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Dual Language Education and the Erasure of Chicax, Latinx, and Indigenous Mexican Children: A Call to Re-imagine (and Imagine Beyond) Bilingualism

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On November 8, 2016, California voters decided to end an 18-year period of restrictive language policy. Reflecting a dramatic shift in the statewide consensus around bilingual education, a supermajority of the state's voters (78%) approved Proposition 58, the "Multilingual Education" initiative, which repealed key sections of a 1998 law that had mandated English immersion—or "English only"—as the default instructional model for all students classified as "English learners." Although this received little attention in the national media given the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, it marks an historic turning point for bilingual education. Among other things, this new law will likely lead to the intensified growth of bilingual programs, in general, and of *dual language* bilingual programs, in particular.

Because language policy trends in California overlap with and often foreshadow similar trends nationwide, I want to take this opportunity to voice some concerns about students who may very well continue to be marginalized even as access to bilingual education increases—Chicax¹, Latinx, and indigenous Mexican children. In particular, I wish to highlight how the ideological process of *erasure* (Irvine & Gal, 2000) functions to marginalize these children in dual language education. By way of introduction, I situate my concerns in relation to California's history with bilingual education, and I take the liberty of sharing my own experience making sense of language ideologies within this historical context. I end with a call to both re-imagine bilingualism and imagine beyond bilingualism as we seek to cultivate equitable and socially just dual language education policies for these children.

Bilingual Education in California: Language, Race, and Ideologies

I was a bilingual elementary school teacher in Los Angeles, California when Proposition 227, also known as the "English for the Children" initiative, effectively outlawed bilingual education statewide in 1998. After 25 years of bilingual education in California, Proposition 227 made it illegal for students classified as "English learners" to receive bilingual instruction except by parental request through a special waiver process. As some scholars have noted, the approval of this legislation had as much to do with race as it did with language (Dueñas-González, 2001; Hill, 2001). At the time, California was witnessing a resurgence of racist and xenophobic anti-immigrant rhetoric and related legislation in response to the continued increase in the state's Latinx population. Discursive representations of Latinx immigrants at the time often combined notions of race and ideas about language in ways that reinforced and perpetuated racist and xenophobic attitudes and behaviors (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Álvarez, 2000; Santa Ana, 2002). In fact, hegemonic ideas about language and race had become so intertwined in the public discourse that language, as Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, and Asato (2001) argued, had essentially become a proxy for race. Although I did not use this terminology to describe it at the time, what was happening in California had a great deal to do with *language ideologies* (Silverstein, 1979)—or "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in the social world" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3).

My experience teaching in Los Angeles before and after the approval of Proposition 227 directly motivated my subsequent research interest in language, race, and social space. Informed by critical spatial theory (Harvey, 1996; Lefebvre, 2005), I was convinced that social space and ideology were inextricably interconnected and mutually constitutive. Lefebvre (2005) highlighted this interconnectedness when he asserted the following:

What we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and its production, and by thus taking on body therein. Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space. (p. 44)

This notion of ideology as *discourse upon social space* intrigued me. In the aftermath of Proposition 227, I sought to make sense of how the socially constructed phenomena of language, race, and space overlapped within California's restrictive language policy context, and I began to draw on *language ideological perspectives* (Kroskrity, 2000) to do so.

Ten years after the passage of Proposition 227, I conducted a study of language and ideology among Chicanx and Latinx youth in an “English only” middle school classroom in East Los Angeles (Martínez, 2009, 2010, 2013). In framing this study, I asserted that there were “identifiable language ideologies that have had a consequential and observable impact on social relations *in public schools* and, by extension, on the social construction *of public schools*” (Martínez, 2013, p. 278), and that “the social spaces of public schools, thus inscribed with dominant ideologies, play a central role in the naturalization and reproduction of those ideologies” (Ibid.). More specifically, I argued that, “in English Only classrooms, racist and xenophobic ideologies of monoglot purism are explicitly instantiated in restrictive language policies and their attendant instructional mandates” (Martínez, 2013, p. 282). In addition to my interest in unveiling some of the mechanisms by which dominant ideologies get articulated, embodied, and contested in classroom spaces, a primary motivation for pursuing this line of inquiry was my desire to draw scholarly attention to the ways in which California's “English only” era had come about as a *consequence* of ideologies.

