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"They go hand in hand": Dialogic pedagogy and linguistic belonging in two elementary classrooms

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Abstract

Elementary school children bring a rich diversity of language to classrooms, a richness that often goes undervalued in educational settings in which teachers feel they must and do emphasize dominant ways of using English. The ways in which teachers interact with children about their language use can influence the linguistic belonging of children from nondominant linguistic backgrounds—their sense of being loved, valued, included, and recognized in positive ways for how they use and understand language. This work addresses connections between dialogic pedagogy and the belonging of multilingual children in two California, English-dominant elementary classrooms. The manuscript centers on the following questions: (1) How did teachers view dialogic instruction and plan dialogically? (2) What did dialogic instruction look like when enacted in these two classrooms? (3) How did dialogic instruction–including professional care and love for multilingual children–relate to the linguistic belonging of multilingual children in these two classrooms? The study concludes that these teachers saw dialogic instruction and the belonging of multilingual children as connected and that they worked hard to find space for dialogic instruction within scripted and district-planned curricula. During dialogic instruction, teachers accepted answers that were not conventionally correct, honored and demonstrated care for students and embraced multiple, diverse ways of expressing answers from their students, including affirming multilingual student language use that did not conform to dominant English standards. Dialogic pedagogy contributed to the belonging of multilingual children in these two classrooms.

Keywords: *Dialogic pedagogy, Social Justice, Courageous Conversations, Literacy, Multilingualism*

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Acknowledgements:

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Introduction and Purpose

We use language constantly—to communicate our desires, to show our competencies, and to present who we are to the world. In United States classrooms, White and wealthy ways of using language often dominate. Yet U.S. elementary children bring a rich diversity of language to classrooms, a richness that often goes undervalued in educational settings where teachers feel they must, and do, emphasize dominant ways of speaking, reading, writing, and teaching English. The ways in which teachers interact with children about their language use can influence the *linguistic belonging* of multilingual children—their sense of being loved, valued, included, and recognized in positive ways for how they use and understand language.

In the children's book *A Different Pond* (Phi, 2016), the narrator states, "A kid at my school said my Dad's English sounds like a thick, dirty river. But to me his English sounds like gentle rain." This quotation sums up both the criticism and, alternatively, the love and care that can be conveyed as we consider language use. Teachers have the option to show this same kind of disdain through correction, emphasis on dominant English, and criticism of children's accents and language use; alternatively, they can engage in pedagogical choices that demonstrate respect, thoughtfulness, and care for their children's use of language; recognition of multilingualism as an asset; and respect for children's ideas, opinions, and contributions to classroom discussion. Research has found that multilingual children often do not have access to some or all of the learning opportunities afforded to monolingual children in the U.S. (Langeloo, 2019). Pedagogies steeped in love and respect can offer multilingual children a sense of linguistic belonging in schools, a belonging that has the potential to impact children's present and future (Murdock-Perriera, 2022)

The belonging of multilingual children–their sense of having positive relationships with others (Walton & Cohen, 2011), the idea that the classroom is meant for them and that they can envision themselves in it (Murdock-Perriera, 2022)–is crucial to their well-being and school performance (Murdock-Perriera, 2022, Martínez, 2013; Langeloo, 2019; Snell & Cushing 2022). How teachers work with children—the pedagogies they choose—inform teacher-student interactions about language use. A pedagogical approach known as dialogism or dialogic pedagogy offers opportunities for children to express competence and promotes children's meaning-making and sense-making. Dialogic approaches also improve educational outcomes and academic progress, especially for multilingual children (Snell & Cushing, 2022). This qualitative study addresses connections between dialogic pedagogy and the sense of belonging of multilingual children in two California, English-dominant elementary classrooms: a second- and a fourth-grade classroom.

The author spent more than 400 hours in the two classrooms: observing, coming to know students and teachers, and interviewing teachers one-on-one about their plans and ideas. Through this ethnographic process, ideas about language and belonging emerged organically as the researcher witnessed moments of love, care, and connection in which teachers engaged in dialogic approaches and, in doing so, promoted their students' linguistic belonging. The study concludes that these teachers saw dialogic approaches and the belonging of multilingual children as connected, and that they worked hard to find space for dialogism within scripted and district-planned curricula. During dialogic instruction, teachers accepted answers that

were not conventionally correct, honored and demonstrated care for students, *and* embraced multiple, diverse ways of expressing answers from their students, including affirming multilingual children's language use that did not conform to dominant English standards.

Literature Review

Teachers interact with the children in their classrooms in countless ways throughout the school day, including one-on-one, in small and large group settings, and through providing feedback. How teachers and students interact with one another is a long-studied topic, initiating with scholars as early as the 1960's and 70's (Barnes, Britton & Rosen, 1969; Cazden, 1972). Study of teacher-student talk throughout the '80s and '90s (reviewed by Mercer and Dawes, 2014) led to the development of two major areas of study in the 2010s: student-student interaction and collaborative learning and *dialogic teaching* (Freire, 1994; Alexander, 2006). In *dialogic* approaches, teachers and students interact respectfully and responsively, acknowledging and building on multiple perspectives (e.g., Nystrand, 1997; Kim and Wilkinson, 2019; Hennessey et al., 2023). Dialogism offers an approach that gives space for listening deeply to what children are saying (Nystrand, 1997) about particular topics, their experiences, and themselves. More than only interactions or speaking, dialogic approaches are about hearing one another, building on ideas, and acknowledging others' existences, experiences, and perspectives.

Through privileging children's thinking and background knowledge (Aukerman, 2013), dialogic instruction offers an approach that differs from conventional understandings of rightness and wrongness of children's ideas and language use. Dialogic instruction makes students thinking about textual ideas central to classroom dialogue about text. It places more of the burden on learning, and less of the burden on "rightness." Aukerman (2013) states that within dialogism the teacher "treats … intellectual work as generative regardless of whether it aligns with her own thinking or ways of reading", honoring student thinking regardless of dominant "correctness." Recent research in dialogic pedagogy indicates its potential relationship to issues of social justice, including language, within the classroom (Murdock-Perriera, 2022). Dialogic approaches offer teachers the opportunity to validate and be equitable in dialogue with children's ideas and their ways of expressing those ideas–the languages and linguistic qualities of how they present themselves.

Within dialogism, meaning-making is, "…fundamentally unfinished, contingent work that centrally depends on the refraction of multiple voices" (Aukerman, 2013, p. A7). Dialogic pedagogy privileges children's textual ideas regardless of rightness but also expects readers to engage with each other's often differing accounts of what texts say. Teachers believe their students' ideas can transform classroom discourse and consider how these ideas develop and collide. This element of negotiation in co-constructing meaning (Teo, 2019; Wenger, 1998) is key in considering the potential of dialogism in promoting linguistic belonging; when teachers give children the power to determine the meaning of text, they also empower the things children say and the ways they say them.

But what can dialogic approaches mean for multilingual children? Aukerman (2013) specifically highlights the opportunities for dialogic approaches to embrace multiple uses of language: "It is up to teachers to recognize that children's existing frames of reference are the primary raw material for new learning, rather than some static predetermined academic language" (633). Dialogic instruction offers opportunities for teachers to honor and recognize their students' frames of reference and ways of knowing. In dialogism, teachers take up student interpretations and question them in the process of making meaning (Teo, 2019; Nystrand, 1997), an approach that centers teacher interactive feedback on children and their construction of knowledge in ways that offer the opportunity to enhance multilingual children's *linguistic belonging*—again, their sense of being loved, valued, included, and recognized in positive ways for how they use and understand language. Beyond the idea of social belonging–the sense of having positive

relationships with others (Walton & Cohen, 2011) –linguistic belonging refers to children feeling cared for and included specifically in relation to their language: the ways they understand and the ways they express themselves.

