richness of multilingual lives.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Family Language Practices, Language and Identity, Linguistic Justice and Resistance, Multilingual Identity Development

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Introduction

I grew up in a household where multilingualism was a tool for survival. Being the oldest in an immigrant family, I was expected to learn English quickly. I did, sort of. I picked it up in the back of the classroom while copying homework, at checkout counters, trying to explain how we were overcharged, or while accompanying my parents to doctor appointments, translating symptoms they didn't have words for in English. For me, English was the language of stress and conflict. It was filled with endless paperwork and the constant pressure of translation. It offered no warmth and didn't make space for my mother tongue or culture. Over time, I learned how to navigate English more fluently, not just to survive, but to express myself and eventually teach, write, and advocate for others doing the same. That process was uneven and emotional, but it shaped how I now approach language with my own children. Now, as a multilingual educator and mother raising three children (ages 6, 9 and 11) in a predominantly English-speaking community with a multilingual, English-speaking spouse, I find myself actively protecting and nurturing the very mix of languages that once went unnoticed in my own life.

In our current home, Spanish and English move easily between us, filled with love, comfort, and connection. For us, multilingualism and the way we move between languages is both an act of love and a powerful form of resistance against cultural and linguistic marginalization. Outside our home, however, we are constantly confronted with the idea that multilingualism is a problem. This narrative is especially visible in growing efforts across the country to dismantle programs and policies that support and protect linguistic and cultural diversity. For example, recent state-level legislation and executive actions have targeted bilingual education and diversity initiatives, including the elimination of the federal Office of English Language Acquisition in 2025 and the passage of laws restricting the use of non-English languages and culturally sustaining curricula in public schools (Belsha, 2025; Najarro 2025). These efforts extend far beyond questions of language; they expose deeper beliefs about whose voices are valued, whose knowledge is legitimized, and whose identities are recognized as belonging. These beliefs are also shaped by raciolinguistic ideologies that position certain ways of speaking as more legitimate than others (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Recognizing the connection between race and language underscores why translanguaging (García et al., 2017), the fluid and intentional use of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire, is not simply a pedagogical choice but an act of linguistic justice.

These broader tensions between language, power, and belonging are also sustained through the systems and policies that shape how language is valued in society. Drawing from critical language policy (Menken & García, 2010; Ricento, 2015; Tollefson, 1991), we can see how these ideologies are embedded in institutional structures that marginalize both language and culture, shaping public discourse and influencing how families like mine experience belonging. In today's sociopolitical climate, these systems cannot be separated from the racialized politics of language that define who belongs and who is silenced. A LatCrit perspective (Delgado Bernal, 2002) deepens this understanding by examining how race, language, and power are embedded in educational structures and policies, privileging dominant ways of speaking while marginalizing Latinx voices, identities, and ways of knowing. Through this lens, linguistic oppression becomes a form of racial subordination, while translanguaging emerges as both a response to and a disruption of those inequities. While translanguaging theory (García et al., 2017) grounds this study conceptually, LatCrit functions as a critical lens to examine how language practices are racialized through power, policy, and schooling. To understand how these broader systems of

power are lived, negotiated, and sometimes resisted within everyday family life, I turn to a qualitative, narrative-based methodological approach.

In this manuscript, I explore how translanguaging shapes how we connect as a family and push back on the English dominance in our daily lives using a qualitative, narrative-based methodology. To make sense of how translanguaging shapes our daily life, I draw from narrative inquiry, autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011), and child-centered interviewing as my primary methods of inquiry. These approaches center lived experience and allow me to examine how everyday language practices are tied to identity, belonging, and resistance. They also support reflexive analysis of how my own history with immigration and learning English shapes how I raise multilingual children today. Autoethnography, in particular, allows me to reflect on my experiences as a multilingual mother, educator, and former child translator, illuminating how early responsibilities with language shaped the way I now encourage our children to value and move fluidly between languages. Narrative inquiry further guides the study by positioning the stories of our children, my spouse, and myself as central sources of data. Together, these methods ground the research in lived experiences and offer insight into how language shapes our daily lives in both emotional and complicated ways.

