Exploring the Boundaries of Emotion and Language: Elementary School Newcomers with Emerging Print Literacy as Co-researchers

by

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The participants in this study are students in Grades 4 to 6 who arrived in Canadian elementary schools with emerging print literacy not having had the right to learn to read and write before migrating to Canada. The research questions that guide this study are: Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools? What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices? And how do the students understand the relationship between these emotions and their identities and literacy practices?

To answer these questions, this research combines the theories of translanguaging, which views language as being socially constructed and complex (García & Wei, 2014); identity as social positions through which the self is developed (Hall, 1996; Moje, Luke, Davies & Street, 2009); and the sociality of emotion where emotions create the boundaries of what a person or idea is (Ahmed, 2004). Employing a humanizing methodological design (Paris, 2011), I utilized qualitative critical case studies to work with the students in co-creating oral and written texts as well as co-researching with the students to identify and analyze themes of emotions found in each-other’s texts. Each of the three case studies took place at a different school site and included four to six students and their teachers.
Key components of the students’ identities are plurilingualism, racialization, low socio-economic status, English-only writers, avid video-game players and social media users, regional migrators and sophisticated consumers of various cultural experiences. The student identified themes include love of family and friends, safety in religion, anger with writing and shyness about videos, which were interwoven with other themes from the data including trauma, print literacy humiliation and safety in Canada.

This research shows how plurilingual children who are in the process of learning to read and write can participate meaningfully in the research process. Emotions and translanguaging combine to take us deeper into understanding how the pedagogical incorporation of the students’ plurilingualism and previous experiences, especially with family, are essential to a classroom without humiliation that is truly culturally sustaining and trauma-informed.
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Note: This dissertation is written using the singular they when referencing any of the literature. The personal pronouns he/him and she/her are used for student and teacher participants.

I have highlighted the student participants words with the following colors:

- English
- Hungarian
- Arabic
- Arabic transliteration
- Spanish
- Hindi
- Tibetan transliteration
- Pashto
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context of the study

In my early days as a middle school educator, some of my own greatest learning as a teacher came from those students who arrived in Canadian classrooms not having learned to read and write in any language and not having had consistent access to formal schooling. These students, who were placed in Grade 6, 7 or 8 mainstream classrooms, taught me the importance of strong interpersonal connections as well as learning about students’ prior experiences. Through perseverance, we showed each other new ways of understanding the world as well as the complexity of learning. Together, we began to create our own space where students felt free to use their burgeoning literacy practices. This involved much listening to the students’ perspective and being attentive to emotional responses. At times, we questioned “those often unquestioned instructional and school cultural practices and flip[ped] elements of school culture, practices, and rules on their head” (Montero et al., 2012, p. 2). However, it never felt like it was enough. Moreover, as both a mainstream homeroom teacher and a specialized language teacher, I felt like I could be doing so much more for the students, and that I was failing them as an educator. With this thought in mind, I have turned my own thinking towards how to add to the research and further find ways to provide rich programming.

One key experience that influenced both my teaching and research occurred on the day I accepted a teaching position at the school where I taught for over ten years. On that day, I happened to pick up a copy of Toronto Life magazine, which I never do, and was drawn to the article entitled “The Prisoner.” It was an autobiography written from the perspective of a young man who had emigrated from Jamaica in middle school and had ended up attending the school where I had just accepted a teaching position. The young man had many negative experiences at my new school, and eventually ended up on the street and in prison. He described himself as being an ESD student (a term which meant English Skills Development (Coelho, 2001) but has often been misread, in my experience, as English as a Second Dialect). The current manifestation of this program, English Literacy Development (ELD), was to be part of my new job where I would work with newcomer students who had missed out on parts of their schooling. In the story, the young man talks about living with his cousin on the streets in Jamaica while his parents came to the United States and Canada to find work. He eventually settles with his father’s new
family, attending school and experiencing life in a community I would come to know well. Throughout the years, I have read similar autobiographies among many different groups of students, and used this story as a literacy tool to engage students while heeding this warning to myself regarding the risks of what can happen to students if we don’t do our jobs right and develop responsive strategies that build strong relationships, address racism and promote translanguaging.

Within the larger Canadian context, studies have found that these newcomer students and refugees in particular, do not always have positive experiences with schooling (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2017; Brubacher, 2013; Coelho, 1998; Kanu, 2008; Kaprielian-Churchill & Churchill, 1994; Montero et al., 2012; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stewart, 2011; Yau & Toronto Board of Education, 1995). Although my research is not specifically focused on refugee students, many of the studies on refugees in the Canadian context include students who have missed school and may not have learned to read and write in any language. Within the research on refugees, students describe experiencing racism (Kanu, 2008; Kaprielian-Churchill et al. 1994; Stewart, 2011; Yau, et al., 1995). For example, in Stewart's study, one of the findings was that "perceived racism and discrimination were most frequently discussed by the students . . . as a major challenge" (p. 178). They later state that there is “a need for stronger leadership and for school leaders to take action against issues related to injustice" (p. 185). In another study, Montero et al. (2012) found that students often feel misunderstood by their school administrators and treated unfairly. Montero et al.call for schools to improve refugee students’ sense of belonging by validating their first language skills, supporting refugee student leadership within the school, and making both school discipline and climate more equitable for all refugee students. Likewise, Kanu (2008) found that some schools offer generic refugee support programs that are not informed by input from the refugees themselves and that the increase in refugee students has not been accompanied by appropriate school support. The students in their study suggested, amongst other things, that teachers slow down and provide academic support; extend English support, even after being transitioned to mainstream classes; reduce racism; and make schools more welcoming to refugees. Similar to my experience, the research in Canadian Secondary schools suggests that there is a lack of understanding and rich programming for students.
For the most part, the students in my study are part of what Li (1999) refers to as the emerging non-White population in Canada. They are part of a larger movement towards racial and linguistic diversification across Canada wherein three-quarters of new immigrants come from racialized backgrounds (Rummens & Dei, 2010). Although not all of the students in my study may be racialized, many are. I feel that it is important to address some key concerns that have arisen from Maynard’s (2017) work on the experiences of students who are racialized as Black. In their work *Policing Black Lives*, Maynard critiques anti-Blackness within the school system drawing attention to such matters as Black children not being constructed as innocent and “thus[,] the worthiness of ensuring their security and protection” (p. 210) is implicated. They further provide examples of Black students being streamed into lower track classes and special education or even placed in “ill-suited” welcoming classes that are “deficient to meeting their students’ needs” (p. 215) simply because of their nationality. In these ways, racism in schools is a key issue already identified in the literature.

### 1.2 Defining key terms: marginalization, plurilingual and limited, interrupted or Refugee

How a language is defined and labelled can work to marginalize the people who speak it. But what does marginalize even mean? Canadian-based researchers Rummens and Dei (2010), working in the area of anti-racism, define marginalization as being:

educators, teachers, along with other adults and peers, who—through their identifications, their "seeing" and "not-seeing" their social inclusion or exclusion—relegate certain individuals and social groups toward the edge of the societal boundary, away from the core of import. Marginalization is thus a process, not a label—a process of social devaluation that serves to justify disproportional access to scarce societal resources. (p. 50)

Some of the groups who are often marginalized in schools are racialized students and the speakers of non-standardized forms of languages (Bourdieu, 2001; Brubacher, 2013; Cross, 2003; Nero & Ahmad, 2014). Bourdieu (1986, 2001) examines the power of official languages and how they place people within hierarchies. They have found that schools can become powerful places for the reproduction of official discourses on language. For the children in this study, learning to read and write in their home languages may not have been made available to them. Schooling not only pressures them to learn a new language, in many cases, but to learn to
read and write for the first time in a language they may not understand in a system that is foreign to them.

Being thought of as a multilingual/bilingual or monolingual is part of a discourse that is social in nature (Otheguy et al., 2015). Within the Canadian context, Motha (2014) examines the social nature of the term multilingual, as it is often a proxy for the term non-native that imagines a monolingual or bilingual French and English speaker as a Canadian identity. Due to these reasons, both of these terms then remain problematic when referring to the students in my study. Therefore, I refer to student participants who speak more than one language as plurilingual, as defined by the Council of Europe (2001). Not only is plurilingual a new term that moves away from the social construction of the terms bilingual and multilingual in the Canadian setting, but it also asks that we look at students’ entire language repertoire regardless of their print literacy usage in those named languages. According to García (2009), plurilingualism is not balanced bilingualism or equal competence in two languages. It includes hybrid language practices. Although García and Otheguy (2020) now problematize plurilingualism as being designed for privileged children and not incorporating non-European languages, I do the opposite with this research and use this term with racialized, under-privileged children. Their term of emergent bilingual gets conflated with official bilingualism, English and French, in the Canadian context.

There is a common assumption in the literature that children arriving in Canada beyond the age of eight who have not learned to read and write are refugees. This has not been reflective of my professional experiences, which means there is a gap between the literature and the actual experiences of students in our schools. In general, the children described in this study may come from experiences of war, poverty, regional migration, plurilingualism, racism and/or religious persecution. They may also come from schools where there was a lack of resources or trained teachers (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). Beyond students who fit the legal definition of refugee, I have had students over the years whose parents were either a nanny or migrant worker and then married a Canadian. After many years of separation from their children, parents were permitted to sponsor their child to come to Canada, who may have been living with grandma and grandpa. In a number of cases, the guardian back home had not required the child to attend school, or the child had attended an under-resourced school. This meant there were significant gaps in the
child’s formal schooling. In these ways, newcomers with emergent print literacy in Canadian schools are not synonymous with students who have arrived to Canada as refugees.

Canada has strict immigration laws that allow people to enter permanently either as a refugee (Government of Canada, 2018a), as a part of family reunification (Government of Canada, 2021), or as an immigrant with cultural capital relevant to the Canadian context (Government of Canada, 2018b). There are programs for migrant workers, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (Government of Canada, 2018c), but current laws only allow the migrant workers to stay in Canada for under a year and make it difficult for the workers to seek permanent residency status or citizenship (Massey & Brown, 2011). This may change now due to the pandemic and the media attention on the living and work conditions of migrant workers. Organizations such as Justicia Justice continue to fight for the workers’ equal rights (Justicia-Justice, 2018). It is with the children of these workers that my research interests begin. However, throughout the study I did not ask about children’s immigration status. I draw attention to this here to highlight how the assumption that all newcomers who have emerging print literacy are refugees is false.