Through dialogic approaches, teachers can engage in interactions that offer children positions of power. As they validate children's ideas and opinions, teachers implicitly and explicitly value how their students use and understand language (Author, Snell & Cushing, 2022). Dialogic instruction constitutes authentic listening, which places children as conversational equals to their teachers, and in which teachers can simultaneously admire the way children present their ideas and the ideas themselves; Cornelius and Herrenkohl (2004) found that, "Giving students higher positions of power … promotes the kinds of conversations in classrooms that help students challenge and refine their previous conceptions…" (490). Dialogism places value in children and their opinions; encourages, allows, and gives space for listening deeply to children; and asks teachers to follow up on children's thoughts; Dialogism gives teachers the opportunity to show children that they value their ideas and their language use.

Recent work has found that dialogic approaches are relevant and effective for multilingual children (Wilkinson, 2016), and support them in thinking creatively, performing well on standardized school measures, engaging in higher-order thinking, and succeeding as human beings (Teo, 2019; Snell & Cushing, 2022). Research clearly demonstrates the potential for dialogic approaches with regard to linguistic belonging, including of multilingual children, but what do teachers think about these ideas, and can enactment of dialogic approaches to embrace and enhance linguistic belonging be a reality? This study fills a gap in the literature in examining how teachers viewed dialogic approaches in relationship to their multilingual students, how they enacted dialogic approaches in linguistically diverse classrooms, and how multilingual children responded to such approaches.

The study explores the relationship between dialogic approaches and the belonging of multilingual children in two classrooms (grade 2, ages 6-8; grade 4, ages 7-9) during and after such instruction, recognizing how the use of dialogism enhances the sense of belonging of multilingual children. Through studying teacher plans and enactment and children's reactions during and after dialogic instruction, the study finds a close, interwoven relationship between linguistic belonging and dialogism for multilingual children. The following research questions are at the center of this work:

1. How did teachers plan for dialogic instruction, including their thoughts about multilingual students in relation to dialogic approaches?
2. What did dialogic instruction look like in action for teachers and students?
3. How did multilingual students reflect on times when dialogic approaches had been taken, and in what ways did this relate to their linguistic belonging?

Methods

I. Timeline

The data for this study was collected during the 2017-2018 U.S. academic school year (August 2017 through June 2018) as part of the author's doctoral dissertation work. As described below, analysis for the data was ongoing and therefore began at the same time as data collection and continued through September 2018. Member checks took place during October, November, and December 2018.

II. Selecting teachers and the participant-observer approach

The research for this qualitative study was collected in two ways: first, through approximately 400 hours of classroom observation in the second-and fourth-grade classrooms; and second, through one-on-one interviews with students and teachers. The teachers were chosen via detailed interviews conducted with a class of graduating teacher candidates; as a Doctoral student, the author served as a Teaching

Assistant (TA) for one of their 26 total classes. The author interviewed 20 candidates and selected these two teachers based on the following criteria: They were first-year teachers; they identified with dominant linguistic and racial backgrounds in the San Francisco Bay Area; they were interested in student multilingualism; they were willing to have the author spend extensive time in their classrooms.

Although the author was not a teacher or co-teacher in either classroom, she was present two to four days each week for much of the school year, and teachers and students developed strong relationships with her. Both teachers were novices. First-year teachers, on the whole, represent seven to ten percent of the teaching workforce (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2022), and Students of Color and low-income students—also the most likely to be multilingual—are even more likely to encounter novice teachers (Clotfelter, et al., 2005). Because of the author's role as a former TA, these teachers sometimes asked her for advice, including around curricular and behavioral choices for students. Through interviewing teachers repeatedly about their decision-making and thoughts regarding students' language, the author influenced the choices they made in the classroom about interacting with children as a participant-observer (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The participant-observer role allowed the author to work collectively with teachers in building reasoning, justification, and space for dialogic interactions. Interactions are defined as times when teachers and students traded talk turns in some format. An interaction could involve back-and-forth utterances, predominantly teacher utterances, or predominantly student utterances. Of course, the author's role in mentoring teachers meant that teachers in this study engaged in significantly more dialogic work, and work around supporting multilingual children, than typical teachers might.

At the onset of the research, the author knew no one at either school, with the exception of the two teachers; by the end of the study, she was familiar not only with the teachers and their students but with other teachers, children, and many family members and school administrators.

The initial goal of the research was to observe how dominant-background-identifying teachers interacted with multilingual children, including children who regularly used nondominant dialectical forms of English. The author searched for patterns in curricular choices that might promote the belonging of multilingual children. Connections with dialogism developed over the course of the study, as described below.

III.   *The classrooms and teachers' backgrounds and demographics*

The first focal classroom was a second-grade in a racially and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood in the suburban Bay Area of San Francisco, USA. The teacher, Connie, self-identified as Asian American. While in many international contexts and in many physical locations within the United States context, Asian-American identity is nondominant or minoritized, both according to local racial demographics and by her own definition, Connie belonged to the dominant culture within her school context and her community. She grew up near the school where she taught in a vibrant Chinese-American community. As a second-generation immigrant, she grew up speaking English and was surrounded by English speakers in and outside school. Connie described her linguistic background as "dominant," "English-dominant," and "privileged," and described her ethnic background as "majority" and "privileged." As a home English speaker, she said she thought and planned in English and that she spoke predominantly English outside of school. Since this was participatory research, the author committed to using participants' own definitions of their backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, Connie's background was dominant, privileged, and in the linguistic majority. In Connie's classroom, the children came from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including (in order of majority) Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Filipino) American, Central American, Mexican American, Caribbean American, Hawaiian, White European American, and African American. They used many languages, including multiple varieties of Tagalog,

Spanish, Tongan, Mandarin, Olelo, and Korean. Three of Connie's 22 students identified as monolingual, and the rest as multilingual.

The second classroom was a fourth grade in a racially and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood in the urban Bay Area. The teacher, Ava, self-identified as White. She described her own racial and ethnic experiences and background as "privileged," "dominant," "white," and "European," and her linguistic background as "monolingual," "dominant," "majority," and "privileged." By her own definition, she was in the majority both racially and linguistically within her school community (which, notably, had different racial demographics from Connie's community, with a much smaller Asian-identifying population and a much greater White European-heritage-identifying population). In Ava's classroom, the children came from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well, including (in order of majority), African American, White/European, Afro-Caribbean, Caribbean American, Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese) American, Central American, and Mexican American. They used many languages, including multiple varieties of English (both U.S.-dominant and nondominant varieties) and Spanish, Creole, Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean. Eight of Ava's 26 students identified as monolingual; and the rest as multilingual.

Importantly, in Ava's class, four African American students identified themselves as multilingual after reading and learning about varieties of language in school. The remaining three African American students identified themselves as monolingual. All Afro-Caribbean students identified as multilingual.

The course in which the author initially observed the two focal teachers recruited for this study was taught by Dr. Maren Aukerman, cited above, and included a specific focus on dialogism, including validating student interpretations and encouraging student sensemaking through non-evaluative, interactive feedback. Through this course, both focal teachers practiced giving students "wait time" to express thoughts, asking open-ended, authentic questions with more than one correct answer, accepting multiple interpretations, and encouraging children to elaborate on these interpretations, as well as allowing conflicting interpretations from children to exist in cooperation and conflict with one another. While dialogism was not the original intended focus of the observations, connections between times when teachers engaged in dialogism and times when multilingual students stated or expressed that they felt loved, cared for, or as if they belonged quickly emerged.

IV. *Recorded observations and interviews*

Recorded observations totaled approximately 400 hours. In both classrooms, the author observed reading and writing instruction as well as English Language Instruction (a time when students were grouped according to school-administered assessments) and Shared Reading (defined below). The author also occasionally observed mathematics instruction. Social studies instruction occurred within the context of literacy instruction in both classrooms. Details about the transcription of the observations and how themes emerged, are described below.