The Rise of Dual Language: Bilingual Education in an “English Only” Era

In the midst of California's ideologically motivated era of restrictive language policy, one form of bilingual education grew in popularity—dual language education. *Dual language* is an umbrella term that refers to “any program that provides literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages, and that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level achievement, and multicultural competence for all students” (Howard et al, 2007, p. 1). The most popular model of dual language instruction, which has become virtually synonymous with the term dual language itself, is *dual immersion* or *two-way immersion*, in which roughly half of the students are classified as “native English speakers” and half are classified as “native speakers” of the partner language. As white, middle-class, and wealthy parents of English-speaking students have increasingly recognized the benefits of bilingualism, they have been turning to dual language education as a form of enrichment for their children (Linton, 2004). The troubling irony, of course, is that these parents have increasingly secured access to the benefits of bilingual education for their children during precisely the same time period when the parents of so-called “English learners” have had their access to bilingual education severely restricted. In California, students classified as “English learners” now make up almost 1 in 4 school-aged children. Over 83% of these students are Spanish-speaking, mostly Latinx children of working-class immigrant parents. And while some of these students are enrolled in dual

language programs, most have been relegated to English immersion classrooms since the passage of Proposition 227. What we are confronted with is a glaringly vivid picture of educational disparity writ large—of unequal access to the benefits of dual language education, a phenomenon that Valdez, Freire, and Delavan (2016) have referred to as the *gentrification of dual language*.

But Proposition 58, the “Multilingual Education” initiative which California voters overwhelmingly approved on November 8, reverses key portions of existing law that have restricted parental access to bilingual education for the past 18 years. Greater choice for parents and increased access to bilingual education is certainly cause for optimism. Now that Proposition 58 has been voted into law, for example, we will likely see a dramatic increase in the numbers of Chicanx and Latinx parents enrolling their children in bilingual education, including dual language programs. But as California embraces bilingual education again, important questions remain about how exactly bilingualism is being defined, how particular educational arrangements will be structured to promote it, and who will benefit from such arrangements. Almost twenty years ago, before the passage of Proposition 227 and before the dramatic growth in dual language programs nationwide, Valdés (1997) forewarned that we might end up further marginalizing Mexican-origin students classified as “English learners” if we rushed to embrace dual language education without seriously considering issues of equity and access. At this particular historical moment, it seems important to reassert these concerns.

A Nationwide Phenomenon

I use California as a case in point for talking about dual language education because of my personal experience here, because of the timeliness of this issue in light of the recent approval of Proposition 58, and because it is the state with the largest populations of both Latinx students (nearly 3.4 million or 53.9% of the total student population) and students classified as “English learners” (nearly 1.4 million or 22.1% of the total student population). However, California also serves as my point of departure for addressing what is better understood as a nationwide phenomenon. As California contemplates what the aftermath of Proposition 58 will look like, dual language education programs are proliferating throughout the country. In Texas, which has the nation’s second largest populations of both Latinx students (nearly 2.8 million or 52.2% of the total student population) and students learning English (approximately 980,000 or 18.5% of the total student population), bilingual education has remained legal over the past 18 years, and dual language programs have grown significantly as a result. And even in states with smaller and more recent Latinx populations, such as Delaware, North Carolina, and Utah, dual language programs are on the rise (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

In response to the continued growth of dual language education, a body of critical scholarship has emerged to foreground issues of equity and access, and to highlight the potential for further marginalizing Chicanx and Latinx students, transnational students, and students classified as “English learners” (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Cervantes-Soon et al., Forthcoming; de Jong & Howard, 2009; Delavan, Valdez, & Freire, 2016; Flores, 2015; Morales & Rao, 2015; Palmer, 2009; Valdez, Freire, & Delavan, 2016). Echoing concerns that Valdés (1997) foresaw two decades ago, this cautionary literature has drawn renewed attention to the issue of who stands to benefit from dual language education and whose interests are being served in its implementation. These scholars have revived an important and necessary conversation at a key historical moment by interrogating mainstream rationales for dual language, historicizing its origins and growth, exploring attendant public discourse, examining the experiences of students

labeled “English learners” within dual language programs, and documenting inequalities that emerge from program implementation. In what follows, I would like to join this scholarly conversation by contributing some brief reflections on the ideological process of *erasure* (Irvine & Gal, 2000) as it pertains to the experiences of Chicanx, Latinx, and indigenous Mexican children in dual language education.

