

Multiliteracies in Rural Communities: The “Revuelto y Mezclado” of Home and Community Literacy Practices of Midwestern Emergent Bilingual Families

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Introduction

*Pues, yo creo que um, **revuelto o mezclado**. De mi parte o y de parte del papa, hablamos en español, y ellos nos hablan en inglés. Es como común para nosotros ya, que nosotros le hablamos en español y nos contestan en inglés*
Well, I believe we are **messy and mixing it up**. For me and also for their dad, we speak in Spanish and with them, they speak in English. It’s common for us, that we speak in Spanish and they respond in English. (Family 1 of Fredonin)

Families moving to new settings mix and blend languages as they are influenced and shaped by their new social contexts and the languages around them. This unique phenomenon has been described as language contact or linguistic transformation (Fishman, 2001; García, 2009). Little research, however, has been conducted related to the dynamic languages and literacies that are created when families possess multiple linguistic resources. This study intends to address this gap by examining the multilingual multiliteracies of families’ households in two rural Indiana communities, bringing more texture to our current understanding of the “revuelto y mezclado” among rural multilingual families.

The definition of multiliteracies involves an expansive view of literacy that includes the use and appropriation of different languages, technologies, and modes of communication and exchange, particularly given changing demographics within rural communities and advancements in technologies. Departing from the “autonomous” definition of literacy being standardized (Leland, Lewison, & Harste, 2017; Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2007; Ong, 1991) and limited to formal instruction in schools, a paradigm of multiliteracies argues that negotiating different linguistic and cultural landscapes is an

essential part of civic engagement, so families can design their own social futures (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007; Lewison et al., 2007; New London Group, 1996). Civic engagement posits that EB families have agency which contributes to their unique negotiation of their new language and literacy landscapes. As school personnel in rural communities are less likely to be well-trained (Parsley & Barton, 2015) and most likely represent the majority group (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018) understanding family-based multiliteracies recognizes the literacy assets that emergent bilingual (EB) children bring to schools. Understanding multiliteracies and its related practices holds important implications for teachers in rural schools as they shift their understanding of EB students’ intellectual capacities and possibilities.

This study investigates EB families’ home- and community-based multiliteracies in two rural, Indiana communities and how they identify and practice their languages and literacies with their available and generated resources. This inquiry provides important implications for rural educators as they move from thinking of literacy and languages as standard, fixed, and English-monolingual toward a more responsive multiliteracy approach to enhance understanding around home, community, and school engagement with families.

The use of the term emergent bilinguals (EBs) capitalizes on the assets and intellectual capacities of students’ bi- or multilingualism (Garcia, 2009). Schools often construct EBs as English Learners (ELs), reinforcing the aim of English over any other language. The term EB is used to redirect schools, communities and families to consider the sustaining value of the bi- and multilingual assets students bring to school. Thus, the term emergent bilingual (EB) is used in lieu of English Learner (EL).

The current study addresses the gaps in the research by exploring family engagement in home language and literacy practices of EBs in rural communities, identifying and describing how parents are raising multilingual and multiliterate children.

The following research questions are posed:

1. What are the home literacy and language practices of emergent bilingual families in the rural Midwest?
2. How do these family-based literacy practices exhibit multilingual multiliteracies?

Multiliteracies and Multilingualism

The New London Group (1996) originally defined multiliteracies to foster a wider view of literacy that accounts for the exponential increase in various communication modes and the linguistic and cultural diversity of communities. Traditionally, literacy is defined as “the ability to read and write; a synthesis of language, context, and thinking that shapes meaning” (Winch, Johnston, Marsh, Ljungdahl, & Holliday, 2011, p. 697). Ong (1991) found that literacy is most often constructed as fixed and standard and, thus, autonomously construed. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) add that institutions or schools construct ‘literacy’ as a form of mass citizenry, which privileges writing as literacy’s dominant form of representation that should be acquired and mastered. In contrast, a multiliteracy perspective recognizes the impact of social, cultural, and technological changes on literacy (Anstey & Bull, 2006) and understands literacy as a dynamic and complex repertoire of social practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Further, the creation of multiliteracies closely tied to one’s identities, which are uniquely constructed within particular places and spaces (Heath & Street, 2008; Li & Renn, 2018).

A pedagogy of multiliteracies invokes educators to depart from the conventional definitions of literacy teaching by recognizing and incorporating extensive representations and multimodal communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Walsh, 2010). Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan (2017) affirm that a multiliteracy classroom should incorporate “a focus on community and social practices, on multimodal means of representing and constructing meaning” (p. 35). Binder (2011) emphasizes that “the concept of multiple literacies can allow teachers to access the rich repertoire of children’s pictorial language, leading to new ways of understanding their

experiences as well as their meaning-making through symbolic representation” (p. 367). Rowsell (2013) gives a more specific description of multiliteracies pedagogy, finding that digital technologies and other modalities, such as music, movement, and visual representations in collaboration with traditional printed texts, are richly constructed tools that contribute to children’s meaning-making. By integrating and combining all these available resources that are used by EB families, students’ literacy and language performances are validated (Binder, 2011; Louie & Davis-Welton, 2016; Murillo, 2012).

