Chapter 4
Multimodal and Multilingual Co-authoring in High School Social Studies ESL Classrooms

Liv T. Dávila and Victoria Susberry

Abstract This chapter presents a qualitative study of how newcomer English Learners (ELs) collaboratively engage various semiotic tools in their production of multimodal identity texts in high school social studies classes. Through analysis of students' written work (worksheet, screenplay, and poster), as well as field notes and recordings of classroom interaction, the chapter explores the choices learners make in co-authoring multimodal texts that bridge multiple languages, contexts, and experiences. It concludes by contributing nuanced conceptualizations of multimodal composition that emphasize dynamic relationships between identity formation, translingual practice and civic engagement in an increasingly interconnected and digital world.

Keywords Multilingual · Multimodal · Identity · Adolescent

4.1 Introduction

English learners (ELs) constitute the most rapidly growing segment of the student population in American schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), as of 2016, there are over 4.8 million children in the United States, or nearly ten percent of the entire K-12 student population, who qualify for language assistance in school (NCES 2019). Roughly one-half of this population are ELs between the ages of 14 and 18, and the majority of these students are lower income, non-white, and non-citizens. Adolescent ELs are also more likely than non-ELs to experience poor educational outcomes and limited employment opportunities upon graduation (Velez et al. 2016).

L. T. Dávila (✉)
Department of Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61820, USA
e-mail: livtd@illinois.edu

V. Susberry
Department of Educational Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61820, USA
e-mail: susberr2@illinois.edu

Development of academic writing and compositional skills is a particular challenge for adolescent ELs who enter the educational system in later grades when they are expected to navigate challenging course content in spite of having fewer years to master the English language. Learning English in school contexts entails learning new academic registers, which necessitates appropriate grammatical and lexical input and scaffolding, including opportunities for interaction and opportunities to tap into linguistic funds of knowledge. Schleppegrell (2004) puts forth the notion of "genres of schooling," which is suggestive of typical text types associated with school-based writing tasks, and can be particularly challenging for ELs to master. Commonly assigned writing genres include personal (recount, narrative), factual (procedure, report), and analytical genres (account, explanation, exposition), each of which involves linguistic choice-making that is dependent upon learners' identities and language experiences. With a view toward these challenges, Lemke (1998) and others (Cope and Kalantzis 2009; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) have called for a reconceptualized understanding of literacy that moves beyond written words to legitimize alternative forms of meaning-making.

Following this orientation, collaborative and multimodal composition in school is increasingly viewed as an important means of increasing students' engagement and motivation to write (Baepler and Reynolds 2014), and an important learning strategy for writing in a non-native language (Elola and Ozkoz 2017; Stein 2000). Learners have different mode preferences, and for some students, visual expression is more effective for learning than writing alone (Smith et al. 2017), particularly for those who have experienced lapses in formal education, or who have not mastered writing in their primary languages.

Important research has explored the use of multimodal literacies in the writing practices of children and youth (Cummins and Early 2011; Gee and Hayes 2011; Jewitt 2008; van Leeuwen 2015). The research presented in this chapter explores how adolescent newcomer ELs collaboratively engage various semiotic tools in their production of multimodal identity texts in high school social studies classes in the U.S. The content of these courses emphasized civics education and included the topics of immigration, citizenship, and government. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. How do adolescent ELs negotiate civic learning and engagement through the creation of collaboratively-authored multimodal texts?
2. To what extent are transnational civic identities afforded through collaborative multimodal composition?

In addressing these questions, this research sheds light on the relationship between global migration, identity, and translingual, multimodal literacy practices in school.

4.2 Background Literature

This study draws on previous scholarship on collaborative, multimodal, and translingual writing practices to explore local and transnational dimensions of meaning-making among multilingual learners of English. These bodies of literature allow us to attend to how students use and negotiate linguistic and communicative resources (e.g., words, sounds, images, colors, video) in the service of civic learning and engagement.

4.2.1 Collaborative and Multimodal Writing

Multimodal composition is a key component of many adolescent ELs' literacy instructions in school in the United States, and it is increasingly seen as fundamental to the development of literacy in a new language (Comber 2016; Dalton 2012; Yi 2014) and the promotion of democratic, culturally and linguistically affirming classroom learning spaces (Pacheco and Smith 2015; Stein 2007). Multimodal composition involves making "semiotic choices" (Kress 2010) to communicate ideas in different ways and using multiple modes (e.g., writing, visuals, sound, movement), thereby providing authors with means of authentic, person-centered communication. More complex multimodal texts combine semiotic systems of static or moving image, written text, voice, and movement to create meaning that moves "backwards and forwards between the various modes" (Cope and Kalantzis 2009, p. 423).