Erasure in Dual Language Education

Erasure is a key concept that has emerged in the linguistic anthropological literature on language ideologies. Irvine and Gal (2000) define erasure as follows:

...the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or language may be imagined as homogenous, its internal variation disregarded. (p. 38)

This understanding of erasure helps explain how language ideologies can function to conceal people and their linguistic practices. In short, erasure is a semiotic process that is central to how we make sense of language in the world and, in particular, what we imagine to be true about linguistic difference. The notion of erasure is key, I argue, to understanding the experiences of Chicanx, Latinx, and indigenous Mexican children in dual language education programs.

Erasing Bilingual Chicanx and Latinx Children

Although bilingual Chicanx and Latinx children are necessary for the implementation of most Spanish-English dual language programs, they often get erased from these programs before they even set foot in the classroom. Indeed, they are rendered invisible by the very conceptualization of “native English speakers” and “native Spanish speakers” that undergirds dual language instructional models. In order to participate in most dual language programs, bilingual Chicanx and Latinx students must become one or the other. What this dichotomous categorization does not allow for—what it essentially denies or erases—is the very existence of bilingual children who speak *both* Spanish and English and who have grown up speaking both simultaneously. The simultaneous bilingualism of these students becomes one of the “facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 38) and that “go unnoticed or get explained away” (Ibid.). The scheme in question is the monglossic ideological frame that society uses for making sense of bilingualism. Within this frame, there is only room for bilingualism if it is conceptualized as two separate monolingualisms or what Fitts (2006) has called *dual monolingualism*, and there is only room for bilingual students if they are conceptualized as either “native English speakers” or “native Spanish speakers.” This dichotomous categorization is inscribed not only in artifacts such as home language surveys, professional development literature for teachers, and promotional literature for parents, but also in the research literature on dual language education and in the curricula that are developed for these instructional contexts. If the inscription of the received categories of “native English speaker” and “native Spanish speaker” contributes to their reification, then the absence of a “bilingual speaker” category surely contributes to its erasure from the public imagination.

Just as Chicanx and Latinx children often get erased in dual language programs, so, too, do their everyday linguistic competencies. In my earlier research in an English immersion

middle school setting (2009), I found that Chicana and Latina sixth graders often disrupted the supposed boundaries between English and Spanish by engaging in an everyday form of translanguaging that they called *Spanglish* and that mainstream linguists have historically called Spanish-English code-switching. I also found that the creativity, skill, and intelligence embedded in their everyday expressions of bilingualism sometimes overlapped with the skills articulated in relevant English language arts standards (Martínez, 2010). Researchers have documented bilingual Chicana and Latina students engaging in this everyday form of bilingualism in both English immersion and bilingual classrooms across the preK-12 spectrum (García & Sylvan, 2011; Gort, 2012; Martínez-Roldán & Sayer, 2006; Poza, 2016; Reyes, 2004). I do not mean to suggest that bilingual children are *always only* translanguaging—that they disrupt the boundaries between languages without ceasing or that they cannot refrain from this practice. Nor do I mean to frame this as a quintessentially Chicana or Latina way of speaking, as many Chicana and Latina youth are monolingual English or Spanish speakers, and many disrupt linguistic boundaries and notions of linguistic ownership by engaging in language practices typically associated with other racialized groups (D. Martinez, 2016). I do, however, mean to underscore that this everyday language practice is a normal global phenomenon and a perfectly legitimate expression of bilingualism (García, 2009).

Despite the fact that translanguaging is a communicative norm both globally and locally in many Chicana and Latina communities, ideologies of linguistic purism often function to reinscribe monolingual speech norms in dual language classrooms (Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015; Palmer & Martínez, 2013). Indeed, these ideologies are inscribed in policies of language separation that designate different times, activities, settings, and sometimes even different teachers for each language. Bilingual Chicana and Latina students' dynamic expressions of bilingualism are often explicitly discouraged and marginalized within these educational settings. Of course, this is directly related to what Flores and Rosa (2015) call *raciolinguistic ideologies*. Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that raciolinguistic ideologies “overdetermine people as particular kinds of language users” (p. 162), and, in particular, “produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects” (p. 150). Within a raciolinguistic scheme or frame, bilingual Chicana and Latina children are not only essentialized and imagined to speak in a particular way, but they are ultimately imagined to speak in a way that is illegitimate.