Multilingualism and Multiliteracies within Rurality

Myths commonly imposed upon rurality suggest lack of resources, distance from such resources and relative homogeneity, both in demographic description and ways of thinking (Davis & Marema, 2008). Alternatively, rurality encompasses a place and a space where families and communities make sense of their locally developed relationships and their available and created resources (Coady, 2019; Heath & Street, 2008). This additive orientation within rurality, allows for a form of sense-making that considers the resources or funds of knowledge that families bring to shape and reshape their new communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Stores, churches and community centers begin to transform and recognize the language and cultural differences of the newcomers and create responsive and inclusive ways of negotiating meaning and connection. This movement away from a “technical response,” often found in urban centers, shows the discursive and inclusive ways such networks shape the distinct identities and practices of EB families. Thus, rural educators can learn how churches, community centers and households negotiate meaning with and among EB families.

Conceptual framework

This study intersects the constructs of multiliteracies and funds of knowledge (FoK), informing a framework that shapes the interpretation and analysis. Bringing together these two areas allows examination of how such literacies are created and how they hold value and meaning within rural EB families.

As defined by Moll et. al (1992) “funds of knowledge (FoK) are historically accumulated and

culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills” (p. 133) that are used as resources in households and communities. A FoK perspective posits that families hold specialized knowledge, language, and literacies, which are uniquely expressed, such as operating a family business or playing musical instruments. Such a perspective can reshape how teachers conceive literacy, from narrow constructions of autonomous literacy to one that is expansive and inclusive of students’ and families’ multiliteracy practices (Compton-Lilly, 2007; New London Group, 1996; Ong, 1991; Reyes & Halcón, 2001). When teachers consider students’ multiliteracies within class, students can be constructed as drawing upon their languages and literacies, fostered and built within their homes and communities (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Iddings, 2009; Murillo, 2012).

An examination of FoK research demonstrates that families possess sufficient social and cultural assets, which can conceptually inform classroom instruction. Additively framing the resources EBs bring to school from their homes and communities, such as their first language and prior knowledge reconstructs the discourses around ‘educational disparities’ between EBs and their English-speaking peers.

Esteban-Guitart (2012) examines the construct of master narratives that suggests a composite identity or way of being. This composite is institutionally framed by schools or institutions and serve as a form of mass citizenry (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). The composite is often imbued upon minoritized groups (Crump, 2014; Morita-Mullaney, 2018) and can shape the language and literacy practices within homes. For example, families may adopt more English practices because they feel such pressures from the school or may construct reading as an “English only” activity. Yet, EB families can resist and negotiate such imposed categories of how language and literacy are understood, appropriated and performed. This study intends to examine this distinct space.

Methodology

This study uses a collective case study approach to examine EB families in two different rural communities. A collective case study is well-suited for this inquiry as it looks at the same group of individuals (i.e., EB parents) and how they identify and appropriate multiliteracies in their homes and communities. This type of study is best conducted in

a natural setting, bounding the local phenomena (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Further, its goals are to replicate findings across cases and identify any possible dissimilarities across cases (Yin, 2009). As a collective case study, this investigation integrates two data sources: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with EB family members. Yin (2009) posits that a theory established before the investigation allows for descriptive connections to be made, particularly when working with a variety of participants in different social contexts. For this study, Moll’s et al.’s (1992) funds of knowledge and the New London Group’s multiliteracies framework are employed.

Data Sources and Collection

For this collective case study, a 32-item questionnaire was completed by parents of elementary-age EB students (Bailey & Osipova, 2015), which was adapted with input from a community partner, “El Centro” (pseudonym), center EB families regularly consult for resources (Appendix A). Two school district Emergent Bilingual (EB) directors and their school-family liaisons assisted with the dissemination of the questionnaires. The questionnaire included items about the parents’ perceived proficiency in the four language domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking in both English and Spanish. Parents also reported their perceived proficiency of their children in both languages. The questionnaire also included descriptive information including age, gender, country of origin, education level, and occupation. A total of 316 of questionnaires were collected from Fredonin and 302 questionnaires were collected from Newberry. Families that indicated interest in a follow up identified this on their questionnaire. The Emergent Bilingual (EB) directors in Fredonin and Newberry also assisted with recruitment. Thus, this is a purposeful sample. This is part of a larger scale study focusing on over 1,200 participants, but this is a specific sample drawn from rural districts.

After the questionnaires were returned, 10 families from each district were interviewed in their home, school, or local community center to learn more about their home literacy and language practices. Interviewed families indicated their willingness to participate in the follow up interview in their questionnaire responses; the community partner, El Centro, then contacted families based on recommendations from schools. The interview

protocol (Bailey & Osipova, 2015) was also adapted with the input of the research team and El Centro (see Appendix B). The interview was semi-structured and included questions related to print and media sources in the home, how family members interfaced with these resources, practices related to homework and school documents, and other forms of multiliteracies in the home and the greater community. The interviews were conducted by El Centro staff in order to put families at ease, since families were acquainted with the work and personnel at the community center.

The interviews went through a robust compilation process. First, El Centro staff provided an overall synopsis of the interview with each family. Second, a 3-minute summary was conducted by the research team that encompassed and reflected the content from the audio-taped interview. Third, a full transcription of the interviews was conducted. If the interviews were in languages other than English, then they were represented in that way and then translated. These translations are also reflected in the findings to demonstrate how families responded to interview questions.