The author gathered qualitative information about teachers' beliefs and plans through four formal interviews, each lasting between 60 and 140 minutes. Informal interactions totaled 20 hours between both teachers. These interactions were driven by the author's growing understanding of the classrooms. During the first two interviews, the author asked teachers questions specifically about how they thought about language and multilingualism; once dialogism emerged as a theme, the author also asked questions about their views and plans regarding dialogism.

Formally interviewing children was challenging; each child in both classrooms was formally interviewed twice. The author made a commitment not to detract from instructional time or to interview

students during unstructured times (e.g., recess). For this reason, interviews were primarily about memories: times children felt they belonged, felt their teachers were proud of them, or felt they were validated. Unlike formal interviews, one-on-one interactions in which children shared their thoughts and feelings with the author were very common and occurred throughout the course of the study. The author had close relationships with every child–multilingual and monolingual–in Connie's classroom by the second month of study, and most children interacted with her whenever they were given opportunities to do so, such as in small group settings, during work time, etc. Of course, especially valuable to the research were comments made by multilingual children. In Ava's classroom, the author developed close relationships with all but one of the students by the third month of the study. Researcher-child interactions in both classrooms were primarily initiated by the children themselves.

V.   *What is dialogic and what is not?: Analysis and transcription*

Every day after collecting data, the author re-listened and took voice-recorded notes. This was part of an initial interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith, et al., 2009) in which participants' own words, thoughts, and actions drove meaning. As dialogism emerged as a theme in both interviews and my observations, the author developed a series of criteria to define dialogic interactions, informed by research in ethnographic transcription (Bucholtz 2000, 2007; Green, et al., 1997; Ochs, 1979) and work by Aukerman and Boyd (2019):

> "*Authentic/Open questions.* Questions that allow for a range of divergent authentic responses without a single "right" answer.
> *Uptake.* Follow-up questions or bids for information that seek to elicit elaboration, explanation, and/or justification.
> *Speculation and Reasoning words.* Words such as *might*, *if*, *because*, and *so* that indicate a language of possibility and/or link to reasoning." (p. 4)

In addition to these specific cues, dialogic instruction centered on student sense-making and reasoning about texts. Other orientations toward how language unfolds extant within dialogic research, such as teachers' awareness of "socially engaged talk" (Aukerman and Boyd, p.8) as well as teachers' value orientations toward unfolding thinking, were not considered. Additionally, teachers' awareness and enactment of more complex ideas surrounding how relationships and communities unfold around dialogic instruction, such as shared interpretive authority, were not explored.

Once dialogism emerged as a theme associated with the linguistic belonging of multilingual students, all the recorded and transcribed data was re-analyzed. Interactions were coded as dialogic when in more than fifty percent of the total interactions, teachers: (1) accepted answers to comprehension questions that were not conventionally correct in terms of their content (e.g., "The Earth is flat.") or (2) asked children to follow up on their thinking in ways that did not push toward a particular, conventionally "correct" response or toward a response that a teacher herself viewed as correct. Interactions coded as dialogic instruction were longer on average than other group interactions (described for contrast below in "Dialogism in Action").

Additionally, once dialogism emerged as a theme of the study, the author directed some teacher interview questions at the topic. Teachers additionally volunteered information about dialogic instruction. All of the information teachers provided about dialogism is described below in "Planning for Dialogism."

After identifying dialogism as a characteristic of the above moves, the author examined dialogic interactions specifically with multilingual students. Using open, axial coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2014), the author mined data by listening for themes and commonalities in dialogic interactions. This resulted in the

recognition of the role of dialogic instruction in multilingual children developing a feeling of linguistic belonging. Through examining interviews with children and teachers in each classroom in relationship to dialogic interactions, as well as through thematic examination of the interactions themselves (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Seidman, 2013), the author recognized that, repeatedly, interactions that were dialogic were positively viewed by multilingual students. Dialogism was associated with validation, belonging, pride, and love felt by multilingual children in these two classrooms and is explored extensively in the findings section.

Having defined and identified interactions that were dialogic in nature, and noting the relationship between these moments and positive interactions for multilingual students, the author made the decision to more closely examine the relationship between dialogic approaches and linguistic belonging through qualitative inquiry, leading to the development of the three research questions, which are also reflected in the organization of the study's findings. Identifying moments in each stage of the teaching process (planning, enactment, student reflection) and triangulating across these three categories allowed the author to reflect on exactly how dialogic pedagogy and linguistic belonging were related in these two classrooms.

V. Member Checks

The author led member checks (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with both teacher participants to verify coding and to write about teachers in ways that were true to their own interpretations of their teaching. Teachers are the experts of their own practice, and member checks enabled the author to determine whether she had perceptively identified and described patterns in their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, as well as to clarify misinterpretations in her understanding of their interactions. Yet member checks also influenced her views of teachers and their classrooms. It was impossible to attempt an objective view of teachers, as member checks—and her general strategies of classroom involvement—led her to develop close and ongoing relationships.

Findings and Discussion: Dialogic Approaches and Linguistic Belonging in Plans, in Action, and in Reflection

Table 1.1 summarizes how teachers considered and planned for dialogic instruction, what interactions about children's language use during dialogic instruction looked like in action, and how children described these interactions both during, shortly after, and in reflective interviews. The findings follow instances of dialogic teaching through three stages–teachers plans, enaction, and reflection, giving readers new insights into not just one part of the dialogic process, but all three stages–how teachers considered such interactions before they happened, exactly what they looked like in action, and how students responded and reflected. Following the introduction to the findings, findings for each stage of dialogic interaction are analyzed, including general information and a basic summary of what interactions looked like, quotations from interactions, and analysis. While several numerical items are shared for the purposes of understanding findings–such as how much qualitative evidence was analyzed in each part of the study–these numbers accompany detailed qualitative analysis of statements, comments, and questions from interviews with the teachers, classroom observations and interviews with students. Numerical summaries are presented to provide a portrait of the vast quantity of data gathered and to contextualize this data and not for the purposes of quantitative analysis.

Table 1.1 Dialogic instruction and linguistic belonging

Finding	Type of data	Total		Codes
		Ava	Connie	
Teacher plans: **Teachers viewed dialogic instruction as related to children's language use**	Interview answer when a teacher mentioned dialogic instruction or shared reading (prompted)	15 answers; Included in 75% of interviews	13 answers; Included in 55% of interviews	PL-Dialogic language
	One-to-one comments to researcher when a teacher mentioned dialogic instruction or shared reading in interviews (unprompted)	13 comments; included in 69% of interviews	7 comments; included in 57% of interviews	PL-Dialogic language
Enaction: **Teachers demonstrated value for their children's language use during dialogic instruction**	Interactions when teachers spoke with children in a group of 5 or more in a dialogic way (100% overlap with shared reading)	12 interactions	18 interactions	INT-public positivelang
Reflection: **Children described an increased sense of belonging related to their language use in relation to dialogic instruction**	Number of children speaking nondominant varieties who mentioned dialogic interactions as times when they felt specifically valued based on teachers' recognition of their language or the ways they used language	15 children; mentioned by multilingual students in relation to 67% of dialogic interactions	16 children; mentioned by multilingual students in relation to 50% of dialogic interactions	LB-dialogic

I.   *Planning for dialogism*

The first two rows in *Table 1.1* contextualize the findings within both teachers' plans for dialogic interactions in their classrooms.