Rosa (2016) extends this discussion by introducing what he calls *ideologies of languagelessness*, which frame bilingual Latina students as incompetent speakers of both English and Spanish. According to Rosa (2016), “the dual-monolingual academic ideal of elite bilingualism leads to the devaluation and erasure of Latina/o English and Spanish language abilities that are construed as illegitimate in relation to imagined linguistic exemplars” (p. 174). Rosa further highlights the dehumanizing impact of these ideologies by illustrating how they function to “call into question linguistic competence—and, by extension, legitimate personhood—altogether” (p. 163). A key point that Rosa emphasizes in this regard is that the language ideologies that mediate public perceptions of bilingual Latina students are rooted in “longstanding processes of racialization” (2016, p. 177).

The notion that racialized perceptions can overlap with and inform perceptions of linguistic (in)competence helps explain how the process of erasure functions with respect to Chicana and Latina children in dual language classrooms. Although their language practices are often visible and, in fact, sometimes highly stigmatized, the linguistic competencies embedded in

those practices—the creativity, skill, and intelligence that I have taken pains to highlight in my own work—often get erased when viewed within this raciolinguistic scheme. Viewing the world through this raciolinguistic and monoglossic lens essentially amounts to letting monolingual white people tell the rest of us what it means to be truly bilingual, what counts as competence in two languages, and what the speech norms should be in schools and in society. Raciolinguistic ideologies of language-lessness and monoglot purism are consequential in schools and society in the sense that they circulate in the public discourse, get inscribed in educational policy, and then get enacted in both teaching practice and informal classroom interactions.

Because I have focused on bilingual children within the context of literacy teaching and learning, I have been interested in the relationship between bilingualism and *audience*—how bilingual speakers communicate with others across the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In literacy, as well as in other content areas, a primary goal is to prepare students to engage with particular audiences—to read, write, listen, and speak with particular groups of people in mind. From this perspective, dual language education represents a significant improvement over English immersion, which only prepares students to engage with monolingual English-speaking audiences, and thereby erases audiences that speak other languages. By preparing students to engage with both monolingual English-speaking audiences *and* monolingual Spanish-speaking audiences, dual language education sends the message to students that both of these audiences are worth engaging with—that they are both groups of people that matter.

But what dual language education does not prepare students for is a *bilingual* Chicana and Latina audience—an audience that reads, writes, listens, and speaks in both Spanish and English, and that sometimes disrupts the supposed boundaries between them. As currently envisioned and implemented, dual language programs still only prepare children for monolingual interaction—for a monolingual world. By only imagining two sets of monolingual audiences, we fail to prepare bilingual Chicana and Latina students to engage with audiences that look and sound like them, like their siblings, like their friends and neighbors. This is an enormous omission—an enormous erasure. When we do not prepare students to read, write, listen, and speak with a bilingual Chicana and Latina audience in mind, we signal to students that people like them, their siblings, and their friends and neighbors are not worth preparing to communicate with—that they are not a group of people that matters. We effectively erase these people from our imagination.

Erasing Indigenous Mexican Children

I should emphasize at this point that my dichotomous framing of Chicana and Latina children as *Spanish-English bilinguals* itself involves a form of erasure. Indeed, among the Chicana and Latina children to whom I have been referring, there are indigenous Mexican children who are multilingual and whose very existence disrupts the Spanish-English binary. Indigenous Mexican students are a growing population that has been largely invisible in U.S. schools, in U.S. society, and in the scholarly literature (Barillas-Chon, 2010; Machado-Casas, 2009; Pérez & Vásquez, Forthcoming; Urrieta, 2013). These students are as Mexican as any other Mexican-origin students in our schools, and yet their cultural and linguistic backgrounds do not always converge with dominant racial narratives about what it means to be “Mexican” or “Latino.” In this sense, they represent what Bonfil Batalla (1987) has called “el México profundo” (p. 9) or deep Mexico. Asserting the need to recognize and re-imagine Mexico’s

indigenous population, Bonfil Batalla argues that “la civilización mesoamericana es una civilización negada, cuya presencia es imprescindible reconocer” (1987, p. 21). In both Mexico and the United States, indigenous Mexicans are a *población negada*—or negated population—whose existence has been systematically denied as part of a centuries-long colonial project.