Data Analysis

Four specific multiliteracies were examined, including 1) print literacies; 2) media literacies; 3) school literacies; and 4) created literacies. Printed literacies are defined as bounded books or text that appears on paper. Media literacies include texts or representations of texts that appear through mediums like television, radio, music, social media, and smartphones. The next category is school literacies, which are literacies that come into the household via

the children’s teachers or schools for use in the home; this may include school announcements, teacher communication, and homework. Finally, created literacies are literacies which the families negotiate and appropriate within their homes or communities that involved exchange within their family, including discussion of religious texts (e.g., religious readings). Table 1 summarizes these examined multiliteracies.

The interviews were analyzed in two stages using Nvivo 12 qualitative software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2018). First, codes were developed for the four areas of print, media, school, and created literacies. After categorizing items into these areas, each item was then analyzed for themes and patterns of multiliteracy use. Similarities and nuances were noted across families. In the final stage of analysis, we triangulated data from the questionnaire and the interviews to describe the themes, patterns, and dissimilarities across the families. While this is not generalizable given the small sample size, it holds immediate relevance to our the two school partners who are deeply committed to expanding their understanding around family engagement and multilingualism within their rural settings.

Limitations

Three of the families interviewed in Newberry primarily spoke languages other than English or Spanish at home: Chuj (Family 4) and Mam (Family 10), from Guatemala, and Karen (Family 6), from Myanmar. Data on the 17 families with heritage languages of Spanish were solicited, but due to limitations of the survey instrument, the Chuj, Mam,

Table 1. Four types of multiliteracies with definition and examples

Created Literacies literacies that are negotiated and appropriated within their homes or communities that involved exchange within their family and may intersect with print, media and school literacies	Literacy Type that intersects with Created Literacies	Definition	Examples
	Print	bounded books or text that appears on paper	books, magazines, newspapers
Media	texts or representations of texts that come into the household through technological means	televisions, videos, movies, music, radio, internet, social media, texting	
School	literacies that come into the household via the children’s teachers or schools for use in the home	school announcements, homework, teacher communication, permission slips	

and Karen's speakers' proficiency levels are not included. In this paper we adopt the term heritage language over home or native language. Heritage language is not the mere utility of a language, but is associated with family's ethnic, racial, cultural and national origins (Carreira & O., 2011; Leeman, L., & Roman-Mendoza, 2011)

Background of Focal Rural Communities

This study takes place in the rural Midwestern communities of Fredonin and Newberry, Indiana (both pseudonyms), which draws from a large geographic stretch of corn and soy crops and manufacturing plants. Over 16,000 people call Fredonin home. The main employer is a factory that produces seasonal food products that are shipped throughout the US. There is a robust partnership with a local university where English classes are offered in the evening as a form of outreach to the community. In Fredonin, there are just under 3,200 students with two elementary schools, one middle, and one high school. Over 40% of the students are eligible for English learning services and 51% of its students are Hispanic. The free and reduced lunch rate is 77%. The academic achievement and growth of students are low to moderate and the high school graduation rate is 88%. Fredonin Schools are rated a "C" grade on a continuum of A-F for the state accountability system. Both elementary schools receive Title I assistance to promote literacy development among its students, so extra staff is available to pull out students identified as in need of English literacy development, most of whom are EBs.

Newberry is located 90 miles away from the city capital and is mostly an agrarian community and home to just over 8,000 people. In the late 1990s, USA Meat Packers (UMP) (pseudonym) purchased a facility in Newberry and over the subsequent months, an immigrant workforce resettled with a community from Mexico and Vietnam. Like Fredonin, UMP has three shifts where most of the EB families work the second or 'night' shift. More recently, a Burmese refugee population from Myanmar has come to serve in the second shift at UMP. As a result of religious persecution, Burmese asylum seekers, resettled by international aid groups, have become the largest refugee group in both the U.S. and Indiana in recent years (Hussein, 2017; Kercood & Morita-Mullaney, 2015; Morita-Mullaney & Stallings, 2018; Trieu & Vang, 2015; US Department of State, 2019).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Fredonin and Newberry families

Newberry's school district is home to 4,254 students and has four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The EB community accounts for over 40% of the total school community, and Spanish is the most common language among EB students. Sixty percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch benefits. The main employer is UMP and the Newberry school district. The graduation rate is 97% and their current state grade is a "B." Although their rate of poverty is not as high as Fredonin's, they do receive Title I support and have a similar model with extra staff and resources for English literacy development, where most of the EB students receive remedial literacy instruction.

Fredonin and Newberry have among the highest proportion of EBs within their schools at the state level. The EB population in Fredonin schools is 24.66% and Newberry is at 25.35% (Indiana Department of Education, 2019). While urban districts in the city capital and larger cities in Northern Indiana have greater numbers, these two rural communities, Fredonin and Newberry are the most densely EB populated in the state.

Both districts receive Rural and Low-Income Schools (RLIS) funding from the Indiana Department of Education (Indiana Department of Education, 2018), which allows for expanded services for EB student achievement and EB family engagement. Both districts identify the need to enhance outreach and connection with EB families but feel constrained by the limited multilingual proficiency among school personnel. As a result, the primary focus with such RLIS grants has been on student achievement within schools, which reinforces the construction of literacy as fixed with the responsibility falling mostly to schools, potentially reducing focus on EB-school-family collaboration.