Many terms have been applied to this group of students such as low literacy and over-age, amongst others (Brubacher, 2013). Currently, there seems to be some consistency in the literature of referring to the students as having limited and/or interrupted prior schooling, as is the case in Ontario (OME, 2008). DeCapua and Marshall (2011) write that those students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) "are well versed in capitalizing on the world around them and have extensive pragmatic or ‘funds of knowledge’ on the basis of life experiences to interpret and organize new knowledge” (p. 36). The students have many things to offer but the label "limited" does not recognize these assets. Instead, it views them through a deficit lens as limited and having gaps. Another term that is often used in the literature, especially in Canada, is refugee (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Brewer, 2016; Cole, 2000; MacNevin, 2012; Wilkinson, 2002). However, refugee is a bureaucratic term created to explain why a person has immigrated to Canada or, a legal term created by the United Nations, not a comment on who a person is. As Rutter (2006) argues, “The hegemonic construction of the refugee child assumes homogeneity, yet the refugee children that I met came from many different countries and had very different pre-migration and post-migration experiences” (p. 5). In truth, refugees
are a very diverse group of students with varying academic aspirations and needs (Shakya et al., 2010). Some refugees may have print literacy in their first languages whereas others may not. Not only that, but, as stated earlier, some of the students in my study may not be refugees. In my previous research, I chose to use the term students in English Literacy Development (ELD) programs (Brubacher, 2013), which is what the program for students with limited prior schooling is called in Ontario (OME, 2008).

For the purposes of this study, I refer to the students as newcomers with emerging print literacy. I have chosen to use the term print literacy as opposed to literacy, as the students may have highly developed oral literacy skills and may be even better at understanding how “audio, gestural, and spatial meaning, and multimodal interplay” (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011, p. 230) to create meaning. The idea then becomes to continue to incorporate all of the students’ literacy practices with an intensive focus on their emerging print literacy practices. Moreover, emergent literacy is a term used in primary education to describe students who are learning to read and write for the first time. However, I have modified the term from emergent to emerging because emergent literacy is often used in reading development charts and leveled readers to denote students reading at a Kindergarten to early Grade 1 level (Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2017; Reading A-Z, 2018; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). I would like to move away from such a precise, English-only orientation towards understanding the students’ literacy practices. Therefore, I use the term emerging as opposed to emergent to avoid confusion. In the area of language education, emergent is a term used to describe bilinguals who are in the process of learning English (García & Kleifgen, 2010). In this way, although this terminology is new, it is connected to the literature on literacy and language. The goal of this research is to understand who newcomers with emerging print literacy are in elementary schools. I also worked with the students in making sense of their identities and literacy practices through the emotions that define them.

1.3 Participants

Part of the aim of my study was to find out who newcomers with emerging print literacy students are in the Canadian context. Through my research, I document more empirically the full diversity of this category of student. My study includes any student who fits into the general category I have identified, namely newcomers who have emerging print literacy. I then look for common themes for this group of students who enter Canada not having learned to read and
write in their home country while looking, as well, at what is unique to each population. In general, the students I researched with include: 1) students from countries where English is not predominant, 2) children of migrant workers, 3) refugee children, 4) students excluded from formal education due to ableism, and 5) immigrants. I had also hoped to research with students from English-speaking countries, as they have been part of my professional practice and I wanted to include them in the study. I begin with them.

1.3.1 Students from English-speaking countries

The group I was not able to address with this study included children from countries in which English is the medium of instruction or otherwise a dominant language, but where the children have not been able to access schools and/or print literacy. This is where my own interest in this research begins: with English speaking students from the Caribbean who have not been able to attend school consistently or have attended an under-resourced school. There has been some Canadian research on newcomer Caribbean youth’s experiences in schools with language and literacy programming (Coelho, 1986; Scott, 2003). In my experience, many students come from the Caribbean with extensive formal education. However, there are students who have not had these experiences: for example, students from Guyana who attended school and learned rote skills but did not have access to written material in the school. This translates into the students entering Canadian schools with emerging print literacy. Moreover, my colleagues and I have worked with the students from Saint Vincent and Jamaica, who had not attended school at all or who, according to the students, had attended schools with high levels of violence and little learning. Research has already found that students with lower reading levels are more likely to drop-out (Anisef et al., 2010). Building on Anisef’s research, my concern is that without recognizing that the students may need teaching strategies that address their unique experiences, they may be over-identified as students in need of Special Education programming, or drop out of school altogether.

1.3.2 Students from countries where English is not predominant

All of my student participants immigrated from countries where English was not predominant. These included Hungary, Slovakia, Syria, Afghanistan, Mexico, Eritrea and Tibet. The Tibetan children also spent time in India and learned Hindi, so although English may be
predominant in India, the participants were not significantly exposed to English while living or going to school in India. In these situations, English was not predominant and the child’s print literacy skills were emerging in all their languages including Hungarian, Roma, Slovak, Arabic, Pashto, Spanish, Eritrean, Tibetan and Hindi. Regardless of the languages spoken, the children in my study have emerging print literacy.

1.3.3 Children of migrant workers

As mentioned earlier, Canada has a number of migrant workers supporting their families who live back home. Due to Canada’s immigration laws, it is difficult for the parents to gain immigrant status and sponsor their children as dependents to come and live in Canada. One group that has had some success is Low German speaking Mennonites from Mexico and Bolivia who are able to use ancestry visas to immigrate to Canada (Bowen, 2010; Brubacher & Wilson-Forsberg, 2017; Crocker, 2013; Robinson, 2017; Stille et al., 2016). In my previous research (Brubacher, 2011), two of my teacher participants worked with large populations of migrant workers. They described students who immigrated to and from Canada based on the planting and harvest seasons. I have also worked with the children of migrant workers who gained citizenship through marriage. Often the parent would have a new spouse and stepchildren. The child would immigrate to Canada to live with the parent and their new family leaving their former primary caregivers back home. I did not ask students about their immigration status as part of this study, but based on what I learned about some of the participants in my study, they may be the children of migrant workers.

1.3.4 Refugee children

Most obviously refugee students fit into this category; however, it was not until recently with the large migration of students from Syria that I have had the privilege of working with many students labeled refugee. Refugees are a very diverse population. In fact, I can even see from my work with Syrian students at my own school that many of the students have extensive schooling and would thus not qualify for the research I wished to complete. In general, refugees as a group have been extensively researched; however, it is rarer to have the researcher focus solely on the experiences of newcomers with emerging print literacy such as Dávila’s (2015) work with two teenage girls from Somalia and the Congo in Secondary school. One group who
has been trying to achieve refugee status to varying success in Canada is the Roma population (Levinson, 2009). These students were part of my study. Another group of students may be refugee students from a range of African countries, who are highly reflected in the existing literature in this area (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow et al., 2017; Cassity & Gow, 2005; Dávila, 2015; Dooley & Thangaperumal, 2011; Frounfelker et al., 2017; Kanu, 2008; Roxas, 2011; Shapiro, 2014; Stewart, 2011). One of the student participants immigrated from Eritrea. However, in general, the immigration status of the student participants is unclear.

1.3.5 Students excluded from formal education due to ableism

Finally, students are sometimes excluded from education because of physical or learning disabilities. Through my professional experiences, I have found that a lack of special education services or even any schooling at all in the home country due to a learning or physical disability could factor into a student’s print literacy. For example, a student with cerebral palsy may not have a learning disability but may still have been forced to sit at the back of the class and not join in the classroom lessons. However, distinguishing the disability from the interruptions to schooling becomes very challenging. One of my student participants from Slovakia who had missed much schooling due to personal illness fits this category.

1.3.6 Immigrants

Although there may be an expectation that most of the participants in this study are refugees, many could simply be immigrants as well. For example, many recent Tibetan immigrants to Canada are from communities that resettled in India during the 1960s (Nyanang, 2021), as opposed to refugees fleeing Tibet. The participants from Slovakia and Mexico may have been immigrants as well. To conclude, defining these different ways that the participants arrived at my study with newcomers with emerging print literacy is not because I want to create a new system for categorizing them, but rather because I want to stress the diversity in their lived experiences and push back against how the kids are labelled and categorized at school.

1.4 The empirical study

The main purpose of this study is to focus solely on newcomers with emerging print literacy to enable them to critically examine their literacy practices and identities. I understand their literacy practices and identities as positioned by social forces and emotions. Following
Ahmed’s (2004) concept of emotions, I recognize that emotions and social-hierarchy are interconnected. Emotions come both from within and without and begin to define the boundaries of who we are. From this perspective I used this knowledge to work with the students in understanding how the social positioning of their literacy practices and identities influences what emotions get associated with them.

My primary focus is on students, but I also worked with teachers in this study. For the students, I conducted a series of critical case studies using humanizing methods (Paris, 2011). Each classroom where I researched with the students was seen as a separate case study site where I conducted research with the student on their literacy practices and identities focusing on how emotions get stuck to these things. The students produced a series of multi-modal texts that reflected their entire language repertoire. These texts included videos for literacy profiles using Flipgrid technology inspired by the study More than “Just Good Teaching”: Mainstream Teacher Education for Supporting English Language Learners led by Dr. Jeff Bale, Dr. Antoinette Gagné and Dr. Julie Kerekes. As a research assistant, I played an integral role in putting together the video prompts for that project. On Flipgrid, we designed prompts, which were used instead of semi-structured interviews, as a way of including the students’ knowledges on who they are and their language and, in my case, literacy practices. I also had the students create a number of written texts that would incorporate their entire language repertoire. These texts became part of the data. Near the end of each case study, the students participated in focus-group discussions where they acted as co-researchers identifying key emotions present in each other’s texts. They asked a series of questions that revealed why they identified a text as having a certain emotion. The students also asked for their insights into what histories and structures have shaped those emotions. Students’ ideas during the focus group interviews informed my own analysis drawing the research in directions that are important to them.