1.   Dialogism: A valuable yet difficult approach

In analyzing interview utterances in which teachers described their plans for dialogic interactions, it is important to note that teachers had received training around dialogism (including leading mock conversations or rehearsals) in one Teacher Education course. Their foregrounding in dialogic methods and approaches included reading research demonstrating the value of considering multiple responses as correct and in emphasizing children's sensemaking during literacy instruction. For both of these teachers, their prior work with dialogism meant that they had an understanding of the practice developed through rehearsals, and that they believed in the effectiveness of valuing student sensemaking. Past research has identified the use of professional development in dialogism as very effective in terms of increasing dialogic interactions in classrooms (Teo, 2019; Wilkinson et al., 2016), as well as finding that increased use of

dialogic approaches resulting from professional development is advantageous for children's ability to defend their thinking and their success in school (Cui and Teo, 2020; Teo, 2019; Aerila et al., 2022).

In all the interviews with both teachers, when asked to describe, discuss, or consider dialogic instruction directly, the teachers described dialogism as a "unique" or "special" approach, and one that was "worthwhile", "worth it", or "good for children". Their descriptions align with research that recognizes the value of dialogic approaches for children in elementary school and older (Teo, 2019; Lefstein & Snell, 2013; Reznitskaya et al., 2009).

Despite having read research around dialogism and connected theory to practice through rehearsals, every single time the two teachers in the study were asked about dialogism, they both talked about difficulties with implementing dialogic approaches, including dialogism in the curriculum, or with their own ability to engage dialogically with their students. Indeed, teachers' struggles with conceptualizing, understanding, planning for, and engaging in dialogic approaches in the classroom are widespread and well-documented in the research literature, and these teachers' views align with past research (Cui & Teo, 2020; Wilkinsen et al., 2016; Sedova, 2021).

Past studies explore how teachers have little training in dialogic approaches overall and feel uncertain about dialogic approaches and unsure about how to enact them (Cui & Teo, 2020).Similarly, the teachers in this study described feeling "unsupported"–by the school, district, and other teachers in their grade-level clusters–in their goals to engage dialogically with the children in their classrooms. Neither teacher considered dialogism to be valued by district administration, officials, or within scripted curricula they were each given.

Ava, for instance, specifically said that she had to "work against" the administration and the curriculum she was "force-fed" to make room for dialogic instruction and approaches. Connie described similar constraints around engaging dialogically:

LMP: What do you take dialogic pedagogy to mean?
Connie: I think of letting the students drive what they think about the reading and the teacher going
          off of that and facilitating whatever conversations the students want to have.
LMP: And how do you feel about dialogic pedagogy?
Connie: It's really hard to do within the constraints we have and the curriculum the school
          provides.

Connie was interested in including dialogic approaches–she stated during interviews that engaging dialogically with students was "good for their identities"–yet the "constraints" of the curriculum the school provided her with made engaging dialogically difficult. Connie couldn't see dialogic approaches as related to district-prescribed student assessment–she believed that dialogism could not be located within the curriculum she was mandated to implement from her district, but that she must find time for dialogism outside of the school's norms.

It is common in the U.S. context for teachers like Connie to work within systems in which non-dialogic (teacher-centered or direct instructional) approaches are emphasized and considered most appropriate for multilingual learners. Researchers document that frequently teachers, schools, and districts can be influenced by "macro-level" policies that suggest non-dialogic approaches are best for improving literacy rates of multilingual learners when, in fact, such approaches actively work against not only multilingual language development but multilingual children's sense of belonging (Snell & Cushing, 2022). Aligned with this work, researchers engaged in ethnographies in classrooms similar to this study but focused on dialogism rather than multilingualism have found that teachers feel the need to modify dialogic

approaches to make space for these practices in their classrooms (Sedova, 2021). Repeated engaging in dialogic practice is a challenge; the statements made by these two teachers align closely with these findings.

For both teachers, dialogic interaction did not feel natural or easy and was wrought with challenges. Nevertheless, as described below, both teachers saw dialogism as important to their students' identities and planned for it in their classrooms. Ava found ways to make dialogic instruction work within curricular constraints, including and especially during shared reading time, as described below in "Enactment." Connie, too, used dialogic approaches during shared reading opportunities with her students.

2. Dialogism and Linguistic Belonging in teachers' plans and ideas

Both teachers saw dialogism as difficult yet important, but how did they view dialogic approaches in relation to children's language use? Both Ava and Connie identified dialogism as a space to prioritize children's opinions and ideas, which they also saw as related to prioritizing and celebrating children's language use; qualitative analysis demonstrates how they saw the concepts of children's interests, opinions, and ideas and children's language use as connected. Ava described this relationship in a quotation from an interview:

LMP: What do you take dialogic pedagogy to mean?

Ava: Not forcing comprehension outcomes that are premeditated in what's right and what's wrong and allowing comprehension to mean a lot of things…

LMP: Do you see dialogic pedagogy in relation to ideas about student language in the classroom?

Ava: I feel like since student voice is so central to dialogic pedagogy, they go hand in hand…when I think about valuing student language it's not only valuing the language that they're speaking in, but just the fact that they have a voice and I want to hear it as much as possible…

Ava described her understanding of dialogic pedagogy and how she saw it as intertwined with children's language use ("I feel like since student voice is so central in dialogic pedagogy, they go hand in hand"). She commented that she wanted not only to value the languages her students spoke, but the fact that they had a voice ("it's not only valuing the language that they're speaking in, but just the fact that they have a voice"). Finally, she identified hearing children's voices as much as possible as an explicit goal of dialogic instruction.

In a second quotation from the same interview, Ava further elaborated on the relationship between dialogism and language for her multilingual students:

Ava: It's not important to me that students are speaking perfect English, it's important that they know that's a construct that somebody made up that they can choose to use or not—that someone might force them to use at some point—but I do see them going hand in hand. It can be a little bit tough; I'm thinking with reading in particular. If we're reading a text that is written in a form of English or a language that students are not super comfortable with or flexible with, I can see that impeding their language use, like science texts in particular.

Ava identified that her students speaking dominant or standardized English was not the goal of dialogic instruction ("It's not important to me that students are speaking perfect English"), and she saw dialogism as a potential opportunity to share this view with her students ("it's important that they know that that's [dominant English, or "perfect English" as Ava describes it] a construct that somebody made up that they can choose to use or not"). She expressly describes dominant forms of English as "made up." Ava

does hint at issues of language and power ("that someone might force them to use at some point"), but she ultimately suggests that it should be up to her students to "choose to use" dominant English or not. Yet Ava also identifies a dilemma inherent within her wishes to help students recognize the role of dominant English and its limitations ("It can be a little bit tough, I'm thinking, with reading in particular if we're reading a text that is written in a form of English or a language that students are not super comfortable with or flexible with. I can see that impeding their language use like science texts in particular"). Concerns about what might be right or wrong dominated Ava's ideas about dialogism, particularly in relation to children's views about their own language use. Perhaps in relation to this, she planned for dialogism during times that were "low stakes"—times during which her students were not being measured or assessed by outside forces such as the district or even the school. The modification of dialogism to take place during specific times aligns with teacher's historical approaches in making modifications to house dialogic approaches within their classroom practice (Cui and Teo, 2020; Sedova, 2021), as Ava did.

Connie also discussed the relationship between children's thoughts and their language within dialogic interaction, drawing an explicit link between valuing children's ideas and valuing their language use. She went on to note the importance of showing children both that they are allowed to share their opinions and that they are allowed to speak in ways that feel most comfortable to them:

LMP: Do you see the ideas we talked about related to dialogic pedagogy as related to language at all?

Connie: Yeah, because I feel like that sets a certain perspective that the students have on how much their thoughts and the language they are using are valued. If it's allowed—if they are allowed to jump in and give their opinion in whatever way they would like to—I think that shows them that what they think is important and the way they talk about it is important and that they're allowed to speak in whatever way they would like to.