In my own work, I have had the privilege of working with children of indigenous Mexican heritage in a dual language context in Los Angeles. Two of these children in particular, Alma and Samantha, have taught me just how easy it is to erase ethnoracial diversity and sociolinguistic variation. Alma and Samantha both speak Zapoteco, an indigenous Mexican language spoken by the Zapotec people who reside in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, as well as in the neighboring states of Guerrero, Puebla, and Veracruz, and, increasingly, in diasporic communities throughout the United States, including various parts of southern California. Zapoteco is a language that has long been disparaged and marginalized in both Mexico and the United States. Like other indigenous languages, it is often referred to pejoratively as a “mere dialect” in Mexico, and many Mexican immigrants—both indigenous and non-indigenous—bring such perspectives with them to the United States. In this country, the situation is compounded in complex and problematic ways by raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) that essentialize notions of “Latino” identity.

Like other indigenous Mexican immigrants, Zapotec students have remained largely invisible to educators and to U.S. society more generally (Morales, 2016; Perez, Vásquez, & Buriel, 2016; Mesinas & Perez, 2016; Vásquez, 2012). I argue that this invisibility extends to dual language education, and that erasure is one of the mechanisms whereby such invisibility is actively achieved. Through the ideological process of erasure, Zapoteco is rendered invisible, and Zapotec students are positioned as part of a “Latino” or “Mexican” population that is assumed to be linguistically and ethnoracially homogenous. This process of erasure, I argue, is reflected in the experiences of Alma and Samantha. Zapoteco, an important dimension of their broader linguistic repertoires, has been largely ignored as they have been viewed as—and, indeed, encouraged to become—bilingual “Latinas.”

The erasure of indigenous Mexican children and their expansive linguistic repertoires relies on indexical links—or naturalized ideological connections—between “Latino” or “Mexican” children and Spanish-English bilingualism. As Irvine and Gal (2000) note, ideology “imagines languages as corresponding with essentialized representations of social groups” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 77). In U.S. schools, Zapotec children, like other indigenous Mexican children, are often essentialized and racialized as “Latino,” and imagined to be *only* bilingual. They are often not recognized as being indigenous at all, and their linguistic and cultural heritage as Zapotec people is rendered invisible. Schools, as institutions, contribute to this process of erasure by invoking and reinscribing the received category “Latino” and its corresponding associations with Spanish-English bilingualism. Insofar as they both reflect and inform the public imagination, schools are central to framing indigenous Mexican children as only “Latino” and only bilingual.

A point worth emphasizing here is that dual language education represents an improvement over English immersion in this regard. It seems likely, for example, that Alma and Samantha would not have sustained their bilingualism and biliteracy within an “English only” instructional setting. Nonetheless, the deliberately additive, enrichment-oriented dual language instruction that these girls have received has sought to cultivate and sustain only a portion of their total linguistic repertoires. While serving to sustain English and Spanish, this instructional context has ignored Zapoteco, the heritage language that these girls share. In this way, even

efforts to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, when situated within a frame that excludes anything beyond “bilingual,” can function to erase indigenous Mexican students like Alma and Samantha from the public imagination.

Re-imagining (and Imagining Beyond) Bilingualism

As we prepare for the intensified growth of dual language education in the aftermath of California’s Proposition 58, we need to recognize the ways in which Chicax, Latinx, and indigenous Mexican students are marginalized by the current conceptualization and implementation of dual language programs. We need to re-imagine and re-invent dual language education as something that recognizes and centers the experiences of these children and that seeks to serve their interests. We should begin by re-imagining what counts as bilingualism and who counts as bilingual. We need to recognize bilingual Chicax and Latinx students *as bilingual*, and we need to recognize their everyday forms of translanguaging as creative, skillful, and legitimate expressions of bilingualism (González, 2016; Martínez, 2010). Rather than enforce rigid policies and practices of language separation informed by raciolinguistic and monglossic ideologies, we should allow for and encourage students’ flexible and dynamic forms of bilingualism in the classroom (de Jong, 2016; García & Kleyn, 2016; Gort & Pontier, 2013; Palmer & Martínez, 2013).