Findings

All 20 families have at least one primary school-age child in their household, and the average household in both communities has approximately three children. The majority of the families (n=18) identified Spanish as their primary home language, it is also a diverse ethnic group. The Karen who live in Newberry have largely converted to Christianity and represent a persecuted group language. In Newberry, one family spoke Karen (a language spoken in Myanmar; formerly Burma), one family spoke Chuj (a Mayan language spoken in Guatemala), and one

Variable	Fredonin Mean (SD)	Newberry Mean (SD)
Mother's Age	33.9 (5.6)	35.2 (5.0)
Mother's Years of Education	10.6 (2.8)	10.8 (5.3)
Mother's Years in the US	18.4 (5.9)	14.4 (8.9)
Father's Age	39.0 (7.7)	38.1 (6.2)
Father's Years of Education	8.3 (3.2)	10.9 (2.9)
Father's Years in the US	16.4 (5.5)	15.6 (9.5)
Total number of children	3.2 (1.8)	2.8 (1.3)

family spoke both Spanish and Mam (a Mayan language spoken in Guatemala and parts of Mexico). Parents and the children within these three families were both immigrants. In contrast, the remainder of the parents had children born in the US, whereas the parents were immigrants. The three families with different language backgrounds also had distinct conditions of immigration. The family from Myanmar came as political refugees, seeking asylum in the U.S. due to religious persecution as a small, minoritized group of Christian-Karen. While Karen is referenced as a within Myanmar (Hussein, 2017; Kercood & Morita-Mullaney, 2015; Trieu & Vang, 2015). The families who spoke Chuj and Mam also came as political refugees, fleeing violence as indigenous speakers due to their religious backgrounds other than their country's mainstream.

Table 2 shows demographics from the two communities. At the time the questionnaires were collected, mothers were in their mid-30s, on average, and fathers were in their late-30s in both communities. Mothers in both locations and fathers in Newberry had an average of almost 11 years of schooling, while the mean amount of parental education in Fredonin was 8.3 years. The mean length of time in the U.S. was 18.4 years for mothers (range: 10-28 years) and 16.4 years for fathers (range: 10-25 years) in Fredonin. In Newberry, mothers had lived in the U.S. for an average of 14.4 years (range: 1-30 years) and fathers had lived in the country for an average of 15.6 years (range: 3-28 years).

Language Proficiency by Community

As mentioned above, the language survey asked participants to assess their own language abilities using a five-point scale (1=not now; 2=just a little; 3=some; 4=fairly well; 5=fluently). Figures 1 and 2 show the mean responses to reported English language proficiency by community. Figure 1 shows

that interviewed respondents from Newberry reported that on average, the English proficiencies of both parents was between "some" and "fairly well" in all language domains. For the elementary-age children from Newberry, the average scores were between "some" and "fairly well" in Reading and Writing, and between "fairly well" and "fluently" in Listening and Speaking.

Figure 2 shows the mean respondents from the Fredonin families. Results indicated that, on average, mothers rated their English proficiency between "some" and "fairly well" in all domains. Fathers' average ratings were lower, though not significantly, than mothers' ratings in all four domains. The average ratings for Fredonin fathers in Listening and Speaking were also between "some" and "fairly well;" their scores in Reading and Writing were just below the "some" threshold. For the elementary-age children, their average scores in Listening and Speaking were quite high (4.7 and 4.8, respectively), approaching "fluent." The average Reading score was just below "fairly well," and the average Writing score was for students was between "some" and "fairly well." In both communities, Writing was the lowest score for the children, likely because they are in elementary school and are still developing their writing skills.

The majority of Spanish-speaking families in both communities rated the Spanish language skills of parents as good as or better than their English skills in all domains. In Fredonin, only one mother and one father (from different families), were rated as more proficient in at least domain of English, and in Newberry, only one mother was rated as more proficient in English. In nearly all cases, children's English proficiency was rated as equal to or better than their Spanish proficiency. Each community had only one exception to this, where the child's Spanish skills were rated as stronger than their English proficiency.

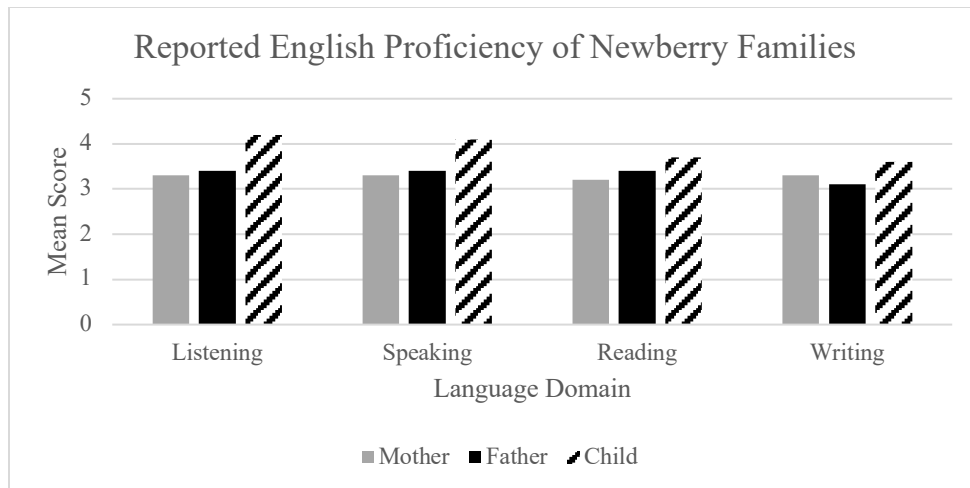


Figure 1. Mean reported English proficiency of mother, father, and target child in interviewed Newberry families