The teachers were my collaborators. For the teachers, I conducted audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews at the beginning and end of the research period as well as audio-recordings of any pertinent informal conversations. These interviews were an additional window into who the students are. Further, I also collaborated with the teacher to create a series of activities that encouraged the students to use their entire language repertoire in their writing. I created some data collection tools, which I discuss later in my methodology section, but I was also open to
working with teachers on their existing program to include collaborating with them to create new activities. Such collaboration extended to sometimes giving the teachers my lesson plans and negotiated appropriate times to enter the classroom to implement these data collection tools. Other times I looked at the teacher’s existing program and suggested ways lessons and unit plans could be modified to meet the expectations of my research. Namely, this was the inclusion of students’ entire language repertoire. Thirdly, I met with the teachers outside of class time to create activities with them that addressed both my research needs and their curricular demands. Again, my goals were the inclusion of students’ entire language repertoire and the creation of written and oral texts that draw attention to the students’ respective positioning.

In terms of teaching the lessons, I used a number of different models. One co-teaching model was for me to formally teach the lessons I had created while the classroom teacher and/or ELD teacher listened to the instructions, interjecting ideas and comments as needed. Once the formal lesson was complete and the students were working on the activities, we would all circulate and support students in their learning. I focused my support more on the participants in the study while still supporting all the students learning as needed. Alternatively, if we decided to use the teacher’s existing program with modifications put in place, it was the teacher taking the lead of the teaching and myself interjecting. In this case, I then worked closely with the participants on the class activities. Finally, following the third model of us creating programming together, we both co-taught the lesson. This meant splitting the class into two or three groups with all of us teaching these groups separately or teaching the class at the same time. The teacher delivered the lesson and I reinforced the learning with the participants by going over the expectations again, adding in translanguaging strategies and giving them feedback.

In designing this study, I saw two major theoretical issues at play: translanguaging (García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014) and the sociality of emotion (Ahmed, 2004, 2010). This study was also informed by identity as position (Moje et al., 2009). With translanguaging, García draws attention to the practices of using an entire language repertoire. Languages are a single array that is always activated. Ahmed on the other hand is concerned with emotion and how emotions circulate within histories and structures giving shape to people and ideas. It is the emotions that become associated with a subject or idea that matter. Finally, Moje et al. discuss how multi-dimensional identities are ever-changing and positioned across space and time. With
García, language is a complex interrelated discourse where the multilingual person brings together all facets of their lives; whereas Ahmed is concerned with how emotions give shape to these facets. These theoretical concepts connect in that they allow the students to examine the emotions that are associated with and give shape to their identities and literacy practices. These emotions take us both further in and allow us to examine how histories position literacy practices and identities.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

First, I examine the relevant literature in the area of refugee studies/limited prior schooling, literacy, and language. Second, I explain my theoretical framework and how each component relates to my topic. Thirdly, I outline the methodologies and research tools I plan to use in the completion of my study. Chapter 4 is then a description of each of my school sites, teachers, and participants. Chapters 5 through 7 are the analysis and findings. Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation by highlighting the significance of the study, limitations, and areas for further research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In Canada, there have been a few studies on the instruction of newcomers with emerging print literacy. For example, Guided Reading and Running Records, which are primary literacy strategies, have been used to research refugee teenage youth (Montero et al., 2014). Montero et al.’s quantitative study with secondary students found that the use of guided reading and running records\(^1\) has had tremendous impact on the acceleration of students’ print literacy skills for refugee students with limited prior schooling at the secondary level in Ontario. In general, they stated that the students need literacy instruction not just language instruction. Montero et al. use the term balanced literacy to describe a program that incorporates oral, reading and writing skills by using centers to teach a range of skills while the students are not working with the teacher in a guided reading group. Another study in Prince Edward Island, with intermediate and senior level refugee children in schools found that literacy and language acquisition is a challenge in a new language when you do not have a great deal of skills in your first language (MacNevin, 2012). The main themes in MacNevin’s exploratory qualitative research study were inclusion, dealing with trauma and learning more about students’ backgrounds. However, the experiences of students with emerging print literacy practices were only a part of their larger study on refugees in general.

Other researchers have only begun to touch on the experiences of these students in Canadian elementary schools. For example, a study on identity texts (Cummins et al., 2015) examined a number of identity projects in Ontario some of which were with students in ELD programs. In one case, the students created multi-modal books that connected their own experiences to the migration of geese. Another project used Cummins’ literacy engagement framework (Cummins et al., 2012). Here, two stories are provided, which demonstrated how schools can cause damage to students’ developing identities. The researchers worked with the children to reconstruct the narratives of their lives. One of the stories took place in a specialized

\(^1\) A specific whole language approach to reading that requires teachers to pre-teach vocabulary and content, have the students read passages aloud while the teacher records errors and ask the students a range of comprehension questions to check for understanding (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, 1996).
ELD classroom where teachers became upset with a student for including a gun in his identity text. Both of these studies demonstrate the importance of identity work with all students, some of whom may have emerging print literacy. However, these studies are about all multilingual students and include newcomers with emerging print literacy practices as part of their larger research projects.

Previously, Chapter 1 offered a description of this dissertation and delved into setting its context. In this chapter, I deeply analyze themes from the literature in this area. I begin by examining the literature on refugee students and the major theoretical frameworks associated with this area of study. I then look at the history of an understanding of literacy and how it pertains to second language education before going into the field of languaging and how it pertains to identity and race. I end this chapter with a discussion of my theoretical framework and how all the pieces fit together.

2.2 Framing refugee students and their learning in schools

As much of the research on students with emerging print literacy is focused within the larger field of refugee students, studies with refugees are included in this review even if the newcomers with emerging print literacy are only a small part of that research. The population of students I care about in this study are largely understudied except in the literature on refugee students. Therefore, I will guide the reader through some of the theories that have informed this research in order to understand what is missing in the literature and why this study is needed. Theoretical frameworks that appeared across a range of studies include culturally relevant pedagogy and Bronfenbrenner’s biological theory of human development. In this next section, I briefly summarize these theories and explain how they have been used in the field of refugee students and how they connect to my own theoretical framework.

2.2.1 Culturally relevant pedagogy

Responding to students’ cultures and previous experiences is a well-established approach within the field of education regardless of how it is framed (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Ladson-Billings’ (1995) formative work with a group of exceptional teachers working with African-American students focused on student success instead of failure. They found that the teachers cared about the impact their teaching had on students’ lives and
took political stances that held them personally accountable. At its core, “culturally relevant pedagogy must provide students with a way to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). Teachers incorporated strategies such as using the school community as the basis for curriculum in the classroom. They held fluid relationships with their students and encouraged collaboration, developing a community of learners. Gay (2000) took Ladson-Billings’ ideas even further by creating a framework which they called *culturally responsive teaching*. Gay’s research encompasses Latino, Asian and Native American, as well as African American students focusing on “classroom instruction in *multiethnic cultural frames of reference*” (p. xxiii). For Gay, story is at the center of their approach to research and teaching. Gay’s work not only looks at students’ cultural knowledge and prior experiences but also delves into their performance styles. Howard’s (2003) work adds to the field by proposing a model of critical teacher reflection. They state that this reflection needs to happen before teachers enter into the social justice work of *culturally responsive pedagogy*. Finally, Paris (2012) questions the terms “relevant” and “responsive” and instead calls for a *culturally sustaining pedagogy* that focuses on both language and literacy as well as other cultural practices. In general, these theories state that there is a disconnect between home and school culture, which leads to underachievement.

Many researchers in the field of refugee research and newcomers with emerging print literacy have found it relevant to include a form of culturally responsive pedagogy in their own frameworks (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Bajaj et al., 2017; DeCapua, 2016; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010 & 2011; McBrien, 2005; Montero et al., 2012; Shapiro, 2014). Ayoub et al. (2016) use culturally responsive pedagogy (Howard, 2003) as a way of valuing cultural knowledge and different ways of knowing amongst refugee newcomers in Southwestern Ontario. They focus on the pre-migration experiences of the refugee students including trauma and lack of formal schooling and find that schools must adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy for refugee students to succeed. Montero et al., a group researching the experiences of refugee students in an ELD program in a Waterloo, Ontario Secondary school, incorporated Gay’s culturally responsive pedagogy with the concepts of critical multiculturalism and school belonging to inform their own research. Shapiro’s (2014) research combines Kubota & Lin’s (2006) critical race theory with Ladson-Billings’ work. Kubota et al. criticize the field of teaching English to speakers of other
languages (TESOL) for not addressing the idea of race and related concepts, whereas Ladson-Billings (1998) calls for the inclusion of stories about racism. By combining these two theorists, Shapiro (2014) hoped “to create a new space for stories about race and difference” (p. 390) within the field of society and education. These studies as well as others show the powerful ways in which culturally responsive pedagogy can be used in the teaching and understanding of the students.

In the Canadian context, Haque (2012) problematizes the concept of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework given the dominance of the two colonial languages in Canadian schools—English and French, and yet many of our students and teachers speak a wide variety of languages. This super-diversity can lead to communities living parallel lives that do not always overlap with one another (Vertovec, 2007). In response, in 1971, the Canadian government created the concept of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (Cummins, 2014, p. 1; Prasad, 2012). Although this concept focuses positively on the cultural contributions of a wide range of backgrounds, it does not aim to highlight the importance of a plurilingual identity in Canada. Translanguaging is the reality even if policy dictates otherwise. Schools and communities have a choice as to how languages are displayed and heard reflecting the value institutions place on translanguaging. Therefore, although culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on culture, which includes language, I would prefer to use a framework with language at its center, one that seeks to move educators away from not just Eurocentric pedagogy but also an English-only, monolingual pedagogy.

Another well-developed and disseminated framework that includes culturally responsive practices is the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP), a program developed by DeCapua and Marshall (2011) that aims to create a bridge to transition students into the American educational system. First, DeCapua and Marshall (2011) state that cultural dissonance must be addressed in any classroom with what they refer to as students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). They write that teachers must address the social nature of the classroom, not just academics. Therefore, culturally based pedagogy that addresses cultural dissonance (Ladson-Billings, 1995) is a key component of the MALP model. According to DeCapua and Marshall (2011) this means that teachers must develop close relationships with their students and respond to their cultural as well as academic and linguistic needs. Secondly,
DeCapua and Marshall (2011) find that SLIFE students view learning under the paradigm of immediate relevance, interconnectedness, shared responsibility, oral transmission, and pragmatic tasks which contrasts with how U.S schools view learning: future relevance, independence, individual accountability, written word and academic tasks (p. 40). This model claims to take essential elements of both and amalgamate them into the students’ program. For example, a teacher might create a program that has immediate relevance and interconnectedness as well as shared responsibility and oral transmission but also incorporates academic tasks that include individual accountability and the printed word. Therefore, using oral language and cooperative learning are essential aspects of the MALP model. According to these researchers, this concept of interconnectedness is essential for students coming from collectivist cultures who may find the individual competition in academic settings foreign and disconcerting. DeCapua and Marshall create a model where students have the added responsibility of mastering English and learning to read and write all while meeting the grade-level curriculum expectation and adjusting to school culture.