Methodologically, this work draws on a combination of child-centered interviewing, reflective fieldnotes, and memory work. I conducted a one-hour child-centered interview with my children, which took place in our home. I initially drafted guiding questions, but before the interview, we talked through the questions together and I invited their feedback, revisions, and suggestions to ensure the questions reflected what mattered to them (Fogle & King, 2013). The interview was audio-recorded on my computer, transcribed in full, and analyzed inductively. I then shared emerging themes and topics with my children, and we engaged in follow-up conversations in which they offered additional examples, clarifications, and reflections. These follow-up conversations were documented as written fieldnotes and incorporated into the analysis. In addition, I relied on memory work (Ellis et al., 2011) to reflect on recurring moments, emotions, and language practices that shaped our family's multilingual life over time, allowing past and present experiences to inform the narrative analysis. The stories that emerge from our home are therefore central to this work; they are not merely personal reflections, but windows into how language holds emotion and shapes everyday experiences of inclusion and exclusion. By treating our children as co-narrators, their ideas, stories, and questions guide the analytic process, revealing how multilingualism is lived as playful, thoughtful, and deeply rooted in care. Together, these approaches create space for a research process that honors personal experience while also asking critical questions about power, language, and how our family lives within and across cultures.

To understand these moments more deeply, I ground the work in translanguaging theory (García et al., 2017). According to the theory, translanguaging is not just switching between languages; it is a political, pedagogical, and theoretical stance that values a speaker's full range of language resources. As García (2009, 2014) explains, translanguaging is not simply a description of bilingual practice but a redefinition of language itself, one that challenges the very notion of separate linguistic systems. It acknowledges that bilingual meaning-making is fluid and relational, shaped by the ways people use their full linguistic repertoires to connect, make sense of the world, and to resist systems that rank languages or voices. In this sense, translanguaging differs from related concepts such as code-switching. While code-switching assumes that bilinguals alternate between two separate linguistic systems, translanguaging rejects this compartmentalization, emphasizing that bilingual speakers draw from a single, integrated

linguistic repertoire (García & Li Wei, 2014). This understanding highlights that languages do not live separately in our minds but intertwine, flowing together as we make meaning. Recent work by Ossa Parra (2023) and Chaparro (2022) extends this understanding into the sphere of bilingual motherhood, showing how translanguaging functions as both an affective and political practice. Through the everyday decisions mothers make about which languages to use, these scholars reveal how love, identity, and resistance are intertwined in family life. Their insights illuminate the emotional and relational dimensions of translanguaging that unfold in our home, where language is both communication and care. In this way, translanguaging reflects how multilingual people speak, live, and construct meaning in the everyday contexts of their lives.

Through this work, I have come to understand multilingual parenting as a political act grounded in everyday resistance. Raising multilingual children is both an act of love and defiance. Each time we speak Spanish at home, when we read together, tell jokes, say prayers, or comfort one another, we are choosing not to let go of the language that connects us to our histories and communities. Our children's multilingualism is not just a personal achievement; it is a declaration of presence in a society that is actively trying to silence our voice. Drawing from translanguaging theory (García et al., 2017), I see our home as a space of counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989); where language itself becomes a way to claim belonging, complexity, and care. Counterstorytelling, a central concept within Critical Race Theory and LatCrit (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), challenges dominant narratives by centering the lived experiences of those whose voices have historically been silenced. In this context, translanguaging operates as a form of counterstory, offering a way to challenge English-only ideologies and to affirm the value of multilingual identities within our family.

Finding Our Path: How Languages Flow and Adapt at Home

Before turning to these moments, it is important to situate our family's linguistic landscape. I am a bilingual Spanish–English speaker, while my husband is a dominant English speaker with receptive and informal use of Spanish and some familiarity with German from his family history. English and Spanish are the primary languages used in our home, with English often serving as a shared language across contexts and Spanish functioning as a key language of connection, care, and cultural continuity.

Even though our home is full of Spanish and English flowing in and out of conversations, I know it does not look or feel the same in every family. It is important to note that every household has its own rhythm and its own way of blending languages. These choices are shaped by the people who live there, the histories they carry, and the meaning each language holds for them. In some homes, parents mix languages on purpose; in others, the switching just happens without anyone thinking about it. In my opinion, none of these ways is more right than the others. They all reflect how multilingual life bends and adapts to the people and the love inside each home. It is important to note that when I share our family's story, I am not offering a rulebook for how to raise multilingual children. Instead, I am opening a window into one home, our home, where translanguaging has become both a way of loving each other and a way of standing up for who we are. Other families will have their own versions shaped by their own histories, dreams, and needs. That is exactly the beauty of it: no two multilingual homes are the same, but every one of them holds a world worth protecting. In our case, the way languages live in our home reflects how our different linguistic experiences flow together. My multilingual practices and my husband's primarily English practice intertwine as we build our journey.