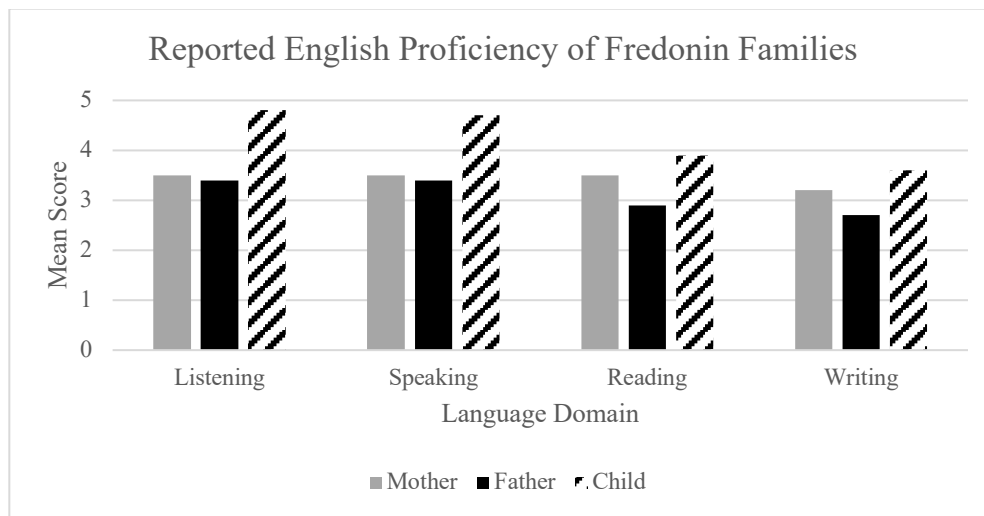


Figure 2. Mean reported English proficiency of mother, father, and target child in interviewed Fredonin families

Home Literacies by Four Types

Findings from interviews indicate that families acquire and use literacy in a multitude of ways and are divided into the four categories identified previously: print literacies (print materials at home, books or other texts; reading and book storage); media literacies (television, videos, movies, music, radio, internet, social media, computers, and smart phones and texting); school literacies (language and translation of school documents and homework); and created literacies (other activities and literacy practices in the home and community). Each component is detailed in the next section.

Print literacies. Looking at the category of print literacies, all families possessed various reading resources, including books, magazines, newspapers,

comics, and religious texts. These resources were mostly borrowed from the public libraries or schools, and some were bought from bookstores, most commonly the school book fairs, or are given free at doctor's offices, churches or community centers. Print resources were stored in a variety of locations, including bookshelves, closets, tables, bedrooms, living rooms, and home offices, and most of these materials were readily accessible to children.

Family 6, speakers of Karen from Newberry, talked about how they read to their daughter at home before she went to bed. They also noted that their local Christian congregation taught Sunday School in Karen. Print resources were gathered from the church, the school, and their home country of Myanmar. Mr. Sujan (pseudonym) shared how

reading aloud to their child in Karen was a significant contribution to her identity.

We would like her to view her identity because she is Karen and her hair and the color of her eyes and they are different, they are different from the native here. And we would like for her to think that her people is also important. And we see many Karen students who they view their language, they do better in schools. I don't know why. But, they do better in schools.

The print literacies in their daughter's heritage language represent an important physical link to her ethnic and cultural identity. Further, these Karen print resources connected her to her heritage community and imbued value and appreciation of her 'people.' While Mr. Sujan cannot explain the measurable worth of the L1 on achievement, he does know that strength in the heritage language has a positive impact on school performance in English.

Access to print materials in the home language was a point of concern for many families. Mr. and Mrs. Sujan noted that there was only "one Karen book" in the library and that it was there because they requested its purchase. To support their daughter's Karen language development, they checked out many English books from the Newberry Public Library and translated the English into Karen during home storytime. Similarly, Family 1 from Newberry shared that they would check out mostly English books and mom would "ask them questions in Spanish" to gauge their comprehension of the material. This oral transformation of the English books to their heritage languages demonstrates the linguistic adaptability and creativity of their household.

In Fredonin, the main source of books in the home were from the school library or via the Scholastic school book fair held twice annually, where nearly all resources were in English. The school library and the book fair mostly had books in English. Family 7 of Fredonin shared, "When there's a book fair, we come and buy the books," but all of them were in English. Family 1 from Fredonin shared what other resources they had in their homes:

Tengo periódicos que compro cada semana y mis hijos siempre leen los cómicos, comics, por ejemplo. Ah, tengo libros, tengo también leemos sobre la biblia un poco y como ellos están en la escuela de la iglesia, también tenemos materiales sobre la biblia, y revistas.