Although DeCapua & Marshall (2011) raise many interesting concerns especially around cultural dissonance and detail practical strategies for supporting students through this dissonance, I find their model problematic for two reasons. The first is that the focus is on supporting students to learn to read and write in English with little attention paid to the development of students’ entire linguistic repertoire. Secondly, I find their model to be too prescriptive in that it assumes one side of a binary reflects the experiences of newcomers with emerging print literacy. I attempted to explain this model to practicing teachers in an in-service professional development context. Many of the participants found that it made essentialist statements about students’ cultures that were not necessarily true of their newcomers with emerging print literacy practices. In these ways, although MALP has an interesting perspective to add to the literature and teaching practice, in general, it focuses on English only.

2.2.2 Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological theory of human development

To move research towards an understanding of the environment and context of child development, Anderson et al. (2004) first suggested the use of Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1999) for refugee children. They feel that due to displacement and trauma, refugee students are a special
population and many schools do not have special support systems in place to address their needs. Anderson et al. suggest using the bio-ecological theory with refugee children is an attempt to “create schools that are better prepared to meet their needs” (p. 2). But what exactly is the bio-ecological theory. Within Bronfenbrenner’s (2001) model,

Development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings both as individuals and as groups. The phenomenon extends over the life course across successive generations and through historical time, both past and present. (p. 3)

Therefore, by using this approach, there is an attempt to place development within an historical context. Bronfenbrenner et al. (1999) outline five contexts in their model: microsystem (family, friends, teachers and other people you connect with on a daily basis), mesosystem (connections between different Microsystems), exosystem (more distant people like family friends or community members who can indirectly affect you), macrosystem (customs, laws and ideologies) and chronosystem (changes over time like puberty). Anderson et al. (2004) then integrate Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological theory with their own model of the development of the refugees through premigration, transmigration and postmigration ecologies. This is a way of looking at the changing environment of the refugee child before, during and after migration providing a snapshot of the different ecologies of the student.

Since the publication of Anderson et al.’s (2004) research, there have been a wide range of studies on refugee students that incorporate the Bronfenbrenner model with the stages of migration when researching refugee children (Frounfelder et al., 2017; Hamilton, 2004; Kanu, 2008; Li et al., 2017; McBrien, 2011; Rutter, 2006; Stewart, 2012). Frounfelder et al. discuss the experiences of Somali Bantu refugees where in their pre-migration experiences they were treated as second class citizens and were historically positioned as slaves. Frounfelder et al. (2017) then compare the current experiences of the Somali Bantu refugees’ postmigration ecology where they were “part of a racial minority in their schools and heard racist comments from peers” (p. 392). Parents’ expectations are described as being at odds with the schools. Despite this the parents were hopeful and had high expectations of their children. The mesosystem, which included the school environment and peers, as well as the macrosystem of US politics and law
are then discussed. Kanu (2008) uses a slightly different version of the bioecological model focusing on individual’s inner most thoughts and not addressing the chronosystem (changes over time). Their research with African refugees in Manitoba included the policies of school divisions and the political views of refugees as well as micro and meso systems that focused on friends and family. Stewart’s (2012) research as well supports the use of a bioecological model with refugee students, as they believe this approach would address many of the challenges refugees experience in Canada.

My concern is that although this research is important within the field of psychology (Agic et al., 2016) within education this model, borrowed from psychology, lends itself to an over-focus on trauma that frames refugees as a problem that must be fixed. Matthews (2008) tells us that “[p]reoccupations with therapeutic interventions locate issues at an individual level and overlook broader dimensions of inequality and disadvantage” (p. 32). However, in defense of the bio-ecological model, it does address the refugee children’s post-migration experiences as well as the pre and transmigration experiences. In this way, many of the researchers using this model address issues of racism and discrimination in the host country in their studies. Regardless, “the construction of the refugee child as ‘traumatized’ impedes a real analysis of their backgrounds and experiences” (Rutter, 2006, p. 5). To conclude, the research on refugees is the largest literature base in my study; however, not all refugees are newcomers with emerging print literacy and not all newcomers with emerging print literacy are refugees. Versions of culturally responsive pedagogy and the biological theory of human development are common in this literature. While they are helpful, they can focus too much on English and trauma and be overly prescriptive.

2.3 An overview of literacy and how it pertains to second language education

How literacy is constructed and understood can greatly influence students’ experiences with schooling. Within this area of research, literacy has been viewed from a wide range of frameworks. For example, researchers such as Perry and Homan (2015) problematize equating functional literacy with basic literacy skills and reading levels with adults. For them, functional literacy can also include reading for personal enjoyment, rather than just reading and writing for the performance of everyday tasks. Whereas other researchers call for frameworks that focus on basic reading skills along with higher level thinking tasks such as Dooley’s (2009) use of
Freebody and Luke’s Four Resources model. They believe that it is crucial for students to acquire resources for conceptually deep and critical literacy tasks while still learning basic reading and writing skills. Researchers have suggested that effective teaching strategies need to include the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students (Musetti et al., 2009; Toledo, 1998). For instance, educators can take the time to make the connection between oral and written communication clearer. Musetti et al. (2009) suggest other strategies such as cooperative learning, scaffolding, progressing from simple to concrete, a holistic approach, and developing higher order thinking skills. In the next section, I discuss how our understanding of literacy has changed and then how this connects to the field of second language education.

2.3.1 Expanding views of literacy

Traditional views of literacy place students within a binary of literate versus illiterate with the latter being seen as a deficit. However, illiteracy is political and is the result of injustice and is not just a question of methodology or pedagogy (Freire, 1985/2005). Moreover, viewing literacy as the ability to read and write in an official language only serves to marginalize the previous literacy experiences of all multilingual students. Street (2013) traces the history of modern literacy practices highlighting the movement from a scientific approach to understanding literacy as a social practice. First, there was the ongoing debate about whether literacy skills should be highlighted by teachers or the actual social practices of the students. This led to a whole language approach to reading with a focus on meaning, even personal meaning in some cases, over the function of language. Overall, literacy began to be seen as social practices. For example, Heath’s (1982) research on the early childhood literacy practices in three diverse communities looks at how “ways of taking from books are as much a part of learned behavior as are ways of eating, sitting, playing games, and building houses” (p. 49). Finally, Canagarajah (2013) discusses how Western conceptions of literacy impose on other cultures. They do not recognize that literacy may vary from one situation to the next. Because our world and how we transmit information and knowledge is changing, the teaching and understanding of literacy must change. Despite all of this, Cummins et al. (2007) notice a disturbing trend towards rigid enforcement of phonics learning in the primary years in low-income neighborhoods, and a more engaging reading program in white, middle-class neighborhoods. The debate between research that views literacy as a social practice and the teaching practices of literacy as a set of skills to be
developed continues. The following section discusses more recent debates and emerging perspectives from the literature.

2.3.1.1 **Multiliteracies**

One form of literacy that asks us to expand our understanding to include other forms of communication is multiliteracies. For example, The New London Group (1996) writes that “literacy pedagogy must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies . . . for instance, visual design in desktop publishing or the interface of visual and linguistic meaning in multimedia” (p. 61). The meaning that comes from the layout of a page is often as essential as the words in the text. With multiliteracies, literacy happens in the home, workplace and in cultural and religious practices including students’ home and local literacies as well as their informal and vernacular languages not just school literacy including new forms of technology (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Egleson, 2009; New London Group, 1996; Rowsell et al., 2008). Moreover, all types of communication, not just formal writing, are seen as literacies, reaffirming that a student who does not know how to read and write can still be seen as literate. Multiliteracies present us with a new, more holistic approach to literacy instruction that has moved beyond traditional, outdated models. I used multiliteracies in large part to frame my previous research (Brubacher, 2011) on teachers’ discourses, finding in part that teachers had not moved beyond passive techniques such as allowing students to use languages other than English with their peers. Moreover, the teachers struggled to create authentic literacy practices with their newcomers with emerging print literacy. Finally, critical literacy, which I discuss next, was only present in a few of the teachers’ discourses, who were not able to find ways to have their emerging print literacy students participate in these deeper more conceptually rich tasks.

2.3.1.2 **Critical literacy**

Multiliteracies is part of the larger movement towards critical literacy, an approach to literacy that is rooted in the tradition of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is an area with its origins in the education of illiterate adults that calls for a disruption to the structure of schooling (Freire, 1970/2003). Many researchers have built on Freire’s ideas including McLaren (1992) who states that traditional pedagogies produce a form of literacy that is in the interest of the
dominant class. Moreover, they state that all language reproduces dominant power relationships (p. 10). Likewise, Fischman and McLaren (2005) discuss how critical pedagogy demands that you not only understand education but transform it. They state that education is the production and reproduction of the labor/power relationships. However, dialogical knowing, on the other hand, where students create and recreate knowing together, always connects people to their socio-political context. Instead, they state, teachers should adopt critical literacies and engage students in discourses of non-Western liberation. Critical theory, as discussed by Lincoln et al. (2013), asks for the taking of action. Participants are asked to work towards social transformation so that they can take control of their futures. Realities are shaped by the political and historical and this must be taken into consideration as false consciousness is stripped away in order for true social transformation to take place. Strega (2005) discusses the notion of the false consciousness as that the individual is sometimes “deceived into complicity with oppression and will therefore unintentionally think and behave in ways that harm herself” (p. 221). To conclude, critical pedagogy and the stripping away of false consciousness are founded in the experiences of newcomers with emerging print literacy through Paulo Freire.