Multilingual Parenting as a Collective Journey

While I mostly write from my perspective as a multilingual mother, the truth is that raising multilingual children has never been my job alone. My husband, a white American of German descent, has been part of this journey in powerful ways. His story, while different from mine, is just as important in shaping the language practices of our home. His life has always been shaped by language. He grew up on the South Side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin where mixing languages and cultures was the norm. His friends, neighbors, and classmates spoke and lived in wide varieties of Spanish and English. His own family also had a multilingual story. His grandparents were German immigrants, and for a while, German and English flowed easily in their home. But like so many immigrant stories, the German disappeared with his parents' generation.

Even though my husband was surrounded by so much language growing up, he didn't have the opportunity to learn one formally. Like many children in the U.S., he moved through a school system that treated world language programming as an elective. His teachers didn't expect him to speak beyond colors and numbers, and so he didn't. But the Spanish he did learn came from his friends. From them, he picked up words, phrases, mannerisms, and expressions. He might not see himself as fluent, but I do: I see it. He built a kind of survival fluency—enough to understand and belong. And even if he'd never say so himself, there's a part of him that feels at home in the language, not because he studied it, but because he lived inside it. That's exactly what makes his role in our family's language journey so meaningful. Even without full fluency, he encourages our children to speak Spanish with pride and makes sure that Spanish doesn't feel like something that only belongs to me. There's something powerful about that kind of support. It reminds me that language advocacy doesn't always come from those who speak the language. Sometimes, it comes from those who stand beside it, honoring its presence and making room for it in our society.

His story doesn't end with the languages he didn't have an opportunity to learn. It's still unfolding, now through our children. As we raise our children with Spanish and English at the center, they have also started asking about the German that once lived in their great-grandparents' home. They want to know where their family came from and what German sounds like. They ask for German words and are eager to complete their lessons on language apps. Somehow, in creating space for one heritage language, we opened the door to another. Our home isn't just multilingual: it's layered. My husband's story is a big part of that. His support and his deep commitment to our children's identities remind me every day that multilingual parenting is not just about speaking different languages. It's about building a home where every part of who we are is welcome. To better understand how these layered histories take shape in practice, I turn now to the translanguaging moments that fill our home.

Our Home as a Translanguaging Space: Blending Languages in Daily Life

Having situated our multilingual household within a broader context of care and resistance, I now turn to the language practices that bring translanguaging to life. Based on conversations with my children and spouse, observations, and personal reflection, I look closely at how translanguaging (García et al., 2017) happens in our home. King and Fogle (2006) describe how parents' language practices are deeply tied to their beliefs, values, and emotions, shaping both the linguistic and affective dimensions of family life. Their work reminds us that

decisions about which languages to use with children are not only practical but grounded in love, identity, and belonging. This perspective helps frame our family's translanguaging practices as acts of care that nurture connection, culture, and understanding through language. In our home, Spanish and English don't exist in separate spaces. They flow into each other, overlap, and shape how we communicate, play, and connect with one another (García et al., 2017).

In our household, translanguaging shows up in everyday moments. Our children regularly use both Spanish and English when we eat, play, tell stories, and even when someone's getting in trouble. Their mixing of languages shows the kind of flexible, creative, and emotionally grounded language use that translanguaging embraces. As my eleven-year-old explained,

> Sometimes Mama will say something like "¿*Qué quieres para desayunar*? and I'll say, Can I have some *pan tostado*? I just use both languages all the time. If I can't think of a word in Spanish, I'll go ask Mami, but most of the time I just use the word that I know, even if it is not in the same language. Mixing the languages is just natural to me.

Some of my favorite translanguaging moments happen at the dinner table. One evening, we were eating a *casado* style dinner (typical Costa Rican meal) and my youngest asked, "Can you pass me the *frijoles*, please?" Her brother quickly responded, "Here are the beans…*pero no te los comas todos*." They both laughed, switching back and forth so easily that no one stopped to notice. Another time, while building with blocks, my middle child announced, "I made un *castillo gigante*." Her siblings immediately joined in, offering suggestions in whichever language fit the idea in their heads at that moment. These examples illustrate how translanguaging emerges organically in everyday conversation, driven by comfort and familiarity rather than language boundaries. In other words, it is less about getting it perfect, and more about expressing yourself and being understood.