Here, Connie is perhaps more explicit than Ava in highlighting a relationship between children being allowed to share and to speak "in whatever way they would like to"–the relationship between children's thoughts and their language. Both teachers described dialogic instruction in their plans as an opportunity during which multiple ways of using language could be welcomed and accepted—when they could celebrate the ways their students spoke as students offered their opinions and ideas about a text.

II. *Dialogism in action*

The snapshot from *Table 1.1* contextualizes the findings related to this section, which discusses when and where teachers made space for dialogic interaction, what dialogic interactions looked like in action, and how teachers used this time to validate children's ways of using language, their ideas, and their contributions. This data offers a window into what was analyzed qualitatively in relation to the broader set of data.

Finding	Type of data	Total		Codes
		Ava	**Connie**	
***Enaction*: Teachers demonstrated value for their children's language use during dialogic instruction**	Interactions when teachers spoke with children in a group of 5 or more in a dialogic way (100% overlap with shared reading)	12 interactions	18 interactions	INT-public positivelang

1. **When did teachers enact dialogic approaches?: Shared reading**

In a qualitative analysis of their plans above, teachers described the struggle to find ways to include dialogic approaches within the constraints of teacher-centered, direct-instruction-heavy curricula, aligning with many teachers' views and experiences that are documented in the research (Sedova, 2021; Cui & Teo, 2020). Yet, one specific practice–a time of the day that was required as a mandated curricular segment in both districts, allowed more flexibility for teachers. This was a time that I witnessed, on average, twice per week in each classroom and was called "shared reading."

Shared reading is an element of the elementary curriculum that has become increasingly common in classroom schedules and is designated by districts and schools as a time when children and teachers share attention on a particular text (Parkes, 2023). In these two teachers' classrooms, this was both a time to share decoding (e.g., to literally read a text together aloud on the board or in books or to be read to from a text) and a time to share comprehension of a text, including re-reading, critical reading, and close reading of children's literature.

Importantly, during shared reading, the goals of "learning to read" (e.g., decoding a text) were lightened for children, focusing on understanding and considering the content of the text. In both classrooms, the teacher read aloud (with or without children reading along) during shared reading, meaning that all children in the classrooms, including those who could not decode the text, had access to discussing and describing the text, as all children in both classrooms had full grade-level receptive English skills. During shared reading, the teacher in both classrooms always had a copy of the book being considered, and children followed along with their own copies of the book, with a copy of the book on the Smartboard screen or by listening and/or viewing pictures in the teacher's copy of the text.

Shared reading took place in each classroom one to three times per week, depending on the structure of other literacy instruction. There was no pattern as to whether shared reading occurred once, twice, or three times in a given week in either classroom, though instances of shared reading increased over the course of the academic year in both classrooms, specifically during the last month of the academic year, when shared reading occurred during every visit the author made to both classrooms.

All present children participated in shared reading at all times. Not all children spoke, but children were never told to sit out or asked to leave the room, and shared reading did not occur during times when some children were removed from the room for specific purposes (e.g., speech therapy). All multilingual and monolingual children who were present in school participated in all instances of shared reading. Therefore, the ratios of monolingual to multilingual children were identical (or close to identical based on absences) to those of children in the class. Participation was fixed with the exception of differences in absence patterns.

One key difference distinguished shared reading from other times of the day. Much of instruction during the rest of the day–whether math, social studies, literacy, or even creative arts was characterized by I-R-E patterns of participation (Zemel & Koschmann, 2011) and was primarily teacher-directed direct instruction (MacIver & Kemper, 2002). During this instruction, teachers initiated (I) interaction with students with close-ended test questions, i.e., questions with a single or discreet set of correct answers; students responded (R), and teachers evaluated (E) this response. Two examples follow:

Connie: So when we subtract, what do we do with this 10?
Child: We regroup the ten.
Connie: Right, we regroup it.

Ava:	So, what would be the correct way to say this sentence?
Child:	We aren't going to play basketball anymore.
Ava:	Correct. Gonna is not a word.

As in these examples, during the vast majority of instruction that was not shared reading, teachers led instruction with test questions, speaking more than children did and directing ideas toward their own (teachers') understandings or standardized understandings and definitions. Few exceptions occurred to this approach, other than teachers asking students for occasional opinions on non-academic topics (e.g., What color background would you like for your published story?).

Of course, I-R-E instruction was still defined as interaction since students still spoke, yet it was not *dialogic* interaction. Two more examples illustrate the IRE patterns characteristic of all classroom interaction that was not shared reading. Importantly, other kinds of literacy instruction (e.g., reader's workshop, book club) did not have the dialogic qualities of shared reading, as the examples below illustrate:

Ava:	And what should we do during reading group?
Jason:	Read our books quietly.
Ava:	Correct.

Connie:	How does the character feel? Happy or sad?
Children:	Sad.
Connie:	Yes. You used the book to tell.

Connie:	Was it right or wrong to exclude the girl who just joined the school?
Amanda:	That was mean. We shouldn't do that.
Connie:	That's right. It's not kind to exclude someone.

Shared reading thus differed from all other instruction throughout the day, both instruction in literacy and other subjects, when children were responsible for decoding any text to which they had access. In Connie's classroom, during spelling work, writing work, book club, and "reading," children read to themselves or aloud to the teacher, with the exception of instructions themselves being read aloud. In Ava's classroom, children read almost exclusively to themselves during these times, including assignment instructions in math, reading, and social studies, as well as any text associated with these learning times. Yet, during shared reading, students were not required to decode any text, and teachers focused their time on discussion about the texts that they read to (or with) children.

As I analyzed moments students associated with belonging or feeling cared about and moments when they contributed most to classroom discussion, a significant pattern emerged. With the exception of public honoring (e.g., assemblies, certificates), these moments occurred during "shared reading."

I have established what did not occur during shared reading—a focus on decoding text and direct instruction—but what did happen? Teachers read aloud to or with students, and they *stopped to ask questions*. Some of these questions were test questions focused on conventional comprehension or attention (e.g., Did you hear what I just read? So, who are the characters so far?), but many of the questions were different. They were open-ended, inviting children to respond, to defend their reasoning, and to bring their ideas into dialogue with one another and with the teacher. These questions positioned students as colleagues, as equals in shared meaning-making around a text. In short, these were dialogic moments. Six questions from shared reading across six months in each of the two classrooms classroom illustrate the approaches characteristic of shared reading:

Ava:

How do you see your skin color?

What do you think is going on inside the character's head?

Black lives matter. That says a lot. What does it mean to you?

This cover has so much going on. I look at it and it makes me think. What does it make you think?

We use the word "unhoused" instead of "homeless". What do you think is different about those two words?

I love this part of the book! What do you love about it?

Connie:

What do you see in this picture?

What tells you about the character's feelings? What does it mean to you to be proud?

How can you tell that he wants to get those shoes?

There's going to be a big decision in this book. Just look at the cover, what do you think the decision could be about?

If you made a mural of your homeland, what would be on it?

Still more exciting, I identified an additional pattern during these dialogic moments: during shared reading teachers offered non-evaluative replies, brought children's ideas into dialogue with one another, and demonstrated consideration of the content of children's answers. Replies that I only heard during shared reading included the following:

Ava:

Hmmm…

What do you make of that

Tell me more

I want to see inside your thinking

Connie:

Tell me what's going on in your head

Wow, I've never felt that way

I want to hear more about that

Can you tell me the clues that got you to this idea That seems really special to you/your family

In essence, teachers found a space for dialogism during shared reading with their students. The organization of shared reading, exactly what some specific interactions during shared reading looked like, and the ways in which it facilitated both dialogue and linguistic belonging for students are described below.

2. *What did dialogic approaches look like in action?*

In my qualitative observations, during dialogic interactions, teachers asked open-ended questions, inviting children to respond. Teachers asked questions that started with "What do you think about…" "What do you see…." or "What can you tell…." "What do you notice?". They pointed to specific places in the text (e.g., "What do you notice about this phrase?"), but instead of seeking a specific response ("Why does the character say this?"), they were interested in hearing how their students made meaning of the texts.