Critical literacy is a large area of research with its leaders ranging from Barbara Comber, Peter Freebody and Carolyn McKinney to Valerie Kinloch, Allan Luke, and Hilary Janks. White and Cooper (2015) write that “critical literacy and democracy are intertwined … but are not one and the same thing” (p. 1). They believe that a deeper conception of democracy leads to critical literacy. Moreover, critical literacy is concerned with how literacy is a social and cultural practice, how power is conveyed and reproduced through language use, and how students can analyze and dissect all forms of culture (Lau, 2011). Critical literacy asks students to look at deeper levels of comprehension by critically analyzing multiple perspectives and looking at how power is imbalanced in a text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Overall, critical literacy seeks to disrupt the common, examine multiple viewpoints, focus on socio-political issues, and promote social justice. First, one must look carefully at the texts chosen for study and make the social issues from that text integral to the literacy program. Wilson and Laman (2007) state that “language practices and literacies are never neutral and that social issues books are an integral part of a critical literacy curriculum” (p. 40). Instead of looking at reading as solely a skill that needs to be learned, teachers must examine the social issues of the text and make them central to
their teaching practice. Moreover, as mentioned earlier with multiliteracies, critical literacy is not just about containing texts to the written word, but instead oral, visual, and graphic representations of language (Norton & Vanderheyden, 2004) become a central part of literacy experiences. Lau (2010) presents the importance of incorporating critical work with multilingual students, even those at the beginning levels of English acquisition. Although their research is not focused on newcomers with emerging print literacy, it does draw attention to the use of critical literacy in multilingual settings.

Within the field of second-language education, there has been some research on the use of critical pedagogy with plurilingual students (Akbari, 2008; Couch, 2017; Cummins, 2000; Pennycook, 1990, 2001). Pennycook (1990) critiqued traditional approaches to applied linguistics as having a positivist orientation towards language and teaching, which means “the social, cultural, political and historical context and implications of language teaching” (p. 304) are lacking: the field of applied linguistics is focused on banking and transmission models of teaching. Pennycook writes that critique, transformation and the exploration of knowledge, culture and power are at the heart of all critical pedagogy models. Cummins’ (2000) intervention for collaborative empowerment is one approach to critical pedagogy that greatly influenced my previous research on students in ELD programs (Brubacher, 2011). It requires teachers to examine the macro and micro-interactions between dominant groups and subordinated communities to create an orientation towards teaching that is transformative and intercultural. All of this is done to create academically and personally empowered students. Cummins model asks us to examine how educational structures work towards creating students who are empowered, not disabled and resistant.

Within the more specific field of refugee and newcomers with emerging print literacy, much research has adopted a critical standpoint (Dooley, 2009; Dooley & Thangaperumal, 2011; Ek, 2008; MacNevin, 2012; Shapiro, 2014; Stewart, 2012; Walsh, 1999; Woods, 2009). MacNevin’s (2012) ethnographic research with refugees on Prince Edward Island asks for a student-centered approach as framed by Freire’s (1998/2005) work. Referring to Freire’s research, MacNevin asks that teachers learn about the worlds of the children they teach and that teaching be informed by knowledge of the children’s daily lives. Shapiro’s (2014) research in the US, on the other hand, calls for a critical approach as well concluding their paper by calling for
teachers to create programming where students analyze their own oppression and through literacy programming work to create change.

2.3.1.3 **Digital literacies and affective literacy**

Recently, there has been a movement in literacy research towards new and digital literacies that are both place-based and temporal. This multimodal view of literacy has led to the out-of-school literacy trend to embrace the internet and other modes and media: “blogs, wikis, websites, social networks, and online games, to name a few” (Street, 2013, p. 60). One area of study has been the text messaging of children and how the written language in texts may differ from traditional forms of reading and writing as well as spoken language. Plester et al. (2011) found that Finnish children were using about three English words per text and that the alterations to written language closely followed the grammatical structures of spoken Finnish. Another study by Lotherington and Jenson (2011) draws attention to how literacy has expanded to include the “visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and tactile dimensions of communication in addition to traditional written and oral forms” (p. 226). Multimodal conceptions of literacy are no longer grounded in the written word.

Some researchers have begun to combine the ideas of affect theory with previous research on literacy instruction. This has led to a focus on how literacy involves the body, emotions and thought (Abdul & Lee, 2017; Amsler, 2001; Cole & Yang, 2008; Leander & Bolt, 2013). For Amsler, affective literacy includes sensation, non-cognitive, paralinguistic, and emotional ways we perceive and respond to a text. Building on a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective, Leander and Boldt (2013) examine how although texts are artifacts of literacy, they are not literacy practice itself. Instead, a text can be moved with and through and used to produce intensity from desire. They focused their research on the movement and sensations of the body. This led to an examination of how the text generates intensity and excitement instead of looking at how the text generates meaning: the text then lives “its life in the on-going present” (p. 25). In general, these approaches to literacy embrace the body and how literacy moves through time and space.

Following a similar stream to Leander and Boldt are those who place themselves within a Deleuzo-Guattarian tradition. First, Ehret and Hollett (2014) chose to examine how bodies move
around screens, as opposed to examining of texts on screens themselves. They connect the bodies and screens by referring to them as real virtuality’s and begin to examine what composing with mobile devices does to the body. This includes “feeling histories, affective atmospheres and the felt experience of time” (p. 428). Another writer, Lenters (2016), uses the concept of assemblage theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2004). Lenters (2016) examines how a young boy engaged in rich, off-task literacy practices while approaching the traditional literacy practices of the classroom with what appeared to be disregard. Emotions such as engagement, pleasure and pride were apparent in the play with a stick figure and lone rider across time and place. In these ways, affective literacy is a very contemporary way of examining the body’s interaction with texts from a Deleuzian perspective.

At the Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada (LLRC) pre-conference, I was first introduced to the work of Sarah Ahmed by Jennifer Rowsell (2018, May), a plenary speaker on the topic of Disrupting Diversity: Literacies as Assemblages of Difference. In their presentation, Rowsell places the study of post-humanism and affect within the history of literacy studies asking “Why Affect now?”. Part of their address highlighted Ahmed’s (2004) notion of sticky emotions and relations drawing attention to how emotions stick to the body and objects. Ahmed’s work has already begun to work its way into an understanding of literacy that incorporates affect and emotion. For example, Anwaruddin (2016) criticizes the work of critical literacy calling it too rational while stating that it would benefit from affect theory. Anwaruddin suggests that there are two approaches to education: cognitive and socio-emotional. They then build a specific theoretical framework that combines the work of Sara Ahmed (2004) and Lewison et al. (2002). They conclude that affective literacy “highlights how students’ emotions help or hinder their learning” (p. 386). This interweaving of critical literacy and affect adds a powerful, new approach to literacy.

Within the field of second language education, there has been much discussion of the affective factors in learning a new language but not affect or emotion. Plavenko (2013) describes these factors as limited in nature and not reflective of affect, which examines what emotions do to the body. Since then, Motha and Lin (2014) have researched desire within TESOL. They find the emotion of desire drives the need to learn English: what will English unlock? Referring to Ahmed (2004), they find that desire is not our own but is shaped by history and structures. In
their research, the TESOL students desire language, identities that are attached to accents, capital, power and what lies beyond the doors that English will unlock (Motha & Lin, 2014, p. 332). Likewise, Benesch (2012) is drawn to the work on Ahmed in their book *Considering Emotions in Critical English Language Teaching* where they examine the work of Sara Ahmed, as well as other theorists on emotion and affect, in connection to research in second language teaching. They highlight how Ahmed challenges the hierarchy of emotions and how Ahmed constructs emotions as circulating between bodies. In these ways, Ahmed’s theories on emotion and affect are beginning to add to current literature in literacy and second language teaching.

### 2.4 Language

Multilingual students often bring transnational and transcultural experiences that could enrich classroom programs (Rodríguez, 2009). However, traditional views on literacy education often privilege those who speak official languages. The students in this study have the added responsibility of developing their print-based literacy practices (Montero et al., 2014) as well as learning a new language and curriculum (Mendenhal et al., 2017). Previous research has suggested that teachers in upper elementary and secondary schools would benefit from incorporating primary literacy strategies such as foundational literacy skills into their teaching when working with newcomers with emerging print literacy practices (Dooley, 2009; Montero et al., 2014; Woods, 2009). Chumak-Horbatsch (2012), a Canadian-based researcher in early child education work asks that teachers working with young children incorporate what they call *linguistically appropriate practice* (LAP), a model that calls for the inclusion of students’ entire linguistic repertoire. Within my own school board, Chumak-Horbatsch’s linguistically appropriate practices resource has been sent to elementary schools where there are primary aged children to be used as an instructional resource. In these ways, students’ entire language repertoire is already being suggested as an appropriate strategy with newcomers with emerging print literacy.

**2.4.1 Understanding language**

Translanguaging is an approach to educating students that acknowledges all of their literacies. Ofelia García (2009) states that “translangagings are *multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p. 45). A few studies
employing translanguaging have begun to appear with newcomers with emerging print literacy practices and refugees, in general (Bigelow et al., 2017; Dávila, 2015; Helm & Dabre, 2017; Stille, et al., 2016). First, Stille et al.’s (2016) collaborative inquiry in Ontario describes shifting teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about translanguaging in content and curriculum learning. They discussed three case studies, which included one with Mennonites from Mexico and another with urban students in ELD programs. The teachers in the study had previously held negative assumptions about their students’ cognitive abilities. Shifting the teachers’ views of the students to incorporate translanguaging practices changed how the teachers chose to support the students. Second, Dávila (2015) completed a year-long qualitative study with two young African immigrant women who they describe as having limited or interrupted prior schooling. Part of Dávila’s framework is to examine literacies in and out of school using a translanguaging approach that examines how the young women "make meaning by integrating multiple linguistic discourses" (p. 642). They encourage teachers to allow students to choose books autonomously and bring both English and native-language books into the classroom. Finally, another study by Bigelow et al. (2017) examines the use of new literacy and translanguaging in a classroom with newcomers with emerging print literacy as they use social media. The students were able to engage in creating content for their peers and for larger global audiences.

Another concept that is like translanguaging is polylingualism. Jørgensen (2008) tells us that polylingualism is a way of “distinguishing between language and a language” (p. 161). In this way speakers use whatever language is at their disposal when communicating and are not constrained by the rules one language. For Jørgensen language is social and must have a message that is understood. Languaging then becomes a way that the speaker uses all of their skills and knowledge. Similarly, plurilingualism, as first proposed by the Council of Europe (2001), is an approach to teaching foreign languages with privileged children which aims “to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place” (p. 5). Plurilingual is a flexible way of understanding how students use language in ways that are important to them. In this way, students are seen through an asset lens. According to García and Otheguy (2020), translanguaging differs from plurilingualism, as designed by the Council of Europe (2001), in that plurilingualism sees students as possessing a repertoire of languages; whereas translanguaging sees multilinguals as having “a unitary linguistic system” (p. 25). In this way,
speakers may appear from the outside as speaking different languages but the way the speaker uses language is as one. However, all these terms are interrelated yet different ways of naming the breaking away from monolingual approaches to literacy.