Translanguaging is also a way we build connections and include everyone. My nine-year-old said "mixing the languages includes everybody. I use both languages so that everyone can understand what I'm trying to say." Similarly, my six-year-old noted, "Mixing also makes it so that both Mami and Papi can understand." Together, their reflections reveal that translanguaging is more than just a communicative strategy; it is an expression of empathy, care, and inclusion. It also bridges gaps in language skills. As my six-year-old explained, "If we speak Spanish at home, it's easier to teach Papa because he knows some words and we can help him learn more." My eleven-year-old chimed in, "Yes, exactly, and sometimes I have to use my Spanish to translate English stuff for Tita and Tito [Grandparents] because they are more comfortable speaking Spanish."

These moments illustrate how translanguaging functions as a bridge across generations and linguistic experiences. They are also examples of metalinguistic awareness, showing how our children shift their language to support others. Metalinguistic awareness refers to the ability to think about and reflect on language as a system, recognizing how meaning, structure, and context shape communication (Jones & Proctor, 2024). The words of our children reflect a deep connection to language and an evolving understanding of their own fluid identities. These everyday exchanges demonstrate that translanguaging is not only about making meaning but also about building relationships and belonging. It makes room for everyone to be part of the conversation, strengthens our bonds, and allows each of us to show up fully, using the language or mix of languages that feels most right in the moment.

Through this lens, I've come to understand translanguaging as a form of epistemological resistance (Li Wei, 2018). It pushes back against dominant ideas about what counts as knowledge, who has the right to speak, and in what language. Epistemological resistance challenges the assumption that valid knowledge only comes in standard formal English (or Spanish). It is a reminder that using multiple languages and discourses (simultaneously) to make sense of the world is valid, powerful, and beautiful. In our home, moving between Spanish and English is not just normal, it is necessary. It reflects how we live, learn, and love. Sometimes the switches come in the middle of laughter or during a bedtime story. Other times, they're quiet and careful, like when one of the children pauses to make sure everyone understands. These moments show that connection, learning, and love all grow when we let language move freely. Next, I want to reflect on the emotional weight language carries in our family, how it grounds us, comforts us, and helps us feel connected.

Translanguaging Love: How Language Shapes Identity and Belonging

Spanish, in our home, brings a deep sense of comfort that our children feel in their bodies. For us, it is the language of childhood songs, nighttime prayers, and loving hugs from their Tita and Tito, woven into their everyday routines. These are the kinds of moments where love and language intertwine, reflecting what King and Fogle (2006) describe as the emotional and relational work of raising bilingual children. For me, parenting multilingually means making room for those moments to flourish. As such, parenting multilingually is never just about vocabulary or grammar. Instead, it is about memory, emotion, and relationship, and in our household, this holds true. One evening, my youngest said, "Speaking Spanish makes me feel good… like the whole planet is hugging me." In this moment, she was describing a feeling of connection, comfort, and warmth associated with speaking Spanish. This comment captures the identity-affirming power of multilingualism.

That sense of comfort is not limited to words. Language and love are further connected via their senses. One afternoon, while we were walking near the lake, my oldest said, "Wet sand reminds me of Costa Rica." A few seconds later, the youngest added, "For me, the smell of wet dirt reminds me of Costa Rica too. It makes me feel like I come straight from that country." Another time, I was frying plantains in the kitchen and my middle child paused, breathed in, and said, "This reminds me of home (Costa Rica)." For me, this is how I know that language lives beyond words. It is in their memories and in the small, familiar things that anchor them to the people and places they love. As such, Spanish is part of how they make sense of who they are. This is why translanguaging just feels natural in our home. We don't sit down and plan how and when to use our language; it just flows freely through our day. And sometimes, those everyday moments open the door to even deeper conversations about identity, family, and what Spanish means to them.