Allowing and encouraging students’ everyday translanguaging would constitute a form of ontological recognition—a way of recognizing these students’ ways of *doing being bilingual* (Auer, 1984), and a way of recognizing them and people like them as human beings who matter in the world. If we only prepare kids for two sets of monolingual audiences, we erase not only bilingual language practices, but bilingual audiences—bilingual people. Conversely, if we privilege bilingual audiences that look and sound like bilingual Chicax and Latinx children, we can “open up possibilities for bilingual writers” (Durán, 2015) and readers, and we can prepare these children to engage with the people who matter most to them. As Durán (2015, 2016) has shown, making actual bilingual audiences central to literacy curriculum and instruction can serve to promote bilingualism and biliteracy even in a restrictive language policy context. In dual language settings, especially if we think beyond the current constraints of language separation, such pedagogical possibilities abound. The current move towards *translanguaging pedagogies* (García, Flores, & Woodley, 2012; García & Kleyn, 2016; Palmer et al, 2014; Pontier & Gort, 2016; Poza, 2016) is an enormous step in the right direction, and one that we would do well to embrace as we re-imagine bilingualism and dual language education.

As I have suggested above, however, recognizing bilingual Chicax and Latinx children and re-imagining bilingualism are not enough. If we imagine Chicax and Latinx children to be *only* bilingual, we erase indigenous Mexican students and their multilingual and multicultural experiences. Just as we have moved towards recognizing transgender and gender non-conforming people in our community by imagining beyond the male/female binary, we need to imagine beyond the Spanish/English binary—beyond bilingualism—in order to recognize the indigenous Mexican students in our midst. We need to recognize that “Chicax” or “Latinx” or any other imagined racial(ized) category is not coterminous with these children’s identities as complex human beings. Alma and Samantha, for example, represent all three of the categories in the title of this article, and yet they are all too often imagined as only a subset of these intersecting identities—as a fraction of who they are.

If we view multilingualism as a normal, positive, and desirable reality for our students—and if multilingualism is, in fact, correlated with improved social, cognitive, and academic outcomes—then it is our ethical imperative to imagine beyond the socially constructed notions of “Latino bilingualism” that currently predominate. We need to recognize multilingual indigenous Mexican children, and we need to ask how dual language education might adjust and adapt to their multilingual realities in ways that promote their success. Morales (2016), for example, notes that the maintenance of indigenous heritage languages in public schools is an invisible issue, and she asks what role dual language schools should play in the maintenance of these languages. I echo her in posing this question, and I urge educators, researchers, and policymakers working with indigenous Mexican children to think beyond current conceptualizations and to imagine a dual language education that is responsive to and supportive of these students. To be sure, there is much thinking and much work to be done in this regard. A fundamental starting point for any such efforts, however, is the very basic recognition that indigenous Mexican students already exist in our schools.

The recognition, re-imagination, and reinvention that I am advocating here should not fall to teachers alone. To be sure, erasure plays out at the interactional level, as students and teachers invoke, perceive, articulate, embody, and contest dominant ideologies (Martínez, 2013). We know that what teachers do in the moment-to-moment details of classroom interaction matters for how students come to see themselves and one another, including how they come to imagine and enact academic identities and trajectories for themselves (Bucholtz et al., 2012; Hikida, 2015; McDermott, 1993). However, the process of erasure also plays out at the structural level, as language policies are imagined, developed, and imposed. In this regard, it is imperative to underscore that dominant racial narratives always also circulate in the broader sphere of the public imagination. And Chicana, Latina, and indigenous Mexican children, like Alma and Samantha, often get erased in these circulating narratives. As researchers, educators, and policymakers pay increasing attention to the promise and potential of dual language education, we must deliberately focus on who gets erased from the public imagination because populations that get erased from the public imagination get erased from public *discourse*. And populations that get erased from public discourse get erased from public *policy*. As we seek to imagine, implement, and enact dual language education policy in ways that promote equity, access, and social justice, we need to deliberately and explicitly privilege the experiences of Chicana, Latina, and indigenous Mexican students. We need to recognize these students, re-imagine them and their everyday expressions of multilingualism, and make their success central to the implementation and reinvention of dual language education.

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¹ I use the terms “Chicanx” and “Latinx” to refer to people of Mexican and Latin American ancestry, respectively. In solidarity with transgender and gender non-conforming members of our community, I use the ‘x’ ending (i.e., Latinx instead of the more common Latin@, Latina/o, or Latino) to signal gender inclusivity and to challenge binary notions of gender. I also deliberately refer to Chicanx and Latinx children (rather than just using the broader category Latinx) precisely because use of the latter alone can function to erase the past, present, and future significance of people of Mexican ancestry in California and the southwest.