In my study, I had hoped to have speakers of global Englishes participate as my student co-researchers, as their literacy practices are often defined as vernaculars and devalued in schools (Nero & Ahmad, 2014). Because of this, I had moved away from models that discuss the interconnected nature of languages that are traditionally seen as distinct and focus on one that seeks to combine languages defined as vernacular in the traditional sense. Specifically, Canagarajah (2012) argues for treating “meaning-making as a social practice that engages holistically with ecological and contextual affordances” (p. 10). I had originally chosen to focus on Canagarajah’s (2012, 2005) work for my study because they often draw on the use of varieties of languages that are not the standardized norm of the powerful. Moreover, research on global Englishes such as Nero and Ahmad’s (2014) work have already used Canagarajah’s ideas extensively when examining the experiences of vernacular English-speaking students in American schools. However, since the participants all spoke a variety of traditionally distinct languages and not global Englishes, using a translanguaging approach that moves between and beyond language (García & Wei, 2014) makes more sense, as García et al. (2017) situate their research within K to 12 learning environments.

Researchers such as King and Bigelow (2020) have found translanguaging to be particularly relevant to students with emerging print literacy, as I have myself as an educator. Although there continues to be debate as to the validity of certain types of translanguaging (Cummins, 2020), (namely, translanguaging aims to move away from named languages and may add to the theoretical implications, but not necessarily practical implications in the classroom), an approach to language that does not focus on named languages and boundaries makes sense with children with emerging print literacy. This is because I want them to learn about print literacy using their entire linguistic repertoire and not wait until they have learned one named language. Translanguaging allows for a playfulness with language in that children can pull from their entire linguistic repertoire instead of focusing on perfecting one language. Within one sentence, for example, they can move between structures creating their own written languaging that is separate from grammatical rules. Many years ago, when I first learned about
translanguaging, I found it quite odd. Why would you have children combine named languages in one paragraph or even sentence? However, when I observed one of my own students, a newcomer with almost no print literacy, learning to love the written text by writing words from different parts of her linguistic repertoire in her responses, I began to understand the power of a translanguaging stance. It is this approach to language that I brought to the case studies. Finally, I do borrow the term plurilingual to refer to students who speak more than one language because, as stated earlier, in the Canadian context bilingual is often socially constructed as knowing French and English.

2.4.2 Identity and applied linguistics

A central concept to this research is that of identity. Identity, as an analytic for research in education (Gee, 2001) has begun to show some growth within the field of applied linguistics. Gee summarizes identity into four categories: nature, institution, discourse, and affinity (p. 100). With institutional identity, a person is defined by their place within society. An affinity group does not need to be local, you can connect across the globe, but it must be chosen. Discourses are any combination of identities that can get you recognized as ‘one person’. They postulate that to a certain extent the West has moved away from natural definitions of identity to we are what group we identify with. Moreover, Gee (2001) uses the term elite to describe a privileged person who often defines themselves in opposition to the nonelites. Elites tend to be seen as having more positive properties with an achieved identity. The students in my study are not positioned as elites, in general. By researching with the students and including their knowledges, I hope to disrupt this myth that positions them as illiterate and incomplete.

There continues to be differing views on identity and its value in research. Norton’s (2013) extensive research on language learning and identity makes the following points: identity questions the use of binary ways of knowing language learners, it examines how relations of power affect language learning, it differentiates between motivation to learn a new language and investment and imagines access to imaginary communities for future identities, amongst others. Another researcher, Lin (2008), looks at how identity has different meanings in different disciplines. They find that identity is becoming a more common term for applied linguists, educators, and researchers. They want identity to be understood in terms of “results of people’s active construction of coherent accounts that help them to make sense of their lives and their
position in relation to others and to the world” (Lin, 2008, p. 210–211). Skeggs (2008), however, problematizes the notion of identity on three grounds: it is not equally available to all, is “generated from discourses on the self and possessive individualism” (p. 11) and is from a Western colonial discourse. Those with privilege are then able to use identity to distance themselves as distinct from others. They further state that “for many, identity is a position that is forced … [and] cannot be mobilized as a resource for enhancing privilege” (p. 26). They are more interested in looking outwards at what conditions make these identity constructions possible.

Identity work in applied linguistics including refugees and those with emerging print literacy is a burgeoning field with more and more researchers incorporating it into their studies (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2014; Cummins et al., 2015; Cummins et al., 2012; Guerrero & Tinkler, 2010). In the Canadian contexts, there has been a focus on Cummins and Early’s (2011) work who state that “identity text production can be harnessed by teachers as an instructional tool to promote literacy engagement and achievement among marginalized students” (p. 9). With identity texts, students must invest their identities in the creation of a multimodal form that holds a mirror up to students reflecting a positive image. In Colombia and the US, Guerrero and Tinkler (2010) completed an ethnography of two distinct sites comparing identity narratives: “By exploring the relationship among multiple identity artifacts, including their visual (photographs), spoken (interviews and observed conversations), and written (photo reflections, autobiographies, essays) narratives, this study makes visible the ways in which displaced youth reconstruct personal and cultural meanings” (p. 56). Their work is grounded in Gee’s (2001) theories of identity referring to Gee’s notion of how identities can be performed by the individual or be authorized by others. They conclude that there must be a movement away from ascribing identities such as refugees or displaced people and that inconsistencies in the youths’ experiences showed a multitude of voices. My hope is to add to the aforementioned literature by having students co-research how emotions socially position their identities and literacy practices using the work of Moje and Hall.

2.4.1 Race and language

Definitions of race and ethnicity amongst sociologists are varied. However, Li (1999) finds that it has become common place to define people as part of an ethnic group based on
superficial traits such as skin color. Some sociologists see ethnicity as “a group of people who presumably share a common experience and origin” (p. 5) while others define ethnicity as constructed “on the basis of social relationships, not on genetic differences or primordial features” (p. 6). Here, unequal relationships and power work to create discourses on race and ethnicity. Therefore, race is viewed as socially constructed. Many researchers see race and ethnicity as social constructions (Brubacker, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie, 2005; Hall, 2006; Howard-Hassmann, 2006) that serve to privilege certain groups of people over others. However, race is just one form of socially constructed identities. Hall (2006) finds that all forms of identity are historically and not biologically defined. People are full of contradictory identities that constantly pull them in different directions. There is no simple, unified identity. Unified identities are comforting stories that the self creates. In education, teachers continue to essentialize culture and the students’ identities (Lee, 2008). Lee finds that teachers need to challenge hegemonic discourses or they risk reproducing discourses of inequity.

Along with race, many other theorists problematize the idea of culture as unchangeable, static, and foreign (Risager, 2006; Shaules, 2007; Worsley, 1999). Culture, like race is something that people simplify to essentialized, superficial generalizations. Risager (2006) outlines many different ways that culture can and has been understood. Three traditional notions of culture include a hierarchical concept where “culture is something that the individual human being or society either ‘has’ or ‘does not have’, or ‘has’ at a higher or lower level” (p. 32); a differential concept which “has to do with culture as something that marks off groups of people from each other” (p. 33); and, finally, a generic concept which is “what is common to humanity” (p. 33) and distinguishes it from other living things. However, Risager then goes on to define varying concepts of culture including cultural relativism, cognitive culture, structuralist culture, and cultural studies notions of culture. In general, however, the postmodern and cultural studies definition, which is most applicable to understanding the relationship between language and culture, present culture as “something that is first identified via an awareness of meaningful differences between one’s own world and ‘the others’” (Risager, 2006, p. 50). Therefore, there are a variety of ways teachers can understand culture. However, an essentialist view of culture only serves to create difference and further marginalize parts of students’ language repertoires.
Kubota and Lin (2009) critique second-language research as not having delved into racism enough. They write that race and language are a part of Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital. The English-only, anti-bilingual education movement enacts racism towards Hispanics, specifically, in the US. They assert that English-only policies are about race as well as language and that school subjects and textbooks privilege legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Von Esch et al. (2020) continue this line of thinking by pointing out how there are “racial hierarchies of languages and language speakers” (p. 397). In schools, they reason, languages associated with Whiteness are more valued. Other researchers have begun to problematize how race is constructed and ignored in the field of applied linguistics (Flores, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Motha, 2014). Flores and Rosa (2015) critique the construction of racialized second language learners as always at a deficit regardless of whether their language production matches those of appropriateness. Flores (2016) then puts forward the argument that under a liberal multicultural approach assimilation to hegemonic whiteness becomes normalized. They call for a race radicalism approach that promotes empowerment as liberation. Flores (2020) also critiques the idea that low socio-economic Latinx students lack academic language drawing on examples of students engaging in complex critical conversations about linguistics. Finally, Motha (2014) draws attention to how language is used to create hierarchies that privilege certain cultures over another. They further comment on hierarchies of language and language varieties. By drawing attention to how language, race and culture intersect to marginalize some students and privilege others, these researchers hope to broaden our understanding of language learners’ experiences in public schools. In my own view, I do believe academic language is important for all students to develop and work on in schools. However, when the idea of academic language is overly simplified and continually focused on as the central concept that matters with plurilingual students, it can lead to deficit thinking that further marginalizes the students for which it aims to advocate.

2.5 Summary of the Literature Review

To conclude, this literature review brings together and provides an overview of the larger areas of refugee studies, literacy, and language. All these bodies of literature inform my research and provide powerful insights into the experiences of newcomers with emerging print literacy in schools. However, my research differs from many of the studies mentioned in the literature.
review in that it does not focus specifically on students arriving from a particular nation who attend secondary school. Instead, I focus on newcomer students with emerging print literacy practices in elementary schools. Moreover, in my study, I move away from a framework that focuses on English only and move towards one that recognizes all the students’ literacy practices. Finally, I do not focus solely on the trauma experienced and instead have them focus their analysis on emotions, literacy practices and identities. In the following, section I explain the theories that inform my research.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

In the following section, I outline the theoretical framework in which I place my study. First, I explain how I understand literacy through a translanguaging lens. Then, I delve into how literacy and identity intertwine through the metaphor of position. Finally, I discuss how emotions that stick inform my research.