One afternoon, we were sitting around talking about why Spanish matters in our home when my nine-year-old paused and said, "It means I'm part of different places." We talk about this a lot, how speaking both languages is not just something they do, it is part of who they are. My eleven-year-old jumped in right after with, "Spanish helps me connect to Tita and Tito." For him, it's not really about the language itself; it's about staying close to the people who love him. Then he added, "If we stopped speaking Spanish, it would feel like our connection to Costa Rica was fading." His little sister added. "It would feel like we're not from Costa Rica anymore and like Tita and Tito aren't here anymore." These moments show how, for them, language is not just about communication; it is a bridge to belonging, family, and place. And for me, that is what

multilingual parenting is about: it is a way of staying connected to identity, culture, and loved ones across generations (King & Fogle, 2006). While these connections are nurtured and celebrated at home, mainstream society often tells a different story. The love we pour into our children's languages doesn't always align with how language is seen and treated in public spaces, especially in schools. That tension is where resistance begins.

Multilingualism as Resistance in a Politically Hostile Climate

When language is treated as something alive and deeply rooted, children grow up with a stronger sense of who they are. In our home, multilingual parenting is how I nurture that sense of belonging. It is how I protect the threads that tie our children to their grandparents and to a version of themselves that feels whole. But that kind of deep, lived understanding of language often gets lost in schools. In many schools, for example, language is often reduced to vocabulary lists, grammar drills, and pronunciation. What often gets overlooked is that multilingual children bring with them entire worlds of experience: their stories, relationships, and cultural ways of being that shape how they think, learn, and communicate (Moll et al., 1992). But instead of seeing these as strengths, many schools operate under policies that treat English as the only language that matters. This narrow view of language leaves many multilingual children, especially those racialized as non-white, seen as less capable, no matter how skilled they are (Flores & Rosa, 2015). That disconnect between home and school is something we feel deeply.

At home, our children's Spanish is embraced and celebrated. In public, it is sometimes questioned or overlooked. My six-year-old once told me she felt like Spanish wasn't allowed at her former daycare in the Midwest, a predominantly monolingual English setting staffed primarily by white teachers. While there were no official rules against using it, the way her Spanish was overlooked by teachers and classmates made her feel like her language didn't belong. She said,

> No one even knew that I spoke Spanish. They didn't know where I was from, and I didn't know how to tell them. I only knew some words in Spanish and couldn't say them in English. And they didn't understand me.

These kinds of experiences are not just about one teacher or one classroom. They point to something much bigger. From a critical language policy perspective, schools often operate with unspoken rules that center English as the only language for learning and belonging (Menken & García, 2010). Even when no one says, "don't speak Spanish," children pick up on what is valued and what is not. This subtle message carries emotional consequences for children who are already trying to figure out where they fit.

The discomfort my daughter felt was not only about language use but also about how race, culture, and belonging intersect in everyday interactions. This connection between language and identity is at the heart of raciolinguistic theory, which helps us see how linguistic hierarchies are inseparable from racial ones. Understanding these dynamics through the lens of raciolinguistics illuminates how race and language shape both social hierarchies and lived experiences (Flores & Rosa, 2015). A raciolinguistic perspective reveals that judgments about language are often judgments about race, particularly in how multilingual children are positioned in schools. These same forces that marginalize multilingualism in schools are the very ones our children confront and resist in their own ways every day.

Despite these experiences, I am continually amazed by how clearly and confidently our children push back against the idea that their language doesn't belong. They don't accept it. Instead, they question it, challenge it, and stand up for what they know is right. When we talked about what they would do if someone told them not to speak Spanish, my nine-year-old became very visibly upset. He said,

> I would first ask them why they didn't want me to speak Spanish. But then I would remind them that I can and will speak Spanish if I want to. They don't have the right to control my languages or my cultures.

I followed up with a question: "What if they made rules to stop you from speaking Spanish?" He didn't hesitate.

"I would become someone like Rosa Parks and organize a boycott," he replied. His six-year-old sister jumped in immediately.

"I would organize something on the street, like remember what we saw on our way home? Honk for social justice?"

"Are you thinking of the word protest?" I asked.

"Yes," she said. "I would organize everyone I know to protest to make sure that we can all speak whatever languages we want." Their eleven-year-old brother added,

"I think anyone should be free to speak whatever language they want. It shouldn't have to be so complicated." These responses came from a place of conviction and fairness. They showed me just how much agency multilingual children already carry. They know their voices matter, and they are ready to use them. Because they are ready, I want to ensure they also feel prepared.