Collaborative writing projects involving multimodal tools, such as video, audio, and Internet-based research platforms (e.g., Wikipedia) are frequently assigned by K-12 teachers of any content area as a means of increasing student motivation, eliciting peer feedback, and refining writing output (Darrington and Doussay 2015; Elola and Oskoz 2010). Teaching that incorporates multimodal resources can allow for complex levels of thinking and engaging group discussion through collaboration. For example, a study by Smith (2019a) found that allowing the use of multimodal writing tools in the classroom provided a means for students to express their thoughts while also encouraging student-generated discussion. Multimodal tools can support students through composing processes, such as allowing for collaborative discussions and expressing their understanding using complex methods (Compernolle and Williams 2013). In a second study, Smith (2019b) analyzed different types of collaboration that come from using multimodal methods in teaching adolescents. He observed three pairs of 12th graders composing a website, a podcast, and a hypertext literary analysis, and found three different types of collaborative partnerships: (1) designer and assistant collaboration, (2) balanced division collaboration, and (3) alternating lead collaboration. This study offers evidence that multimodal tools allow for more collaborative learning and complex thought. In addition, a study by Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera, and Cummins (2014) found that allowing students to collaborate using multimodal tools in writing assignments increased their motivation and effort.

In analyzing the choices ELs make in their composition of collaborative multimodal texts, the current study draws on Cummins and Early's (2011) work on *identity texts,* which incorporate all modalities—spoken, written, musical, visual, and dramatic—to convey past and present stories. Scholarship has pointed to the importance of multimodal writing for immigrant and refugee-background youth as a means of expressing affiliation and exploring identities. For instance, Karam (2017) researched how through multimodal composition, an adolescent refugee EL in the U.S. effectively aligned his interests and experiences with in-school writing tasks. McLean (2010) explored the digital literacy practices of an adolescent immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago and found that this learner created an online "home" that united "her identities as a student, adolescent Trinidadian, Caribbean, and American" (p. 16). Grapin (2019) evaluated different uses of multimodality in the classroom separating them into two different categories: weak and strong. From these results, the author proposes that education must embrace multimodal learning in order to best support ELs, because doing so allows them to utilize the meaning-making resources while engaging with the material at hand.

Allowing ELs to use multimodal tools in writing provides these students with a stronger sense of self-identity within the classroom (Ntelioglou, et al. 2014). Wang (2018) conducted a qualitative case study with ELs in order to assess their use of multimodalities to create written pieces about their biliteracy. Student participants used a combination of words and images to compose multimodal texts to write about their personal journey of English learning regardless of their age, gender, and nationality. Additionally, Bunch and Willett (2013) explored how middle school ELs engage with and produce multimodal social studies-focused writing and found that students were most successful when presented with a meaning-based, dialogic approach to developing literacy.

Existing research underscores the importance of multimodal teaching and learning to create a student-centered classroom that gives learners of English a sense of identity, creates a collaborative culture, and increases students' proficiency in English, while also promoting development in their home language. The research presented in this chapter further expands on this earlier work by exploring the particular nuances of collaborative translingual writing using multiple semiotic tools. In so doing, it accounts for broader contextual variables that factored into students' linguistic choice-making when co-authoring written academic genres.

4.2.2 Translingual Writing

Research points to the benefits of multilingual and multimodal interaction in oral and written formats (Hawkins 2018; Wagner 2018). A translingual orientation to collaborative multilingual composition among ELs suggests there is a "synergy between languages that generates new grammars and meanings" (Canagarajah 2015, p. 419). This orientation acknowledges that languages construct norms that are strategically negotiated in social interactions. Speakers of any language are agentive actors who,

through interaction with others, position themselves within local and global contexts (Alim 2009). Multilingual individuals use features of their entire linguistic repertoire purposefully to fit their particular social situation (García and Li 2014). Translingual writing within classrooms allows for learners to support one another linguistically, socially, and academically, and to connect to different proficiencies, affiliations, and heritages of communities outside of the classroom (Leung 2014).