2.6.1 Translanguaging

Understanding language as the practices that speakers use and as constantly being negotiated in different spaces is a burgeoning field within applied linguistics. As mentioned earlier, researchers such as Canagarajah (2005, 2012), García (2009), the Council of Europe (2001) and Jørgensen (2008) have all discussed how languages connect in different spaces. For the purposes of this research, a translanguaging stance is used to understand the students’ literacy practices. Translanguaging is defined by Otheguy et al. (2015) as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (p. 283). Named and official languages do not define speakers’ literacy practices under a translanguaging approach. Despite this, throughout the research I do refer to students’ named languages but understand that the students use their languages in an inter-connected way where they are constantly choosing from their repertoire about how to communicate in different times and spaces. García (2009) tells us that our current conception of language comes from the development of nation-states. Moreover, they write that language academies and grammar are ways of hiding language variations and missionaries and colonizing officers were part of language standardization as well and often invented monolithic languages. The reality is that “most children in the world are
educated in a language other than that of the home” (García, 2009, p. 26). Due to these reasons, incorporating a translanguaging stance into teaching becomes even more important.

In *The Translanguaging Classroom*, García et al. (2017) connect theory to practice and describe essential components of translanguageing in K to 12 classrooms. They see the *translanguaging corriente* as language use in the classroom. Are students’ languages hidden? How can language be heard and felt in the classroom? They also see that a translanguaging pedagogy allows teachers “to purposefully and strategically leverage the translanguaging *corriente* produces by students” (García et al., 2017, p. xi). By incorporating a translanguaging perspective into my research, I bring a holistic approach to learning that sees plurilingual students as having a linguistic repertoire that is constantly being pulled from and enacted in different spaces and time. García et al. (2017) state that with a translanguaging stance teachers have a holistic approach to students’ language repertoires with the following four purposes:

- To support students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts
- To provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts
- To make space for students’ bilingualism and ways of knowing
- To support students’ socio-emotional development and bilingual identities

(p. 50)

Some researchers, such as Deroo and Ponzio (2019) are beginning to examine how translanguaging stances can be taken up by teachers and incorporated into teachers’ pedagogy. In this research, I examine the teacher participants’ translanguaging stances.

**2.6.2 Multi-dimensionnel identities as position**

The second part of my theoretical framework examines identity and literacy through the metaphor of position as discussed by Hall (1996). In general, Moje et al. (2009) find that all ways of understanding identity include the following: identities are social and not individual constructs, one person has many different identities and identities can only be recognized within relationship to others and identities are not inherent in the individual. Specifically for my research, Hall (1996) understands identity to be strategic and positional. Examining how deconstruction has decentered identity, Hall (1996) draws attention to discursive approaches
which focus on the construction of identity as always being in process. Instead of viewing identity as an essentialist way with a stable self, identity is positional and strategic. In fact, Hall finds that fragmentation and fracture are more components of identity than unification. Power and exclusion are what appear to construct a unified identity (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996). For example, marginalization positions the racialized or ethnitisized body against the European body, which is seen as normal (Hall, 1996, p. 16). People resist, negotiate, or even accommodate the positions in which discriminatory practices and views place them.

Building on Hall’s ideas, Moje et al. (2009) summarize how this philosophical stance views social positions as the primary means through which the self is developed. The individual takes up or resists these positions changing over time thereby allowing “people to tell stories about themselves, to represent themselves in narrative” (Moje, et al. 2009, p. 431). Furthermore, the individual and structures construct identities both in the moment and across spaces. People can then embody those positions in certain times and spaces or resist them. The examination of these positions over time becomes a key component of viewing identity as positions. As people take on certain identities in which structures position them, they begin to imagine their future selves “moving within and across those positions” (Moje, et al. 2009, p. 430). Referring to a further metaphor of lamination Moje et al. (2009) present two shifts in the way ‘identity as position’ can be understood. One shift, position as lamination, privileges the dimensions of time and space leaving the identity unidirectional. Whereas, the other version, coming from Stuart Hall (1996), sees people as multidimensional while still consisting of layers. People find themselves in multiple and conflicting identities that are “enactments in interactions” (Moje et al., p. 431). Each moment produces a new layer to identity, which requires people to be thought of as multidimensional. These dimensions shift across interactions, time and space and overlap to create hybrid identities.

How does identity connect to literacy? Research in new literacy studies is beginning to draw attention to how identity shifts with a different sense of agency when children enter different spaces (Moje et al., 2009). One use of identity as position in literacy might “be as an enabling tool, a device for making meaning of and speaking back to or resisting the call to certain positions” (Moje et al, 2009, p. 431). Literacy then becomes a tool to create a hybrid yet stable identity or even to create meaning itself. People construct identity through the stories they
tell of themselves. People can begin to recognize each other through stories. McCarthey and Moje (2002) add that narrative then becomes the gel that holds identities together. People create narratives of themselves that are hybrid, multi-dimensional and only appear to be stable. Identities are both coherent and unstable. A person can begin to construct themselves in the different aspects of their lives. The children in this study have complex identities and may have experienced marginalization due to race and class as well as language. My decision to include identity as position in my theoretical framework was to draw attention to these inequities and the powerful structures that situate the children within these multi-dimensional positions. Like García, this work focuses on the hybrid nature of reality but moves beyond language and literacy to include hybridity in areas such as race, gender, sexuality, culture, age, and any other multiple and conflicted positions.

2.6.3 Emotions that stick

An affective design that examines how emotions create boundaries between things, also, frames my research. Ahmed’s (2004) work on what they refer to as the sociality of emotions is central to this research. Building on the concept of hybridity, Ahmed (2004) examines how “emotions are bound up with the securing of social hierarchy” (p. 4) and are passed over the body by structures within society. This is what they refer to as the sociality of emotion where “emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4). Structures in society like the nation, for example, assume emotions on the body. In this example, Ahmed asks us to examine how feelings of love for the nation can work to “other” people who are framed as “illegal immigrants and bogus asylum seekers” (p. 1). This narrative of love for the nation invites people to develop “rage against these illegitimate others” (p. 1). They further examine emotions such as pain, hate, fear and shame found in public texts and how these emotions get stuck to subjects permitting society to further marginalize racialized people.

Ultimately, Ahmed (2010) is interested in the body and how emotions affect it, in its capacity “to act and be acted upon” (p. 1). For Ahmed (2010), “Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects” (p. 29). They are concerned with emotions that stay with us, which they refer to as sticky emotions. Belonging and un-belonging then become markers of emotion on the body. Ahmed (2010) further states that
“[t]o be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things. To give value to things is to shape what is near us” (p. 31). In the case of the participants in my study, I ask them to turn towards their own language repertoires, literacy practices and multi-dimensional identities to reflect on how certain emotions stick and how these sticky emotions give value and shape to those objects. Those emotions that stick and preserve the connections between these things are closely examined and analyzed with the students. Students are then asked to reflect on what histories and structures position them within these emotions. Overall, Ahmed believes that emotions create the boundaries that allow objects, including the self, to be delineated.

In a conversation between Schmitz and Ahmed (2013), Ahmed discusses their own reluctance to use the word affect, preferring emotion, which they believe can take us further than affect. Ahmed (2010) is more interested in history and its connection to emotion. Continuing their conversation with Schmitz, Ahmed (2013) finds that when things are given emotion, they have value. They further state:

emotions don’t work simply in a located, bound subject. They move and they are not just social in the sense of mediated, but they actually show how the subject arrives into a world that already has affects and feelings circulating in very particular ways. (Schmitz & Ahmed, 2013, p. 98)

They critique the study of emotion and affect stating that there has been too much of a focus on negative emotions and instead turn their focus away from pain, hate, fear, disgust and shame (Ahmed, 2004) towards emotions such as happiness (Ahmed, 2010), curiosity, excitement and interest (Ahmed, 2017). However, it should be noted that in general, Ahmed does not like to place emotions in the binary of negative and positive. Each emotion is complex and multi-dimensional.

Hybridity serves as a thread running through all the different components of my theoretical framework. Ahmed (1999), who positions themselves as a black feminist, examines the hybrid nature of women who are racialized as Black, passing as White in their work Passing through Hybridity. In this piece, they address the complexity of their own identity, where having mixed-race heritage (English and Pakistani), they do not feel either Black or White. They
problematize how structures impose identities and then they reinforce the idea that hybridity “traverses absolute distinctions between identities” (1999, p. 97). In Schmitiz and Ahmed (2013), Ahmed further discusses the hybrid nature of language and the challenges of translating words such as “willful” to other languages: “Because the equivalent words in most other languages aren’t will-words” (Schmitiz & Ahmed, 2013, p. 106). In this way, Ahmed’s ideas tie into the holistic nature of translanguaging.

**2.6.4 Conclusion: Connecting them all**

![Figure 1 Theoretical Framework](image)

If one were to view literacy as a tool for producing the self, the person who does not have access to print literacy skills could be seen as incomplete and not having the ability to think abstractly. Unfortunately, I have found that this is often how newcomers with emerging print literacy are framed and understood. Instead, I hope to move away from this marginalizing orientation, which views print literacy as ‘a happy object’ (Ahmed, 2014) that must be attained, and instead use plurilingual literacy practices as mediums for self-discovery, emotional reflection, and self-formation. At the center of this project is the study of the students’ multi-dimensional identity, which is placed within multiple and unstable social positions. These social
positions through which the self is developed change in different spaces and across time. The student takes up or resists these positions that are forced upon their bodies through histories and structures. It is the emotions which stick that affect their identity construction thereby influencing how they construct and feel about their plurilingual literacy practices.

The main purpose of this study is to focus solely on 8- to 14-year-old newcomers with emerging print literacy to enable them to critically examine their literacy practices and identities both in and out of school. They do this by using their knowledges to understand how structures and histories shape the emotions that are associated with their identities and literacy practices. Emotions are political. They are personal but history also shapes them. These emotions then influence the students’ actions and become associated with their identities. The following questions guide my research:

(1) Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools?
(2) What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?
(3) How do the students understand the relationship between these emotions and their identities and literacy practices?
Chapter 3: Methodology

The following chapter describes the humanizing research design for my translinguaging project that enables children to research the emotional aspects of their multi-dimensional identities and literacy practices. Because I am working with a group of children aged 9 to 12 who are often labelled illiterate or incapable of completing academic work, I purposely ask the children to draw on oral practices that incorporate their entire language repertoire. They became my co-researchers incorporating their views into the analysis of the work. Instead of continuing with the marginalization process of children being researched upon, I research with the children. Their views influence and even determine the analysis of this data. I do this through a critical set of collective case studies couched within humanizing research methods (Paris, 2011). In the following section, I explain the design that guides my overall research project as well as the data collection and timeline.