During shared reading, teachers encouraged students to interact with one another and demonstrated valuing their students' ways of using language. I counted talk turns during all shared reading interactions and compared them to a random sample of other interactions throughout the rest of the instruction; multilingual children had more talk turns during dialogic full-class sessions than during other times of the day.

Additionally, both teachers were more accepting of children's choices around phrasing, word choice, and grammar during dialogic instruction. Whereas during other times of the day, teachers stopped to comment on the varietal feature (e.g., We don't say Aint, Gonna isn't a word), or rephrased children's use of spoken language to match dominant English norms (You should say "I am going to go to the park, not "I'ma go to the park."), during shared reading, teachers welcomed children's phrasing and ideas without comment or correction. As they described in their plans, during dialogic interactions in both classrooms, teachers' interactions with children about children's language use emphasized that teachers saw children's ideas, opinions, and ways of expressing themselves as valuable.

A dialogic interaction in Connie's class demonstrates her openness to children's responses and interpretations during shared reading:

Connie:	Dr. Martin Luther King: What kind of person do you think he was? What was he like? Was he good? Was he bad? Was he brave? Was he not brave? Scared, why?...
Amanda:	Respectful.
Connie:	Okay, he's respectful because….
Berni:	He is respectful because he doesn't judge other people by their skin color because, well, no one should even be judging people about their skin coloring. It's not right for them to say that White and like… well in the past it sounds like they're trying to just say that: White is good and Black is like other people. And that's why it makes me feel bad.
Connie:	Why does it make you feel like that?
Berni:	Because Black skin coloring getting not treated—they should get treated the same as light-skinned people. It doesn't matter.

In this interaction, Connie allowed her students to express their ideas in ways that did not align with the conventional answer she was seeking, asking follow-up questions regarding student thinking. When Amanda told her that Dr. King was "respectful," despite the fact that Connie herself would have been more likely to say "worthy of respect" or "respected," she asked for clarification and explanation, just as she did for all the answers the children provided, moving past Amanda's specific phrasing. Then, she invites Berni into the dialogue. Rather than evaluating or offering an answer herself, Connie calls on Berni. This was one of the longest talk-turns that Berni had in my entire bank of transcribed data. He shares his reasoning around respecting people regardless of their skin color and offers a moralistic approach, which Connie follows up by asking more about.

Yet while Connie allowed and invited multiple perspectives, she did not necessarily bring them into dialogue with one another—even during dialogic interactions, comments batted between Connie and her students. Examining the qualities of dialogism within my coding scheme, these interaction fit definitions of dialogic instruction, but they did not necessarily possess all qualities of dialogism—Connie didn't ask for probing questions, and while she encouraged children to back up their reasoning, she didn't provide supports for this reasoning.

Similarly, Ava, in a dialogic interaction with her students about a bibliography of Jesse Jackson, allowed multiple student interpretations of the text, though, again, the interaction shifted between Ava and the children rather than among children:

Ava:	Eric, what's your inference?
Eric:	He doesn't meet many White people.
Ava:	He doesn't meet many White people…
George:	I think Jesse knows not as much White people.
Ava:	Mmhmm. Ahmed?
Ahmed:	Jesse only knows people the same race as him.
Ava:	And George.
George:	He never met a White person.
Ava:	Oh interesting. Can you say more about how you're drawing that inference?
George:	He wanted to invite Jesse to his home but he didn't.
Ava:	So, you're using what came right before these words to make that inference. You are more than welcome to do that. You can use all of the context that you've read in your book. Anything that you know so far to make an inference about the kind of thing the character said.

Ava welcomed ways of offering answers and answers themselves that didn't match the conventional "correct" answers to her questions ("Oh interesting …"). She encouraged further student response rather than asking the children to match her interpretation of the text with nonevaluative phrases like "Hmmm…" She brought the students into dialogue with one another by calling on George rather than offering her own interpretation or evaluation of what was being said.

On one of the last days of school, Ava presented a wordless picture book to her fourth graders, the text Journey, and led a shared reading session–a dialogic interaction–around the text. An excerpt from the interaction and an analysis of Ava's approach follows:

Ava:	And my other question is why is the book called *Journey*. Why is the only word in the book the word, "journey"?...
George:	The book is called *Journey* because it's like in the book they would be going to an adventure.
Ava:	It's like the girl going to?
George:	An adventure?
Ava:	To an adventure. Okay, let's do Randall and then Ahmed and then Lucas.
Randall:	Umm, I think it's called *Journey* because the little girl makes her own journey like….
Ahmed:	The book does have words. Journey is the word!
Lucas:	You can imagine what journey she'd be on because we can imagine using our imagination what's gonna happen in the journey.

Unlike the instances of correction above, Ava repeated a student's prepositional use ("To an adventure") that did not match dominant English phrasing (on an adventure) in her response. Whereas throughout the day she emphasized learning and becoming fluent in dominant uses of English, during shared reading, she embraced her students' own uses of English, leveraging them to get at students' ideas. This short conversation includes another example–Ava did not comment when Lucas said "in the journey" rather than "on the journey", instead she invited more students to share. Notably, her students are excited about the text, exclaiming about the word journey and rushing to share their interpretations. The next section of the findings will focus on students' reflections during and after shared reading and what these approaches meant to them.

The findings in this section on enactment demonstrate that during dialogic interactions of shared reading, unlike during other times of the day, teachers were accepting of children's linguistic variation, styles, and differences, including those that did not adhere to dominant English norms. Some studies have

found that instruction like this is less commonly offered to multilingual children than to their monolingual peers (Langeloo et al., 2019); in these classrooms, because of the shared nature of 'shared reading' time, multilingual and monolingual children both had access to instruction that was dialogic in nature. The interactions that occurred during shared reading were influential in children's views of themselves and their language use, as described below.

III.   Reflections on dialogic approaches and linguistic belonging

Shared reading emerged through thematic analysis by re-listening to hours of recorded data as a time when children felt they could share about themselves and their cultural backgrounds. Whereas no comments from multilingual or monolingual children (during or after shared reading or in interview-prompted questions) mentioned negative associations with shared reading, many multilingual children specifically offered comments about shared reading, demonstrating the sense that it was safe to be themselves and that ideas and values from their home lives were welcome in the classroom during these times. Three examples follow in the "Shared reading and children's Voices" section.

When considering the relationships between dialogic practices and linguistic belonging for multilingual children, it is apparent that dialogic interactions were not solely responsible for enhancing their linguistic belonging during these times. Rather than suggesting a causal relationship, my findings emphasize that during shared reading (a time when teachers used dialogic approaches), multilingual children spoke more frequently than during other times of the day, as demonstrated by comparing interactions during direct instruction and shared reading.

Multilingual children both identified shared reading as a specific time (in comparison to other times) when they felt they were included and welcomed *and* more commonly discussed positive associations with shared reading than they did with other interactions.

Multilingual children in both classrooms described ideas and feelings related to belonging when they discussed these interactions with me more frequently than in relation to other classroom activities. Multilingual children cited feelings of belonging in relationship to 67% of dialogic interactions (during or after the interaction, referring directly to the interaction) in Ava's classroom and 50% of dialogic interactions in Connie's classroom, whereas during and following direct instruction, multilingual children only cited feelings of belonging 10% of the time in Ava's classroom and 21% of the time in Connie's classroom.

Again, rather than offering evidence, these quantitative data provide context for qualitative findings about shared reading and how children reflected on the shared reading experience:

Multilingual children shared treasured memories from these interactions, as evidenced in interviews sometimes months afterward. In fact, these findings align with contemporary researchers' findings that dialogic approaches have the potential to enhance students' sense of belonging (Aerila et. al, 2022). Details, quotations, and analysis of these findings are in each of the sections below, which all relate to children's responses and reflections on shared reading.