At home, we sometimes act out different scenarios so they can practice responding in ways that feel both safe and true to themselves. We also talk about the difference between someone who is curious and someone who is being discriminatory, and I encourage them to trust their instincts. I want them to carry the deep knowledge that their language is a part of who they are and that it is worth protecting. My hope is not to make them combative, but to give them the confidence to decide how to respond in their own way. The need for these talks reminds me that our home does not exist apart from the world. It is shaped by the same political and cultural forces that define which languages are welcomed and which are silenced outside our walls**.**

In today's climate, where efforts to support diversity are being rolled back and multilingual education is under attack, everyday moments of resistance take on real significance. Across the United States, the federal government has designated English as the official national language, dismantled the Office of English Language Acquisition, and removed rules that once guided how schools support multilingual learners. These actions reflect a broader political movement aimed at weakening multilingual education, eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and restricting classroom discussions about race, culture, and identity (Au, 2022; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Ray & Gibbons, 2021). At the same time, book bans and anti-immigrant rhetoric continue to shape public discourse, positioning multilingualism as a threat rather than a strength(Pen America, 2023; Valdés, 2020). These federal actions shape how multilingual families like mine move through schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces, and how our children learn what languages and identities are valued.

In this environment, our children's everyday acts of language take on new meaning. When our children speak Spanish with pride, mix languages to get their message across, or use both languages to connect with someone they are sending a clear message: "This is who we are, and we're not going anywhere." Their words and actions challenge exclusionary narratives. That confidence, however, is not accidental. It is the result of everyday intentional labor that takes

place within our home, grounded in love, patience, and the belief that voices matter. The daily work of nurturing that confidence and holding space for their languages is challenging. It is this unseen labor that makes those moments of pride and resistance possible. This work is not just practical; it is emotional, rooted in love, worry, and the hope to keep our languages alive. It is within this emotional space that the work of multilingual parenting unfolds.

The Emotional Labor of Multilingual Parenting

My daily acts of choosing Spanish, reading bedtime stories, and initiating conversations are expressions of linguistic motherwork that protect my children's right to belong in their languages. This work becomes even more layered in a household like ours, where despite our multilingualism, English is more dominant. There are days when our children choose English first, and in those moments, it feels as though I am choosing Spanish alone. Yet even in those moments, there is beauty. Their multilingualism doesn't disappear; instead, it adapts. These experiences remind me how easily even our safe space can be influenced by broader pressures. They also echo intergenerational language histories that shape how our choices are understood and received. While my parents encouraged Spanish as a means of maintaining connection and cultural continuity, my husband's family history of language loss sometimes made our intentional multilingualism feel unfamiliar, even surprising, precisely because language had come to be remembered as something that inevitably fades with assimilation rather than something actively sustained across generations. Still, I am not doing this work alone.

Our children are active participants in shaping family language practices (King & Fogle, 2013). They redirect, they lead, and in many ways, they are the ones keeping Spanish alive. They are policymakers in their own right (2013). Our children decide when to speak Spanish, when to switch to English, and how to move between languages depending on context, emotion, and who is in the room. Still, the pressure to default to English is always present. There are days when it would be easier to let go, when English feels faster, more accessible, and more easily understood. But letting go would mean losing too much. One night, my eleven-year-old told me, "I would be very sad if I can't speak Spanish, our connection would be lost." Then he added, "I would lose a part of me and a part of you." So, we choose again. We read books in Spanish. We tell stories from Costa Rica at dinner, even if my spouse doesn't catch every word. We keep using all our languages, not because it's easy, but because it matters. It is how we resist.

This kind of parenting doesn't come with clear milestones or external validations. Instead, the emotional labor lives in the reminders to say "*buenas noches*" instead of "goodnight," the gentle nudges to choose the Spanish version of a book. It is in the pauses when I wonder if our children will keep choosing Spanish as they grow. Still, there is joy. It is in the pride I feel when they explain something in Spanish to their Tita and Tito without hesitation, or when they correct my English vocabulary with a giggle. It is also in the moments of frustration, when I feel like I am doing it alone, or when our society makes our language and culture feel like a burden. Those moments often make me think about the years ahead and what I want Spanish to mean for them as they grow.