I have newspapers that I buy each week and my children always read the *cómicos*, comics, for example. And I have books that I also read,

including the Bible a little and for the children, they are in Sunday school and we also have Bible materials and magazines.

English newspapers were a common print resource, which the children read and discussed with each other in English. Family 1 of Fredonin described the interaction fostered among her children as a means to English development. Magazines came from church and were used within the family to discuss biblical stories in Spanish. This was a shared activity across children and parents to foster understanding of the Bible, but also to connect religion to their linguistic heritage of Spanish.

Media literacies. Participants in Fredonin and Newberry interfaced with various technologies, audio technology (radio, music), visual technology (television, videos, movies), and interactive technology (smartphones, social media, texting). The families' audio-related practices included listening to CDs, music, hymns and sermons, and radio programs. The main source of music came from home stereos or car radios. The mother from Fredonin Family 6 shared, "*Cuando mis hijos están escuchando en la casa, en ingles, y en el carro, español.* [When my children are in the house, [the music] is in English and in the car, it is in Spanish]". Whereas parents preferred listening to music in Spanish and children preferred it in English, the locations were distinct: Car for songs in Spanish and the home for songs in English.

Television and videos also served as a key source of language and literacy interaction. Two families did not have televisions, but all families watched movies and other videos together on televisions or devices like smartphones, computers or tablets. Some families said when families watched video media together, they watched Spanish programs, including movies and soap operas. Otherwise, children preferred watching movies in English. The mother from Fredonin Family 2 stated, "*Conmigo, español. Con ellos, inglés.* [With me, Spanish. Among them, English]". She also said that her strategy to support her children's acquisition of English was to play cartoons and movies in English, without subtitles, seeing this as a tool for developing listening skills in English. In contrast, Family 1 from Newberry, whose children were first generation US born shared, "but I encourage cartoons that I used to watch when I was younger. I tell them, and they're in Spanish. It's kind of the same as what they know, but it's in Spanish. Like Garfield." In this case, cartoons

served as a connection to the mother's childhood while also serving as a strategy for supporting Spanish language maintenance for her children.

Social media was appropriated in different ways by family members. For Family 6 in Fredonin, they mostly used Facebook and their children used YouTube, saying "*Nosotros el Facebook en español, pero ellos se meten así en como YouTube, puro inglés*. [For us, we use Facebook in Spanish, but for them, they get into YouTube, but fully in English]". Family 6 of Fredonin felt that their children were too young to interact with social media just yet, but noted that the children frequently watched YouTube videos in English, including cartoons, which she reported as a form of English language instruction.

Newberry Family 6 discussed the use of smartphones. The mother stated that she would text her older children in Spanish, but they always responded in English; even so, they understood each other. Family 1 and 2 from Fredonin and Family 7 from Newberry also shared that they would use "*ambos*" or "both" languages to communicate via texting. Parents would intermingle English with Spanish, whereas children would use mostly English with the addition of emojis.

School literacies. Another category of multiliteracies included school literacies, including school documents and homework, that families have and use in their homes. Families in both communities stated that print communications from schools were frequent. In Fredonin, six families noted that print communication sent home were in both languages, whereas in Newberry, four families reported that materials were bilingual and 10 families reported that they only received school communications in English. While both districts report that they translate the most important documents, classroom communications are more frequent and not all are sent home in the home languages of the families due to the volume and lack of available translators. This is an even greater challenge for languages other than Spanish.

Families reported using a range of methods to extract meaning from school communications. Family 7 and 9 from Fredonin reported that while their children's schools sent home materials in English and Spanish, they found that they were "not good translations." The mother from Fredonin Family 9, who reported higher proficiency in English relative to other families, reported that she had no trouble reading the English versions, but she sometimes

struggled to read and understand when the information was only sent in Spanish as she had no point of reference for some of the word choices.

Families were asked what strategies they employed if they did not understand the content of the message. Family 6 and 7 in Newberry used Google Translate to define chunks of words they did not understand. Mr. Suján of Family 6, a speaker of Karen whose child is in a bilingual Spanish-English program, shared that when they first came "I had to Google it, Google translate it [Spanish to English forms]... and after that, uh, one of the teachers send us a letter and we can ask the translated version of the homework [in English]". Whereas the Karen family had an English-Spanish translation furnished by school that gave them some access to English directions, they still had to negotiate the meaning with their daughter who was more proficient in English and Spanish. (their child was in a bilingual English-Spanish program at school). Family 7 of Newberry also used Google Translate for school documents. The mom shared, "*Los traduzco en Google*. [I translate them in Google]".

Family 4 and 10 of Fredonin made different reports about the languages of school communication. Family 4 reported that it was only in English, whereas Family 10 reported forms were in both languages. Both families worked with their children to negotiate understanding around the form's content. Family 4 mom shared, "*Pues, leerlos, sí, sí los puedo leer. Pero para traducir, no... Mis hijos me traducen*. [Well, I read them... if I can read them. But, to translate, no. My children translate]". For Family 3 in Fredonin who reported only receiving school communication in English, the mom worked with her spouse to interpret. Family 4 and 10 from Newberry would go to schools to seek out an interpreter who could wade through the texts to help them understand the intended message, but they were the exception; all other families appropriated technological tools and worked with family members to engage with the school, regardless of their reported level of English proficiency. Through this approach, meaning is contextualized and fostered among all family members.