Research has demonstrated how translanguaging can facilitate the development of academic writing. Velasco and García (2014) conducted research that evaluated five written texts produced by young bilingual writers with varied language background where translanguaging is used in the planning, drafting, and production stages of their writing. They analyzed how and why translingual writing was used, as well as the effect it had on the development of the authors' writing and voice. The authors concluded that translanguaging pedagogies facilitate the development of academic writing in one language while also affirming students' multilingual identities. Kibler (2010) examined the writing practices of bilingual secondary students noting improvements in writing when students are allowed to write collaboratively and using their primary languages. Distinctively, she found that bilingual writers use both languages as they navigate and show expertise in various kinds of writing tasks.

Lee and Handsfield's (2018) research explores how students who are bilingual and bidialectal move across languages to express meaning through code meshing, combing their first language or dialect with standard English. Code meshing is important in the classroom as a means of fostering identity among students while building their literacy skills. The work of reframing dichotomous views of languages requires conscious and continued efforts to unlearn the myth that there is only one correct way to speak or to write.

In sum, existing scholarship points to positive learning outcomes associated with allowing students to use multiple linguistic, digital, and textual tools in their compositional processes in school. The current study expands on this body of work by exploring the nuances within collaborative multimodal and multilingual writing and transnational civic learning among adolescent learners of English.

4.3 Methods

This chapter draws on qualitative research conducted at a public high school in a midwestern city in the United States between 2015–2017.

4.3.1 Research Context

Of the 1,100 students enrolled in the school, roughly ten percent were designated as English learners. Approximately 75% of this population were from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras and spoke Spanish, Q'anjob'al, and Quiché

as their primary language(s). Twenty percent of the ELs were from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon and spoke French, Lingala, Tshiluba, and Fulani. The remaining 5% of students were from China, Vietnam, Morocco, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Data were collected in two sheltered ESL classes (Echevarría and Graves 2014) that met daily for 50 minute periods and emphasized social studies and civics content. There were roughly 20 students with varied linguistic and educational backgrounds in each class. The two ESL teachers of these classes, Mrs. Jones and Ms. López, were both bilingual in English and Spanish and encouraged students to use their primary home languages in spoken and written forms when working within same-language groups as a means of scaffolding content and English language learning. (All participants have been given pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality.) They frequently provided written instructions in English, Spanish, and French, the dominant non-English languages spoken by ESL students at the school.

Mrs. Jones and Ms. López also routinely integrated multimodal writing activities into their daily lessons. Although the ESL classrooms were not equipped with permanent computers, students had access to laptops and Chromebooks that the teachers checked out from an audio-visual center accessible to all teachers at the school. Students used both of these resources to conduct research on the Internet, and for writing tasks, which included open-ended assignments and worksheets accessible through the teachers' Google Classroom platforms. The teachers also allowed students to use their smartphones in the ESL classrooms in order to look up definitions on Google Translate. Smartphone use occasionally extended beyond assigned tasks, though, and students were frequently reminded to turn off music or videos that were not part assigned activities.

4.3.2 Participants

The focal students whose writing is presented in this chapter were multilingual in French, and several Central African languages including Lingala, Tshiluba, and Swahili. These students were literate in French and were developing writing skills in English (Table 4.1).

These students (like their peers in the ESL classroom) could be considered technologically savvy as they all had smartphones that they carried with them during the school day and often plugged into outlets in the ESL classroom. While none of them had computers at home, they frequently used computers at school and the public library.

Table 4.1 Participants

Name	Age	Language	Grade	Arrival to US
Reine	16	French, Lingala	11	2012
Marie	16	French, Lingala	10	2013
Joie	15	French, Lingala	11	2013
Laure	14	French, Lingala	9	2014
Malik	17	French, Lingala, Tshiluba	11	2015
Amadou	16	French, Lingala, Tshiluba	11	2016
Auguste	18	French, Lingala	11	2017

4.3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The focus in this chapter is on students' texts while also attending to individual, contextual, and material factors that influenced their composition. Individual factors include students' language backgrounds, and immigration experiences. Contextual and material factors include the task students were to complete and the resources they used to complete them. Data were collected by the first author using ethnographic methods, including prolonged classroom observations in the two focal ESL Social Studies classrooms, interviews with students and teachers, and artifact collection of handwritten and typed texts and drawings. Observational data were recorded in handwritten field notes, and interviews and classroom interactions were audio-recorded. Photographs were taken of students' ungraded handwritten assignments, and hard copies of typed writing assignments were collected when available. Artifacts presented in the findings section are transcribed using original spellings in order to illustrate instances of translingual writing, for instance, how students tap into literacy in French as they write in English. While a total of 23 writing samples were collected, the three writing samples presented in this chapter were purposefully selected because they showcase how the focal students singularly and collectively navigate languages, experiences, and identities as they negotiate means of expressing themselves through texts and images.