As they grow, my hope is that Spanish will always be a living part of their everyday lives. I want it to be present in the way they talk to their friends, the communities they choose, and the families they one day create. I hope it always feels like a source of joy, love, and connection, and not something they keep up out of obligation. At the same time, I worry about the pull of English becoming stronger as they get older. I worry about how easy it can be for

Spanish to fade, not because they reject it, but because daily routines and outside pressures most often win. I know their relationship with Spanish will change over time, but I hope it will always carry the warmth, history, and love that shaped their earliest years. These hopes and worries are part of what makes multilingual parenting such deeply intentional work, shaping not only how I use language with my children now but also how I imagine their futures.

Final Reflection: Holding Language, Love, and Belonging

This manuscript has examined translanguaging not only as a communicative practice but as a deeply emotional and political process embedded in our family life. Grounded in translanguaging theory (García et al., 2017; Li Wei, 2018), narrative inquiry, and autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011), this work draws from our daily experiences to show how language both shapes and is shaped by relationships, identity, and justice. By engaging with these frameworks, I've been able to center the voices of our children, not as passive participants, but as co-theorists and knowledge-makers (Fogle & King 2013). Their words, emotions, and insights are essential to understanding how translanguaging in our home is not just a strategy but a practice of belonging.

Translanguaging theory helps us see that multilingual speakers don't operate with two separate language systems. As García (2014) emphasizes, translanguaging reimagines language not as fixed codes but as an integrated repertoire shaped by history, power, and identity. This perspective situates translanguaging as both a lived reality and a transformative framework for understanding communication, learning, and justice in multilingual families. In practice, this means that multilingual individuals do not move between distinct linguistic boundaries but instead draw from a unified and dynamic repertoire that reflects their full communicative potential. In our home, this repertoire is not only spoken but deeply felt. Our children live it in every interaction, choosing when to speak Spanish, when to use English, and how to blend both in ways that include, support, and express love. Through these choices, they demonstrate how translanguaging functions as both expression and connection, adapting fluidly to relationships, moods, and needs. What I've come to see is that these language choices aren't random. They come from a deep well of lived experiences. These are our *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992). Their stories about switching languages for grandparents, about how certain smells bring up memories, or about why they feel safer and happier speaking Spanish reflect this deeply relational and intentional use of language. These moments are what Li Wei (2018) describes as translanguaging moments, rich and spontaneous acts that disrupt normative expectations and open new possibilities for thinking, speaking, and being.

Their voices also push back against dominant narratives that frame multilingualism as a deficit or a problem. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2015) remind us that even young children are shaped by systems of race, language, and power long before they have the words to name them. Our children not only feel these forces but also find ways to respond, transforming awareness into action. They resist. Their reflections are grounded in lived experience and guided by a deep desire for a more inclusive world. Viewed through a raciolinguistic lens, these insights show how children's translanguaging practices simultaneously challenge and reimagine the racialized hierarchies that privilege standardized English. As such, their translanguaging is not only creative; it is political. In this sense, raising our children to translanguage unapologetically is an act of affirming that we belong, even when the words and policies around us suggest otherwise. These moments of resistance do not emerge in isolation; they are shaped by longer family histories of language, loss, and adaptation that stretch across generations.

Across generations, language practices are never static; they are shaped by histories of migration, loss, survival, and adaptation. Our family's translanguaging practices exist alongside intergenerational memories of language suppression and partial loss, particularly in my husband's family history, and moments of negotiation within our present-day household. These tensions remind me that multilingual parenting is not only about what languages are spoken, but about how families reckon with past erasures while imagining different futures. Holding space for translanguaging across generations requires patience, vulnerability, and an ongoing willingness to resist defaulting to dominant language norms.

Writing this manuscript with my family, rather than just about them, has changed how I understand both research and resistance. It required patience and deep listening. It asked me to slow down and really sit with their words, and to trust their ways of knowing. Additionally, it has reminded me, again and again, that this is not my story alone. It is ours. They are part of the intellectual and emotional heart of this work. Their voices bring meaning, and their insights push me to see things I would have otherwise missed on my own. Together, we are telling a story about language that is rooted in love, grounded in experience, and reaching toward a more just future. And we are not alone in this work. This is why supporting families who are raising multilingual children matters so much. They are doing the daily work of holding culture, connection, and possibility, and that work deserves to be seen, supported, and celebrated. As Li Wei (2018) reminds us, translanguaging is not only about language, but also about imagining something better. It is about creating spaces where all of who we are is welcomed.

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