All families were deeply committed to meeting the expectations of homework, which was primarily in English (the exception being Family 6 of Newberry, whose daughter was in a bilingual program). Families across both communities varied in the language(s) they used to facilitate understanding and completion of homework, but they

all drew upon their multiple linguistic resources to understand homework and complete it collaboratively.

A central theme in many households was the use of the family's heritage language as a form of access to homework content. Family 1 of Newberry and Family 6 of Fredonin used only Spanish to facilitate homework tasks. The Family 6 mom of Fredonin stated, "...*Yo les explico en español*. [I explain it in Spanish]". Family 1 mom of Newberry shared, "I mean, like math – Spanish. Reading or social studies, she'll ask me the question and then I'll just go through and tell her in Spanish and then she'll find it in English." In this case, the reciprocity is negotiated between the parent and her daughter as the mom explains content in Spanish and the child finds what she needs in English. Four families from Newberry and one family from Fredonin used both English and their heritage language to interact with homework related tasks. Family 9 of Newberry demonstrated the different roles that each parent adopted in supporting their child's schoolwork. The father helps the boys in Spanish with Math and Science, while the mother helps the boys in English with their Social Studies and Language Arts work.

Two families from Newberry and four families from Fredonin used only English to assist their children with their homework. Family 5 of Fredonin shared, "*La tarea está en inglés*. The homework is in English", which drove how the parents facilitated connection and meaning to the content. While all six families rated their level of Spanish proficiency higher than their English, they elected to use English with their children to support their understanding of the homework.

Family 6 of Newberry, speakers of Karen, recounted when they first arrived and were navigating the types of homework their daughter had. Mrs. Suján shared:

Like when we first arrive in United States, it's our four years living here, so we told her that you cannot speak English at home, just Karen, so when her father tried to help, ask her to count one, two, three to one hundred, she said, "No English at home." But her father said, it's not about English or Karen, it's about homework.

The parents are very focused on her Karen maintenance, but also on her homework completion. While language is the tool by which understanding is negotiated for homework, Mr. Suján does not cast specific linguistic restrictions keeping the focus on the construct of homework.

Created literacies. Two main created literacies were observed in the two communities. Church was a major source of literacies as families worked through religious texts or sermons to transform them into immediate relevance. Secondly, families discussed the role of language during meal preparation.

Religious texts, especially the Bible, played a role in families and served as a central mechanism for imbuing values. In Newberry, many families belonged to a church where services are conducted in Spanish. Family 4 regularly attended and made the reading of religious texts a part of their home literacy practices. Newberry Family 4 shared:

... a veces también como una biblia, explicar que es lo que se debe hacer que lo que en estos tiempos allí muchas cosas mal en este tiempo.... le platicamos como de la biblia para que ellos tengan un mejor estudio porque aprendan bien.
... sometimes, we also read the Bible, to explain that there is much to do in these times, as there are many bad things in these times... we practice the principles of the Bible so that they [the children] have a good study ethic and that they learn well.

For this family, the Bible held special significance for them as it addressed the sociopolitical context of being Hispanic in a rural US community.

Another Newberry family from Guatemala who spoke the indigenous language of Chuj, attended a church with other Guatemalan-Chuj speakers. Señor y Señora Ixtatán (pseudonyms) shared:

Señora Ixtatán: *Van a la iglesia.*

Señor Ixtatán: *Si, nos vamos a la iglesia, en la todos los santos del doce a una quince ya para las tres y media empieza.*

Señora Ixtatán: *La versión en Chuj.*

Señora Ixtatán: *Si, en puro chuj. Tenemos algunas familias que son guatemaltecos y si apenas hace poco que empezaron eso, verdad? Ya tiene tiempos porque terminan la misa en español y todos asisten, pero lo todos que van a hacer local que tienen y expliquen chuj... Tratan de explicar en Chuj porque a veces los niños van de vacaciones a Guatemala con la abuela, los hermanos, tia, tios y no entienden español.*

Señora Ixtatán: They [Guatemalans] go to the church.

Señor Ixtatán: Yes, we go to the church every Sunday at 12:15 to 2:15 and also at 3:30 it begins.

Señora Ixtatán: The version is in Chuj [the service at 3:30].

Señor Ixtatán: We have some families that are Guatemalans and if just recently they started that, right? The church has times, because they finish the mass in Spanish and that everyone attends, but everyone goes to a place where they explain Chuj ... They try to explain in Chuj because sometimes the children go on vacation to Guatemala with their grandmother, the brothers, aunts and uncles and they do not understand Spanish.

The Ixtatán family would listen in Spanish, their second language, and then access meaning in dialogue with other Chuj speakers who had greater Spanish-Chuj proficiency, making the mass service quite extended. This connection demonstrates not only the devotion they have to their faith, but also how churches provide spaces for multilingual negotiation and connection, which sustains their children's communicative connections among their extended family.

Cooking was another central literacy practice for families in Fredonin and Newberry. Family 1, 5, and 6 of Newberry and Family 9 of Fredonin expressed the shared language and literacy practice of cooking meals together. Family 1 of Newberry shared:

We watch some videos if we want to make something, like a new cake or something like that, that we'll listen to it in Spanish, or I'll read the ingredients in Spanish. Or like ...when she's reading the box, she'll say those *huevos* [eggs], and the instructions are in English, so she translates it.