To explore students' choice-making with regard to multimodal composition, we coded data around the themes of translingual writing, digital images, drawings, use of technological resources, and social studies content. These themes were further condensed into codes related to participants' identities as Congolese immigrants who had recently arrived in the United States. In the following section, we present the three illustrative examples that provide a deeper analysis of students' choice-making in their composition of translingual writing.

4.4 Findings

This section addresses the overarching focus of this study on processes through which adolescent newcomer ELs collaboratively engage a variety of semiotic resources in their production of multilingual and multimodal identity texts. The three writing samples presented below correspond to the two guiding research questions and showcase (a) how the focal students negotiate civic learning and engagement through the creation of multimodal texts (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2), and (b) how transnational civic identities are afforded through multimodal composition (Fig. 4.3).

4.4.1 Civic Learning and Engagement Through Multimodal Composition

4.4.1.1 Exploratory Writing on Multiculturalism in the United States

Collaborative writing was a mainstay of the focal ESL classrooms, and Mrs. Jones and Ms. López encouraged and supported multimodal composition throughout their teaching. Students in turn were socialized into drawing on multiple semiotic tools in their written work. The first example (Fig. 4.1) is an exploratory text written by Auguste, Reine, and Amadou as an in-class Think, Pair, Share writing activity. The class primarily enrolled newcomer ELs who had been in the United States for between two months and two years, or had limited literacy in their first language and English. Auguste had finished the equivalent of high school in the Democratic Republic of Congo and had developed academic literacy in French. He had lived in the United States for one month and had no prior English language or literacy learning experiences. Reine had lived in the United States for two years and had learned to write in French during the past two years of her schooling in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Amadou had lived in the United States for one year and had begun to acquire literacy in French in the year prior to migration.

As a context for their writing, students had been asked by Ms. López to work in groups of three to complete the Think-Pair-Share worksheet on which they were to write about multiculturalism in the United States, referencing their own immigration experiences. The writing prompt, included on the PowerPoint slide in English, Spanish and French, read: "Do you believe the United States is multicultural and diverse? Why or why not?" The sample below illustrates the students' collaborative translingual practices used to convey their responses.

Transcription:

In the first column on the top left, Reine wrote,

I think

Yes

Because American have many contry for example: africa, Mexico, India, Isia (Asia), China and Korea
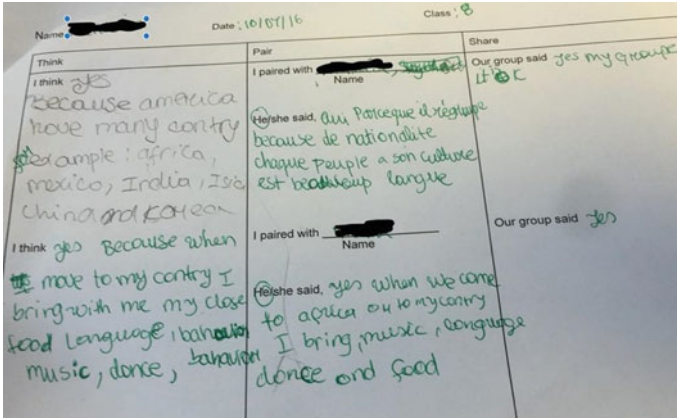
Fig. 4.1 Think, Pair, Share Writing Activity

Below, she continued,

Yes Because when I move to my country I bring with me my close (clothes) and language, behavior music, dance.

After completing the left column, Reine interviewed Auguste (in French) and wrote his response on her paper entirely in French in the middle column: *Oui parceque il regroupe beaucoup de nationalite chaque people a son culture est beaucoup de langues* [Yes, because people of many nationalities come [to the United States]. Each group has their own culture and a lot of languages.]. Below she recorded Auguste's second response which she translated into English: *Yes when we come to Africa ou (or) to my contry I bring, music, language, dance and food.* In the third column, Reine recorded her group's consensus on their response to the initial question: *yes, my groupe (group) it's ok.*

We see instances of translingual writing and multimodal semiotic choice-making through voice and text in each of these columns, including the middle column, written mostly in French. Notably, Reine's use of "my country" indicates identification with a physical location (i.e., the country I currently reside in) that being the United States, as opposed to the Democratic Republic of Congo. These multilingual writers use different multilingual composition strategies such as back translation (where Reine translates Auguste's response from French to English) and rehearsing (where Reine tries out words they may most accurately convey her intended meaning, whether they are semantically, grammatically, and orthographically correct) (Velasco and García 2014), to convey personal meaning and material association. Here we see Reine's linguistic dexterity in her translation of Auguste's response from French to English and how students serve as informal translators for newcomer peers (Leonard 2017).

