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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Language of Identity, Language of Access*.

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REFLECCIÓN

1. This section begins with the following sentence: "At times, the scholarly community find themselves engaged in ideological rivalries that educators do not identify with." Why do you think this is?
2. LILA is a theory-based approach to language education. What is the value of considering theory in instructional planning?
3. Which theories or theorists guide your approach to teaching (language or otherwise)?

POSITIONING LILA: CHALLENGING A FEW OF THE "FUNDAMENTALS" OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

This book positions language of identity and language of access as equally important and directly challenges three fundamental understandings in the field: additive approaches to multilingualism, code-switching, and use of the term *academic language*.

Additive Approaches to Language Instruction

Early American approaches to English education were subtractive in nature; that is, they sought to replace home language or home language varieties with what was known as "academic English." In my ESL teacher licensure program more than twenty years ago, I (Michelle) learned about the transition away from a subtractive to an additive bilingual model. I was taught to encourage parents of MLs to speak with their kids and read to them in their home language and

assured them that their children could both have rich instruction in academic English and maintain home language with their support. I was proud that our field had made such great strides toward developing multilingual minds and multicultural identities.

However, without methodologies to support home language usage in the classroom, these additive approaches were ideological in nature and often yielded the same subtractive result. In retrospect, I can see that my conversations with parents at conferences urging them to use home language with their children was in direct conflict with the visible space of my classroom—a space where English print adorned the walls, English was the sole language of instruction, and English was prioritized over all else. I assume that learners who came of age in my classroom are now adults with gaps in their home language and literacy. García (2009) corroborates the myth of additive bilingualism and offers the term *dynamic bilingualism* as an alternative. Dismantling policies (written or unwritten) that relegate certain language varieties to the home and others to school is a step toward the dynamic multilingual space that García envisions.

Code-Switching

Language is the multifaceted human system of communication. However, there aren't clear lines where one language or language variety ends and another begins. Even the words *dialect*, *variety*, and *language* aren't clearly defined by linguists, who opt to use the term *named language* to refer to any language with a name. Not only do named languages like English and Spanish borrow from each other, languages change over time. If we can't identify where one language ends and another begins, and we reject the idea of languages being discrete codes, how can we consider turning one off and turning another on? The school of thought behind code switching is that each language exists in isolation. This is how the concept of code-switching has been explained and has been accepted as truth until recently.

Thanks to the work of García (2009), we now know that our brains are hardwired to be indiscriminate repositories of language and learners naturally have access to their full linguistic

repertoire. It is society, not our brains, that tells us which language is “appropriate” in a given setting. Flores and Rosa (2015) refer to this as *discourses of appropriateness*, which implies that there is an appropriate time and place for different languages. Teachers can actively inhibit language suppression in their classrooms. Translanguaging refers to multilinguals activating their full linguistic repertoire. In contrast to code switching, translanguaging acknowledges the ways that multilingual brains actually work.

Use of the Term *Academic Language*

Modern-day scholars in the area of raciolinguistics point out how the concept of academic language is inherently rooted in white elevation and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) suppression (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Rosa and Flores (2017) write that the existing model in education implies that multilingual learners are “in need of linguistic remediation to provide them with access to the subject of the so-called ‘academic language’ required for complex thinking processes and successful engagement in the global economy” (pp. 626–627). Certainly, justice-minded educators will take issue with the home/school and basic/cognitive dichotomies when it comes to student capacity for learning and engagement. And while we can’t influence all corners of society, we can make changes in the classroom knowing that translanguaging is the default for multilingual brains and that MLs have their full linguistic repertoire (García, 2009) available to them at all times. Seltzer and de los Ríos (2018) write

Pedagogy that takes up a translanguaging lens views students’ language practices as interconnected and inseparable, and organizes classroom learning so that students can draw on all their linguistic resources—as well as other external resources—at all times in order to make meaning. (pp. 53–54)

How can we create learning spaces where our learners’ full linguistic repertoires are welcome, even celebrated? This is a call to action for teachers to change our verbiage. For this reason, LILA uses *language of access* in place of *academic language*. A more in-depth explanation of the language of access can be found in Chapter 6.



OJO

Wait a minute! Aren't you just rebranding academic language and calling it by a new name?

Not exactly. Just as disciplines and ideologies evolve, language does too. While code switching and translanguaging both present the same, they have significant epistemic differences. Epistemology refers to the knowledge that a concept is grounded in. That knowledge informs how we determine what is true, what we believe, and how we justify our beliefs.

Code-switching is grounded in the knowledge that languages exist as discrete codes that can be turned on and off. Translanguaging is grounded in the knowledge that humans have one linguistic repository to draw from at all times. For both terms, the presentation is the same—they describe what happens when someone uses more than one named language in discourse.

Now let's try that with academic language. Academic language is grounded in the knowledge that there is a specific language that is necessary for success in school that is different from, and higher in status than, the language used at home. Language of access is grounded in the knowledge that all spaces (even nonschool spaces like an auto body shop, gaming convention, or sailing expedition) have language that is needed to gain access but this language is all of equal status. When used in a school setting, the presentation for both terms is the same—they describe the language that is needed to be successful in school.

Epistemology, my dear Watson!



REFLECCIÓN

1. Why is the concept of additive bilingualism challenged today?
2. The language that we use often indicates to others what we believe and how we understand the world around us. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the political landscape. Consider the following examples:
 - a. The war "in" Iraq versus the war "on" Iraq
 - b. Government subsidies versus corporate welfare
 - c. Obamacare versus the Affordable Care Act

Discuss the epistemic differences in the terms above. What knowledge/beliefs do they convey? Can you think of other examples outside of linguistics and politics?