The daughter's transformation of spoken and written print from Spanish to English demonstrates how two languages make cooking a multilingual multiliteracy activity. Further, the rich intersection between read text, identified ingredients, and oral language demonstrates how literacies are generated, instead of merely acquired.

Analysis

Multiliteracies are uniquely situated within the communities of Fredonin and Newberry. EB families engage in language and literacy activities that have the simultaneous goal of English language development, heritage language maintenance, and transformation of both languages into unique forms of immediate relevance. These rich connections

across their language resources demonstrates the creative agency of rural EB families.

Parents are actively engaged in the children's literacy and language development as they use technological tools that facilitate connections across languages (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Walsh, 2010). While it could be inferred that families are engaging in mere translation that is literal or autonomous (Ong, 1991), their use of Google Translate leads to meaning making among family members, including children, spouses, and, in some cases, with school personnel. This mediation across technologies, languages, and literacies demonstrates the creative transformation of print. Families begin with a school text and then work via Google Translate. Next, they discuss with family members, ultimately resulting in a newer understanding around the original text.

Understanding is negotiated; not merely transmitted.

As two families denote, the quality of Spanish translation from the schools is low because they are typically produced by a computer translation program. EB families demonstrate their resistance to this approach to translation (Lewison, Leland and Harste, 2017; Ong, 1991). They critique their school system for Spanish translation quality, if offered, but they also position their strengths around their multilingual and technological capacities and emphasizing their desire for their children to be multilingual.

Identities are shaped by the multiliteracies negotiated by families within Fredonin and Newberry. Through interaction, family members are taking on particular roles, creating access to learning amongst each other (Heath & Street, 2008). As family members reflect on their growing experiences and proficiencies in multiple languages in their new rural homes, they articulate their shifting roles based on what they need to understand. For Family 6 from Newberry, where only Karen is used in the home in order to create a linguistic connection to their child's heritage, Spanish and English are now a rich part of their negotiations around 'homework.' Through this role-taking and role-making, all family members identities are shifting based on their growing repertoire of social purposes and practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). Thus, this study holds important implications for rural schools, particularly Fredonin and Newberry, who can become validators of the varied social purposes of language and literacies of their growing EB communities.

Classroom Implications

It is critical that school educators understand how family multiliteracies are being negotiated and created to dispel the myths they may hold about their students' literacy practices and to help them consider literacies to be inclusive of other languages and modes of expression. Despite the cultural differences and perceived language barriers, these families are providing a variety of print resources in different languages, and they interface with them in ways that create connection to their respective heritages. These materials also serve as brokers for English development and heritage language maintenance. While forms of print from school could be conceived as fixed and autonomous (Ong, 1991), rich creativity is observed with which families transform print into dialogue between and among siblings and parents. Reshaping perceptions about this holds important implications not only for classroom teachers and administrators, but also for teacher educators.

Moll et al. (1992) and Moll's (2014) research within homes and communities has shed important light onto the sophisticated funds of knowledge of families, including the multilingual multiliteracies of families. While scholars posit that such practices can be applied in schools (Louie & Davis-Welton, 2016; Murillo, 2012), Moll (2014) advises that home visits without proper discussion and support ahead of time can reinforce stereotypes, subtractively positioning EB families' literacies as being non-standard or not reflective of the literacy that is measured and valued in schools. Instead of an immediate transport of family multiliteracies to schools, this study invokes classroom educators to consider their own definitions of literacies and how they intersect and differ from the literacies of EB households. This *foregrounding* is a necessary component of understanding a pedagogy of multiliteracies before moving to immediate practical implementation.

As teacher educators, a *Family Multiliteracies Project* has been created as a result of this inquiry, where in-service teachers participate in the same interview protocol used herein (Appendix B) with a focal family from their classroom. Initially, teachers were unsettled as they felt they were encroaching on their students' private lives. Further, teachers felt their lack of language proficiency in the family's heritage language would inhibit understanding and access. Within and despite their discomfort, teachers identified the languages and literacies at home,

interrupting their historic notions of language and literacy *and* their teacher identities as literacy experts. These shifting notions from autonomous school literacies to expansive and dynamic multiliteracies discovered within EB households has not yet affected their classroom literacy practices. However, teachers' paradigm of school literacies has been unsettled as they have observed the multilingual and multiliterate capacities of their EB students and families. Their observation and affirmation of the "revuelto y mezclado" created within EB families is a necessary step in their teacher transformation toward a pedagogy of multiliteracies distinct to rurality.

Conclusion

The EB families from Fredonin and Newberry are engaged in a range of literacy activities in their rural contexts. This research demonstrates the diversified home-based literacy practices that supports complex multilingual and multimodal literacy practices. Without knowledge of such examples, it is all too easy for teachers to "underestimate" the literacies of EB families (Murillo, 2012). The findings recognize the activities the parents engaged in with their children, and emphasize the importance of the home-based literacy practices on children's emergent literacy, language skills and identities. This distinct agency capitalizes on the social futures EB families create through language contact and transformation (Fishman, 2001). Rural teachers who have taken on this study of their EB students using the same family interview protocol now negotiate and disrupt the standardization of language and now see how multilingual multiliteracies creates access and connection for their EB families.

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