4.4.2 "Helping Immigrants" Screenplay

The second writing sample, a screenplay, was collected in Mrs. Jones's intermediate ESL civics class, the focus of which at the time of data collection was immigration to the United States. Toward the end of this particular unit, students were assigned a group project in which they were to compose and record a screenplay documenting experiences of immigration (though not necessarily their own). Students worked in groups of three or four over the course of two weeks to complete this project.

The screenplay below involved writing about and performing an experience that three out of four members of the group did not share. This text was written collaboratively by Reine, Joie, Marie, who are from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Pedro, who immigrated from Jalisco, Mexico five years ago. This excerpt, while written entirely in English, exemplifies experiences shared by many newcomer immigrants in school, including alienation and bullying.

PLAYING SOCCER AT THE PLAYGROUND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

People were teasing me when I was little

[a boy punches my nose and bleeds]

Manolo: J
hey!!!??? What was that for !?
Mean Boy: KeKe LM
you are a mexican and we hate you ugly jerk!!! Ha ha ha

[everyone keeps beating me up and i ended up hurt, beaten, and a broken jaw]

Scene 5

10 YEARS LATER AT MY HOUSE WATCHING THE US ELECTIONS

We are watching the TV and seeing who will be president Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton

Me:]
come on Hillary. You need to win.

Angel: d
if Hillary wins she will be the first female

Dad: LM
we are Doom if Trump wins. We will have to go back to mexico

[Trump wins in the elections]

Manolo:].'

Fig. 4.2 Excerpt from Screen Play Entitled, "Helping Immigrants"

In this screenplay, the group took up the topic of immigration policy, which dominated the headlines nationally and locally before and after the Trump election, when this data sample was collected. Composing this text as a group allowed the students to express concern over and resist anti-immigrant sentiment, which is seen mostly clearly in Manolo's final statement:

> If Trump builds the Wall how am I gonna be able to see my Abuelita? Let make every people from the different country to be welcome here. We have to help these people.

In this statement, we see the students grapple with implications of the proposed constructed border wall between the United States and Mexico on transnational family dynamics. The modes of text and voice in the form of oral performance interplay with each other to simultaneously emphasize meaning and emotion (Cope and Kalantzis 2009; Lemke 1998). This particular text exemplifies the influence of emotional and personal characteristics–in this case, fear and sadness over separation from a loved one–on the stories that students compose. The discussion (in English and Lingala) was recorded while students were rehearsing their performance and further illustrates students' negotiation of their stories and roles:

Pedro: (reading the script)

Reine: That was perfect, oh my gosh!

Marie: But you have to speak together at the same time!

Reine: Oh eko sala eloko te oko bebisa lisusu esi to kenda ki deja bien! (Oh it doesn't matter. You're ruining it even when we were doing fine!)

Pedro: Let's go again.

[Pause]

Reine: Omoni nga nazo sala trois eloko yango ezo zua mua retard soki olingi bongo eko sala eloko te (You see, I'm doing three things at once. That's why it's taking time.)

Marie: Eh to tiaki na biso yango te! (laughs) (Hey we didn't turn [the video recorder] on!) Pedro, why don't you turn when you start? (Why didn't you turn it on when we started?)

Reine: Ready, set, go!

Pedro: Ssshhhh—

Marie: Wait, zela (wait)!

[Pedro, Reine and Marie read through the entire script.]

Reine: That's perfect!

Marie: Awww, I miss my sister, my cousin everyone [off script]!

The students' practice was cut short by the ringing of the bell signaling the end of the period. What was evident in their rehearsal was their investment in portraying personal stories that frequently accompany experiences of migration and resettlement. Composing this script using multiple modes (e.g., text, voice) allowed these students to explore, present, and find meaning in others' and their own experiences of separation from family, whether temporary or permanent, voluntary or involuntary. Through this script, we also see students' emotional responses to policies that reinforce their systematic exclusion which they may be hesitant to articulate if composing this text alone (Compernolle and Williams 2013). The opportunity to act out these

scenes as characters in a performance perhaps created a distance between themselves and the personal challenges they confront as minoritized immigrants in a time of tightened immigration restrictions. Taken together, the examples in this section illustrate how through their multimodal compositions, students engage with transnational forms of belonging, and grapple with personal experiences of migration, and social integration and exclusion in the U.S.