The snapshot from *Table 1.1* below contextualizes findings in this section:

Finding	Type of Data	Total		Codes
		Ava	Connie	
Reflection: **Children described an increased sense of belonging related to their language in relationship to dialogic instruction**	Number of children speaking nondominant varieties who mentioned dialogic interactions as times when they felt specifically valued based on teachers' recognition of their language or the ways they used language	15 children; mentioned by multilingual students in relation to 67% of dialogic interactions	16 children; mentioned by multilingual students in relation to 50% of dialogic interactions	LB-dia logic

1. **Shared Reading and belonging in children's voices**

Based on an analysis of all full-class sessions, children who spoke non-dominant varieties had more talking turns during dialogic full-class sessions than they did during non-dialogic sessions. The simple fact that their voices were more present during these interactions indicates the potential for enhanced belonging because of the role representation plays in belonging (Langeloo et al., 2019).

In addition to simply hearing their voices more, the lack of correction during dialogic interactions meant that children who spoke non-dominant varieties described feeling more included within the community, respected, and valued both during and after such interactions. They believed their teachers cared about what they thought, that they were proud of them, and were interested in their well-being. Both Ava's and Connie's multilingual students mentioned looking forward to shared reading. As Ava's African American student, Keyshawna, said, "When we do shared reading, we feel like we are all part of the class because no matter how we talk or how we say it, Ava says it's ok." Keyshawna specifically recognized that multiple varietal use ("how we talk or how we say it") was accepted during shared reading.

Amanda, in Connie's class said, "we can say it how we think it. In shared reading, we don't have to fix it.". The idea of monolingual students not having to "fix" any part of themselves to be worthy of the shared reading conversation was pervasive during shared reading. This kind of sharing and openness meant increased responsiveness and attention to class material during dialogic instruction. These findings align with research that multilingual children benefit from instruction that is specific to them, that respects their ideas, and that honors their ways of thinking (Ferrada, 2019; Snell & Cushing, 2022; Karchava et al., 2018; Aerial et al., 2022).

Berni, in Connie's Room, said, "Shared reading is like a time when we can talk about the language that we speak at home, like Spanish." Aella said, "Shared reading is like about us, like about our own home." Shared reading was not just a time when students' use of language was accepted. Ava's student said, "Shared reading tells us about all kinds of people, like unhoused people." Dayvon, an African American student in Ava's room, said, "in shared reading, it's really Black Lives Matter." During shared reading– children's lives really did matter. This idea of mattering contributed to the greater sense of freedom, choice, and investment during shared reading as compared to other interactions throughout the school day. This is evidenced below in an interview with Connie's student, Jacinda:

LMP: Do you have a happy memory of Room 11 this year?
Jacinda: My favorite memory was when Ms. Connie got to read to us.
LMP: Read to you like directions or read to you like from a book?

Jacinda: Yeah. Like a book, like shared reading.
LMP: Why was that special?
Jacinda: Because she got to read to us and we got to listen and then we talked about it.

As mentioned above, multilingual children talked about shared reading afterward in casual conversation in both classrooms, citing that the time was a space for having the opportunity to listen, to talk, to be heard, and to be themselves.

2.   Shared Reading and belonging in teacher's voices

When I asked teachers to describe shared reading time, they talked about looking forward to this time, the children's excitement, and the fact that they felt a greater sense of choice surrounding their curriculum and texts during shared reading. Several examples illustrate this finding:

LMP: Can you talk about shared reading a little?
Connie: I really like that because it felt very natural to do…it didn't feel so much like a lesson even though it was a lesson and they were always excited for shared reading like they always wanted to see what book they were reading. I liked hearing what the kids had to say, too.
LMP: How did you feel about the books that you chose?
Connie: Some of the books were in the curriculum I was using but some of the books I tried to change it and pick ones that worked and then kind of toward the end …just trying to read as many culturally relevant books as I could because there was no longer a teaching point it was just reading for the sake of learning about other people.

Connie commented that shared reading "felt natural" to her and her students, that her students were always excited about shared reading time, and that she appreciated hearing their ideas ("I liked hearing what the kids had to say, too"). Connie also identified that shared reading allowed the opportunity to select "culturally relevant" books. She tied this to dialogic instruction as a space where children could learn "for the sake of learning about other people." Interestingly, Connie identified "reading for the sake of learning about other people" as pedagogically distinct from the idea of a "teaching point," perhaps alluding to the tension she described between the curricula mandated by her district and the curricular choices she herself might make, as well as those that might be most beneficial to multilingual and multicultural children in her class.

Ava understood shared reading as a time when children who struggled with dominant English language use and social status could feel they belonged to the class and when their language, contributions, and ideas were most valued.

Ava: I love it. I loved reading aloud. The only thing I had hesitations about was, "Is this too babyish for them?" which was why I chose to read *Wonder* over an extended period of time because I was like they're gonna get sucked in—everyone loves this book. And they did love it… And I've talked about it with you before but really one of the few opportunities where a kid like Camilla can contribute. Oh yeah, it was an area where I had choice…I love read aloud. And I love also that along the same lines as the choice I didn't have to follow someone else's curriculum. Don't get me wrong I'm super thankful for units of study but just being able to do what I wanted and what I liked to talk about and what my kids wanted, what they were into and wanted to talk about. They were so into reading *Joelito's Big Decision*. They loved the book. They loved anything that talked about controversial stuff or anything that they saw as relevant. I'm glad that they brought it up.

Like Connie, Ava described her feeling of choice surrounding curriculum during this time as freeing ("it was an area where I had choice," "I didn't have to follow someone else's curriculum."). She was interested in her students' bringing up the importance of shared reading time in relation to their belonging in their interviews with me ("I'm glad that they brought it up"). She specifically described dialogic instruction as a time when she was able to privilege and bring forward the voices of Camilla ("really one of the few opportunities where a kid like Camilla can contribute"). Ava recognized her students' appreciation for reading aloud ("They loved the book") and, similar to Connie's suggestion that she had more choice over curricula during shared reading, that she loved being able to "do what I wanted and talk about what my kids wanted". Finally, and again like Connie, Ava noted that shared reading was a time to work through complex issues related to social justice in her classroom curriculum ("They loved anything that talked about controversial stuff or anything that they saw as relevant") and cited a text related to language, race, power, as well as to activism, read by her students during shared reading ("The were so into *Joelito's Big Decision*"). These findings align with research which finds dialogic approaches to be participative, characterized by collective approaches and to connect to children's home lives (Ferrada, 2019).

Conclusions, Significance, and Reflections: Dialogic Approaches and Linguistic Belonging

The findings above examine dialogic interactions as they are planned by teachers, enacted in classrooms, and reflected upon by multilingual children in two U.S. classrooms. This ethnographic study examines the process of these interactions from start to finish with two groups of teachers and children. The research fills important gaps in the literature: it is both ethnographic and multi-staged; it offers a close-up, detailed view of dialogic interactions with teachers and their multilingual students from start to finish. The study is unique as well in its impact on teachers' approaches. Through repeatedly conversing with the author around dialogic approaches and finding space for dialogism in the fixed curricular confines of their settings, the teachers in this study were able to show respect and honor their multilingual students' ideas, voices, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves.

Dialogic approaches, including those intended to enhance the linguistic belonging of multilingual students, were difficult for both teachers to enact in the confines of the conventional curriculum structure imposed in both classrooms, yet shared reading made these approaches possible. Since the author observed not just shared reading but entire school days, she was able to consider in detail the differences between the majority of the curriculum, which emphasized direct instruction, and shared reading. According to the criteria for dialogic interactions, the shared reading process was organized dialogically, with demonstrable respect for students' ways of using language and their ideas. This environment of shared meaning-making, respect, and honoring of multiple ways of speaking and sharing ideas, including those that were familiar or comfortable for multilingual students, facilitated multilingual children's linguistic belonging in comparison with the Initiation-Response-Evaluation patterns the author observed elsewhere in the curriculum.