4.4.3   Affordance of Transnational Civic Identities

The expression of transnational civic identities (of belonging both here and there) is evident in the two previous examples as students consider what being a Congolese immigrant in the U.S. means (Fig. 4.1), and the notion of family and belonging in two nations (Fig. 4.2). The final example of collaborative multilingual and multimodal composition captures processes of deliberate meaning-making and, more specifically, how the co-authors make choices about what aspects of their lives and communities they wish to portray to those outside of their community.

This informative writing expressed through a poster (Fig. 4.3) that Reine, Marie, and Joie created as part of a display for "Multicultural Night," an event that was to take place in the evening that showcased the languages and cultures of many students at the school. In addition to the poster, Reine, Marie, and Joie choreographed a dance which they performed at the event. At the top of the poster, students wrote words in English and French: "*Justice, Paix, Travail"* (Justice, Peace, Labor), the national motto of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Positioned throughout the poster are pictures the students found on the Internet, including ones of then-President Joseph

Fig. 4.3 Multicultural Night Poster

Kabila. Also included are pictures of popular Congolese musicians they were able to print off using computers in the school library.

> Reine: Pona nini bozo sala Drapeau? (Why are you guys doing the flag?)
>
> Marie: Toko presenter yango lobi, to bina ko, nga mutu nazo bela nako tiah musique ndenge nini (We're going to present it tomorrow. We're going to dance, and I'm sick! How am I going to put the music?)
>
> Joie: We have to get it done.
>
> Marie: Kasi to get it done ebongo nga na lobi nini? (Then let's get it done, what did I say?)
>
> Joie: Today is the last day [to work on it].
>
> Reine: Tika boye, boye eza bien. (Leave it like this, this is good.)
>
> Marie: To– tala eloko ya kokata zua nini oyo paier ya pe kata yango. (let's—look, this is something to cut get a paper and cut this.)
>
> Joie: Tala biso tozo sala yango awa (We're doing it over here.)
>
> Marie: Etoile, mettre içi, etoile, etoile [singing]. (Star, to place here, star, star).
>
> Joie: Awa ti awa (from here to here) [pointing at the stripes in the center of the flag]

The following interaction in Lingala, French, and English was recorded as the students were working on the poster during class.

In addition to negotiating the placement of visuals on the poster, the activity highlighted the students' collective semiotic choices to represent the Democratic Republic of Congo as a modern democracy rich in culture. In their deliberate choice of visual design at the level of the whole text, we see how the students prioritized certain meanings while backgrounding others.

This affirmation of their identities as Congolese immigrants in the United States was crucial for their engagement in multimodal literacy practices. The accessibility of technologies (the Internet, printer) that students used to research and display their work also provided them with ways of showcasing their identities to a wider audience.

4.5 Discussion and Implications

The chapter emphasizes the dynamic relationship between identity formation, translingual practice and collaborative civic engagement in an increasingly inter-connected and digital world. The three examples presented in the previous section demonstrate multimodal composing processes and practices of adolescent multilingual writers with an emphasis on individual and contextual factors that influenced the semiotic choices they made (Kress 2010; van Leeuwen 2015), and how they use them to make meaning. The samples include personal, analytical, and factual written texts as written "genres of schooling" (Schleppegrell 2004) and center around students' identities as recent immigrants to the United States, what they have had to leave behind, and what they have brought with them in terms of material possessions and linguistic and cultural knowledge.

The students' writing experiences were not unlike those of multilingual adolescent writers explored in earlier research (Karam 2017; McLean 2010; Smith et al.

2017; Smith 2019a, b; Wagner 2018). In this and other research, collaborative and multimodal composition affords learners opportunities to shape their identities as newcomer immigrants and English language learners, who are developing civic understanding across multiple local and global contexts (Bunch and Willett 2013; Ntelioglou et al. 2014). The examples presented in this chapter further underscore how collaborative multimodal translingual writing expresses and reconstructs multi-faceted identification, while showcasing students' linguistic and social resources. In addition, these writing samples illustrate how the focal students straddle local and global contexts of being and belonging through language(s), visuals, and sounds.