Whereas at all other times during the day, teachers evaluated their children from a fixed conventional perspective, guiding them toward correct or conventional answers, during dialogic interactions, teachers demonstrated respect for children's own voices, ideas, and ways of thinking, being, knowing, and expressing themselves. These moments of respect were understandably described by the children as associated with a sense of belonging–an invaluable contribution to research on praxis when considering education in the United States' multilingual, multicultural context. This perspective takes on international significance when considering multilingual classrooms across the world, in which the language, variety, or dialect children speak is not dominant. The study highlights a significant finding: the association between dialogic approaches used by dominant-language-identifying teachers and the feelings of respect, belonging, honor, and positivity experienced by their multilingual non-dominant-speaking

students. Specifically, the reiteration of this finding across both classrooms throughout an entire academic year of ethnographic research speaks to the incredible potential for practical enactment of dialogic approaches that can be applied worldwide and across contextual and cultural barriers.

A notable finding of the study was the alignment between the two classrooms in terms of the patterns around dialogic interaction. At the start of the process, the ways the two teachers talked about their plans aligned. Both believed dialogism was connected to language and belonging, and both believed dialogism was valuable to include as part of the curriculum. Both teachers wanted to engage dialogically with their students–they sought to value and honor both their students' voices and the ways they voiced their ideas and to allow for their students to interpret texts and to defend those interpretations. Because of their shared training, both Connie and Ava had a sense of what strategies to enact when engaging dialogically.

Though Connie had perhaps more curricular leeway than Ava due to her district having fewer scripted timed sessions, she and Ava both believed that including dialogic interaction as part of the regular school day was a challenge. When asked about including dialogism, both teachers described challenges around the practicality of finding time for action and engaging in the practice itself.

Fascinatingly, both teachers also made space for dialogic interaction–and both did so during the shared reading space. Shared reading seemed to naturally support students' self-expression without teacher judgment despite the classrooms' different districts, demographics, and ages. When shared reading occurred, both teachers engaged dialogically with students, including placing student ideas in dialogue with one another, honoring student presentation of material, including in students' own languages and dialects, and avoiding the back-and-forth I-R-E pedagogies that dominated the rest of the day in both classrooms.

Additionally, the dialogic conversations that occurred in each classroom centered around critical topics that were important to children. In Connie's classroom, the second-graders interacted dialogically during shared reading on the the topics of immigration, poverty, social assistance, colonization, language and language barriers, cultural affinity, and protests. In Ava's classroom, the fourth graders discussed the Black Lives Matter movement, life as an unhoused person, inclusion, racism, immigration, and colonization. Though the list of topics differed slightly, in each classroom the topics for shared reading were representative of the children's affiliations and experiences.

Dialogic interaction during shared reading was critical shared reading–reading about crucial topics where children had the chance to be experts. During these times, teachers in both classrooms brought ideas about language dominance into conversation–and these were the only times observed by the researcher when such critical topics were broached.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, but even more significantly, multilingual children in both classrooms described shared reading in similarly positive terms. In Ava's classroom, in which more children spoke Spanish, a variety of Asian languages, and nondominant varieties of English at home, children reflected that they could "be [them]self " during shared reading, that they were "accepted", that it was "okay to say it how I say it". In Connie's classroom, which had few children with varied dialects of English, but in which the vast majority of children spoke languages other than English at home, children shared about their own linguistic backgrounds and family history during shared reading, and afterward talked about feeling proud of their families and who they were.

As Ava once commented, "Children often see and hear that 'One of the easiest ways to tell whether or not someone is a "real American" is the language that you hear them speaking.' " In many classrooms,

the ways in which children use multiple languages–and how teachers respond to this language use–has major impacts on their feelings of belongingness–of being "real" students.

This qualitative study finds that when teachers recognize all students' contributions; accept and encourage multiple varieties of English use; and respect and honor children's answers, these dialogic approaches are described by multilingual children as times when they feel care and love, a sense of belonging, and pride in themselves as members of their classroom and school communities.

This work finds the use of dialogic instruction to be significant in forwarding, recognizing and highlighting the narratives of children who speak non-dominant languages and varieties of language. It centers us on the belonging of these children and offers a specific approach that—if the findings of this small study hold on a larger scale—has the opportunity to provide spaces to belong in classroom discourses for multilingual children across the world.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite filling a gap in the research in examining dialogism and linguistic belonging of multilingual children from planning, through enactment, and to reflection for both students and teachers, this study was limited in a number of ways. Because it is not possible to ask second- and fourth-grade children about their views on linguistic belonging or dialogic approaches, nor is there a standardized quantitative measure of belonging for elementary schoolers, the study can only find associations between elementary school children's feelings of belonging related to their language use and the use of dialogic approaches, rather than claiming causal relationships. The study demonstrates that when multilingual children engage in dialogic interactions with their teachers, they reflect on these experiences positively, including being able to articulate that their ways of speaking and using language felt respected, as well as their ideas honored. But the study cannot claim that dialogic approaches result in belonging for multilingual elementary students. As research in belonging is expanded, and continuing ethnographic studies examine translanguaging and languaging pedagogies and perspectives, approaches for ethnographic research with elementary schoolers in linguistic belonging may emerge. Future classroom ethnographies, for instance, might examine translanguaging and linguistic belonging for elementary school children, reflecting on associations between the two.

Similarly, this study was limited in its scope. Such an ethnographic work could not occur in thousands of classrooms across the country, and therefore the claims made here about associations between linguistic belonging and dialogic approaches apply only to a narrow scope: two classrooms with first-year teachers using dominant English in United States Northern California schools.

Concurrent research suggests that approaches toward dialogism might have different effects in urban classrooms, or in classrooms in other environments and contexts (e.g. Fujii, 2015). Indeed, it seems certain that in an environment with differing language ideologies and patterns of dominance, dialogic approaches may have varied effects. Future research might examine dialogism and linguistic belonging in with non-dominant-identifying teachers, or within environments in which students' and teachers' language identifications match.

Bounding dialogic interactions in this ethnographic context defied the very nature of these interactions themselves, and rendered quantitative comparisons less useful from the perspective of action-oriented research. Since dialogic interactions have been bounded and compared quantitatively in past research (Alexander, 2018)), such an approach might prove useful in future research within a different context, and could provide more conclusive causal results which could deeply enhance the ethnographic reflections and associations detailed here.

Nevertheless, this small study and the dialogic approaches enacted within found profound moments of belonging for multilingual elementary-schoolers, and deep-seated reflection and thoughtful attempts at enactment in their teachers' teaching. Teachers planned thoughtfully for dialogic interaction with their students, despite the many barriers they faced; they enacted dialogic approaches–if not as often as they hoped, during a specific time throughout the year. This study answers a gap in the current research, offering portraits of dialogic interactions for multilingual children in three stages–planning, enactment, and reflection. It gives an ethnographic lens through which to view specific moments in which dialogism comes alive for multilingual children with their dominant-language teachers–a common pattern within United States schools–, and examines how these children reflect on and describe such moments in their own words and ideas. And this study examines this data in context: within the perspective of research informed by hours spent in each classroom. Through documenting and tracking dialogic instruction, and studying both teacher plans and enactment and children's reactions during and after, the research finds a close, interwoven relationship between linguistic belonging and dialogic approaches with multilingual children. It holds significance in highlighting the lives of multilingual children: their ideas, thoughts, experiences, and the ways in which they—and we as educators—make sense of the world and find their place within it.

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