In certain cases, students' ability to access and complete grade-level work was limited by their newness to the English language and literacy. To compensate for this, Mrs. Jones and Ms. López allowed students to fluidly draw on their multilingualism, their experiences of immigration, and of being immigrants in the United States. Multilingualism was viewed by the teachers as an asset, and students were given agency over their language use, which encouraged the development of awareness of context-specific communicative norms (Canagarajah 2015). Students were encouraged to use their primary languages at all stages of their writing, from planning and research, to synthesizing, writing, and talking about their work in front of others. Though not highlighted in this chapter, the teachers in this study emphasized the importance of critical media literacy and knowing how to interpret online texts as fact-based or not, and provided students with tools to engage their own and others' texts in multiple modalities, including images, font styles, colors, to explore more deeply how knowledge is positioned, presented, and consumed.

Like texts presented in Cummins and Early's (2011) edited volume, the sample texts showcased here carry specific functions: to provide information (the Think-Pair-Share worksheet), to tell a story (screenplay), and to express creativity (the poster). The collaborative multimodal structure of these assignments generated co-constructed knowledge around topics of culture, language, immigration, politics, and national identity. Our research expands upon this and other research by emphasizing how transnational civic identities are afforded through collaborative and multimodal composition. The processes of semiotic choice-making involved in these compositions, which were captured through ethnographic data, point to a process of identity negotiation and development, and suggest that the textual representations and portrayals of transnational civic identities can carry as much weight as the identities themselves.

Several questions warrant further exploration on topics that were not addressed in this study. For example, future research could investigate students' development of writing over time and whether or not translingual and multimodal composition leads to greater retention of new vocabulary and grammar along with spelling and punctuation. Other research could explore whether certain kinds of multimodal tools are more conducive to learning over others, and at what point such tools detract from creative and collaborative writing. Attention to the assessment of collaborative multimodal writing projects is also needed using quantitative or qualitative measures. Finally, additional research that analyzes translingual multimodal writing through the lenses of race, gender, class, and documentation is much needed, and would yield important

insight into power dynamics in relation to literacy, civic values, and transformative pedagogies. Users of online media must equally develop an understanding of the ethics of using multimedia as a tool for learning, particularly in light of the rampant use of the Internet to distribute false information to mass audiences. An orientation toward sociocritical literacies (Córtez and Gutiérrez 2019) is key to establishing equitable learning environments in and outside of school.

4.5.1 Implications for Teaching

Multimodal learning methods are helpful in facilitating the development of a learner-centered classroom that gives students a sense of identity within the classroom, creates a culture of collaboration, and increases their knowledge of the English language while also promoting development in their home language.

Multilingual students in English-medium schools benefit from structured opportunities to develop writing skills in varied genres. Such opportunities can be further enriched when students work collaboratively across languages and experiences. The following recommendations leverage students' knowledge while encouraging new learning:

1. Link curricular content to students' experiences.
2. Provide written instructions, worksheets, and other texts in one or more of students' primary languages.
3. Allow students to work on writing assignments in same-language groups through the planning, editing, and production processes.
4. Group students with mixed proficiency in English in order to promote peer-to-peer scaffolding of language and literacy.
5. Provide students with multiple opportunities to showcase their knowledge and identities through images, songs, and videos.
6. Ask students to orally present their work to others and provide opportunities for critical reflection and feedback.

These pedagogical approaches (and others) are important for adolescent ELs who face daily reminders of their marginalization in schools and society. They shed light on the ways in which such learners actively contribute to wider discussions around the relationship between literacy (multimodal or not), citizenship, and belonging.

References

Baepler, P., & Reynolds, T. (2014). The digital manifesto: Engaging student writers with digital video assignments. *Computers and Composition, 34,* 122–136.
Bunch, G. C., & Willett, K. (2013). Writing to mean in middle school: Understanding how second language writers negotiate textually-rich content-area instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 22,* 141–160.

Canagarajah, S. (2015). Clarifying the relationship between translingual practice and L2 writing: Addressing learner identities. *Applied Linguistics Review, 6*(4), 415–440.

Comber, B. (2016). *Literacy, place and pedagogies of possibility.* Routledge.

Compernolle, R. (2013). Sociocultural theory and second language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research, 17*(3), 277–281.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). A grammar of multimodality. *The International Journal of Learning, 16*(2), 361–423.

Córtez, A., & Gutiérrez, K. (2019). Socio-spacial repertoires as tools for resistance and expansive literacies. In M. Pacheco, Z. Morales, & C. Hamilton (Eds.) (2019). *Transforming schooling for second language learners: Theoretical insights, policies, pedagogies and practices.* (pp. 123–142). Information Age.

Cummins, J., & Early, M. (2011). *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools.* IOE Press.

Dalton, B. (2012). Multimodal composition and the Common Core State Standards. *The Reading Teacher, 66*(4), 333–339.

Darrington, B., & Dousay, T. (2015). Using multimodal writing to motivate struggling students to write. *TechTrends, 59*(6), 29–34.

Elola, I., & Oskoz, A. (2010). Collaborative writing: Fostering foreign language and writing conventions development. *Language Learning & Technology, 14*(3), 51–71.

Echevarria, J. & Graves, A. (2014). Sheltered content instruction: Teaching english learners with diverse abilities (5th Ed.). Pearson.

García, O. & Li, W. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education.* Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Gee. J. P., & Hayes, E. R. (2011). *Language learning in the digital age.* Routledge.

Grapin, S. (2019). Multimodality in the new content standards era: Implications for English learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 53*(1), 30–55.

Hawkins, M. R. (2018). Transmodalities and transnational encounters: Fostering critical cosmopolitan relations. *Applied Linguistics, 39*(1), 55–77.

Jewitt, C. (2008). Multimodality and literacy in School classrooms. *Review of Research in Education*, *32*(1), 241–267. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X07310586.

Karam, F. J. (2017). Language and identity construction: The case of a refugee digital bricoleur. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 61*(5), 511–521.

Kibler, A. (2010). Writing through two languages: First language expertise in a language minority classroom. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 19,* 121–142.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication.* Routledge.

Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design.* Routledge.

Lee, A. Y., & Handsfield, L. J. (2018). Code meshing and writing instruction in multilingual classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 72,* 159–168.

Lemke, J. L. (1998). Multimedia demands of the scientific curriculum". *Linguistics and Education, 10*(3), 247–272.

Leung, C. (2014). Communication and participatory involvement in linguistically diverse classrooms. In S. May (Ed.), *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA.* TESOL and Bilingual Education: Routledge.

McClean, C. A. (2010). A space called home: An immigrant adolescent's digital literacy practices. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 54*(1), 13–22.

Ntelioglou, B. Y., Fannin, J., Montanera, M., & Cummins, J. (2014). A multilingual and multimodal approach to literacy teaching and learning in urban education: A collaborative inquiry project in an inner-city elementary school. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*(5), 533–542. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00533.

Pacheco, M. B., & Smith, B. E. (2015). Across languages, modes, and identities: Bilingual adolescents' multimodal codemeshing in the literacy classroom. *Bilingual Research Journal, 38*(3), 292–312.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistic perspective.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Smith, B. E. (2019a). Mediational modalities: Adolescents collaboratively interpreting literature through digital multimodal composing. *Research in the Teaching of English, 53*(3), 197–222.

Smith, B. E. (2019b). Collaborative multimodal composing: tracing the unique partnerships of three pairs of adolescents composing across three digital projects. *Literacy, 53*(1), 14–2.

Smith, B. E., Pacheco, M. B., & de Almeida, C. R. (2017). Multimodal codemeshing: Bilingual adolescents' processes composing across modes and languages. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 36,* 6–22.

Stein, P. (2000). Rethinking resources: Multimodal pedagogies in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(2), 333–336.

Stein, P. (2007). *Multimodal pedagogies in diverse classrooms: Representation, rights and resources.* Routledge.

van Leeuwen, T. (2015). Multimodality in education: Some directions and some questions. *TESOL Quarterly, 49,* 582–589.

Velasco, P., & García, O. (2014). Translanguaging and the writing of bilingual learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 37*(1), 6–23.

Velez, E., Silvia, S., & Tolbert, M. (2016). *Older adolescent and young adult English Learners: A study of demographics, policies, and programs.* U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/older-adolescent-young-adult-ell.pdf.

Wagner, J. (2018). Multilingual and multimodal interactions. *Applied Linguistics, 39*(1), 99–107.

Wang, H. (2018) A case study of English Language Learners' multimodal compositions and identity representations. Unpublished dissertation, Georgia State University.

Yi, Y. (2010). Adolescent multilingual writers' transitions across in- and out-of-school writing contexts. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 19,* 17–32.

Liv T. Dávila is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her scholarship addresses the education of multilingual immigrant and refugee students, with special attention to learner identities, language and literacy practices, and teacher ideologies. Her recent work has appeared in *Race, Ethnicity & Education, Modern Language Journal, Bilingual Research Journal*, and *TESOL Quarterly.*

Victoria Susberry is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her background is in Elementary Education, and her research interests focus on language biases in academic and non-academic settings.