3.1 Overall Research Design

My study predominantly focuses on qualitative work in the classroom. To date, many research projects with refugee students and those with emerging print literacy have adopted qualitative methods (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Dávila, 2015; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Dooley, 2009; Emert, 2013; Gagné et al., 2017; Hek, 2005; Kanu, 2008; King & Bigelow, 2020; Matthews, 2008; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stille et al., 2016; Shapiro, 2014; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012; Vecchioa et al., 2017). Qualitative researchers are interested in people and how they relate to the world, how they feel about the world. Newcomer students with emerging print literacy often embody the voice of the marginalized student especially in schools where their lack of schooling and ability to read and write are seen as deficits even in the most ideal of situations (Montero et al., 2012). Moreover, remaining neutral only serves to uphold the power structures of society and marginalizes minority voices (Sears & Cairns, 2010). Remaining neutral in my research does not disrupt the structures that frame the students within a deficit framework. Moreover, within critical qualitative research “there is a great potential for the interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing” (Lincoln et al., 2013, p. 207).
3.1.1 Goals of the study

The goal of this research is to understand how plurilingual newcomers with emerging print literacy make sense of the emotions that are associated with their identities and literacy practices. Children work collaboratively and individually using translanguaging to create oral and written texts. They then act as co-researchers to analyze and code each other’s texts. This is done through what Paris (2011) calls a humanizing approach to research, where “the researcher’s efforts must coincide with the students’ to engage in critical thinking about the problems and issues of interest as both the researcher and participants seek mutual humanization through understanding” (p. 137). In this way, I incorporated the knowledges of a diverse group of students in different elementary school sites over the Winter and Spring of the 2019 school year.

3.1.2 Critical and collective case study design

In this chapter, I delve into methods for my research study. First, my study is a series of critical case studies. There are many different definitions of case study, but all of them list the following: “it has defined boundaries (could be place or time) and is ‘centered on description, inference, and interpretation’” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 162). Using this definition, each case study took place in one elementary school within a 3–4-month time frame. Within the area of case study design, my study is placed within a critical paradigm. According to Crowe et al. (2011), the critical case study approach “[i]nvolves questioning one’s own assumptions taking into account the wider political and social environment. Interprets the limiting conditions in relation to power and control that are thought to influence behaviour” (p. 5). In this way, I disclose my own identity by examining how I position myself both in relation to the students and the material being studied. This took the form of me participating in the activities that I ask students to perform and revealing my own experiences and self to the students.

As well as being critical in nature, I completed more than one case study. Collective case studies involve “studying multiple cases simultaneously or sequentially in an attempt to generate a still broader appreciation of a particular issue” (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 2). My research captured both the data that is unique to each case and also the data that is consistent across more than one time and place. The boundaries of each of these cases was the school site where I collected the data. The children in the study are in Grades 4 to 6. This research occurred from January to June.
of 2019. In Ontario, where this research takes place, all children in Grade 4 will have turned nine by January 1\textsuperscript{st}. Some of these children may have turned ten between January and June. For Grade 5, there is a similar pattern but the age is 10 with some children turning 11 and with the Grade 6 students the age is 11 with some students turning 12. I did not ask the students their exact age or where they have their birthdays. Therefore, Grade 4 students are 9 or 10 years old, Grade 5 students are 10 or 11 years old, and Grade 6 students are 11 or 12 years old. The children in the study purposely came from highly diverse communities. For example, I researched with Tibetan students in a suburban community where there were some themes that arose that are not apply to a group of Syrian students. However, I am also interested in finding common themes that connect the experiences of all newcomers with emerging print literacy. All the students in my study are newcomers with emerging print literacy.

3.1.3 Children as co-researchers

This series of critical case-studies has the children work as collaborators whose on-going involvement influences the research process. In many ways, I come from a discourse of what Ahmed (2004) frames as “you” and “we” (p. 2). As a teacher, I am part of a collective “we” that teaches “you” the students. This is a part of my own hybrid identity with almost 15 years of teaching. Being out of the classroom while doing this research and PhD gives me some distance from this dichotomy but being a teacher still deeply informs who I am. I believe my experience as a teacher both enhanced my research and, at times, biased how I viewed the data and worked with the students. By researching with the students, I pushed my own thinking away from this dichotomy to position my voice with the students in a collective “we”. Drawing from the work of Mayall (2008), I frame the students’ ideas as knowledge as opposed to perspective, as knowledge highlights the history behind an idea and implies reflection. The use of the term knowledge is a way of privileging the children’s ideas.

Prasad’s (2015) work with plurilingual children in both French and English schools is an example of a multi-site study completed with children. Children became their co-researchers in that they created a range of multimodal texts and worked with them to find themes in the texts. The texts were then categorized by these themes. Prasad then used the children’s ideas to inform their analysis. Another aspect of Prasad’s work is the incorporation of creative-arts informed methods into their data collection with the children, which uses Clark’s (2005) mosaic approach.
I am intrigued by this form of data collection but decided to focus more on the students’ oral and written literacy practices as illiteracy is often a label assigned to my student participants. Although my research at times incorporates arts-informed activities, the data collection is focused on the oral and written texts.

**3.1.3.1 Ethical concerns for working with children**

A number of researchers have raised concerns about working with children. First, Punch (2002) states that research with children is essentially different from research with adults. They further state that children may have a different way of seeing the world, are used to having to please adults, may even fear adults, have a limited vocabulary, have fewer spaces in society, have gatekeepers with whom you must build rapport, may not fully understand the adult world, are not used to being treated as equals, may lack confidence in one-on-one situations and may have a limited concentration span (p. 326–327). As an experienced teacher with children, I have had many experiences entering children’s spaces and working with them in one-on-one and in small groups as well as whole class settings. Building rapport with gatekeepers and finding ways to engage children with shorter attention spans has been part of my life for many years. However, as I am used to being a teacher and acting as an authority figure with children, my challenge, at times, was to find ways to have the students lead me into their thinking and understandings of the world, as opposed to me deciding where the thinking leads us.

Second, in Bradbury-Jones and Taylor’s (2014) work a variety of solutions are presented to challenge what may appear when researching collaboratively with children. The first problem is the assumption that children are competent to form their own views. They suggest that data collection methods need to be age appropriate and children need to be treated as equals. Another suggestion is to establish clear boundaries and ground rules. Do not assume children are homogeneous, even if they share similar experiences. They also state that the co-researcher should not perceive children as having absolute powerlessness. Moreover, they write that making judgments about consent on an individual basis is key. Clear child protection protocols are needed for every student. The children need time for reflection, review and debrief. Finally, the co-researcher must recognise and encourage the role children have in supporting each other. In general, much thought and care must be used when collaborating with children as co-researchers.
3.1.4 Humanizing research design

I worked with the children to create a range of multimodal texts that position their identities in a time and place based on their own knowledges. I use Paris’ (2011) humanizing methodological stance “which requires that our inquiries involve dialogic consciousness-raising and the building of relationships of care and dignity for both researchers and participants” (p. 139). As the children in my study are often marginalized, a humanizing approach becomes even more imperative. Like Paris, I share parts of my own identity and literacy practices with the students based on their questions and demands. These questions and demands place me as an outsider or as similar at times. I ask the students to share of themselves, so I must share of myself along with them.

Paris’ (2011) humanizing research builds on Paulo Freire’s conceptualization of research with marginalized populations. It involves sharing with youth the many ways that we are both insiders and outsiders to their community and lives. Humanizing research avoids exploitation and colonization. According to Paris, there is a reciprocal relationship of dignity and care where the researcher works with the participants as well as choosing them. As much as possible, the researcher gets to know the participants before asking them to be part of the study. Moreover, the researcher’s analysis “is always framed within the cultural norms and expectations they received, perpetuated, and challenged” (Paris, 2011, p. 142). One does not look for deficits but instead seeks to understand things within contexts.

Delving further into this idea of humanizing research, I chose to research with the children to analyze these identity elements for themes. In this research, the themes are based on emotions as a way to capture the emotions the children see as associated with their literacy practices and multi-dimensional identities. Emotions are complex and I was interested in seeing how the children in this study position their own emotions and each other’s towards what Ahmed (2010) calls things, not just my own insights as an outsider to these school sites. As Mayall tells us “good information about childhood must start from children’s experience” (p. 110). Moreover, the students in my study are often relegated to the margins. I hope to place them at the center of the research process and view the research data based on their knowledges.

3.2 Recruitment and research sites
Fieldwork for this study was conducted at three different elementary school sites over six months. Chapter 4 goes into much greater detail about these sites and the participants. A number of newcomers with emerging print literacy, aged 8 to 12, were recruited at each site to be part of the study depending on student numbers and availability.

As I worked with a vulnerable population (newcomer children) recruiting students for the project was approached with sensitivity and awareness that the children and families do not feel pressured to be part of the project. To recruit teachers and schools for the project, I submitted for ethical approval first at the University of Toronto and then, at the school board level. Once this approval was attained, I emailed teachers and administrators to introduce my study (See Appendix L). I also emailed teachers with my information and consent letters as well as delivering copies to the school sites (see Appendices A and B).

I applied to four school boards. I was rejected at two school boards, and a third wanted major revisions. The fourth school board where I gained access asked for minor revisions, the most important being that I needed to contact all the participants’ guardians to get an oral consent. Luckily, getting consent happened at the same time as parent-teacher conferences, so the teachers allowed me to use that time to speak to families as translators were already present. Many of the parent-teacher interviews were over the phone. In a few cases, the parents spoke English. The school called the parents for me and then I was able to communicate the purpose of my study and what would be expected of their child.

In terms of teacher recruitment, teachers I had connected with over my last 15 years as an educator were contacted using the teacher/administrator recruitment email (Appendix L). I also contacted teachers I had met through conferences. One of those teachers agreed to be part of my study. I also contacted a colleague from my pre-service education. She was able to connect me with one of her colleagues at a school where she had taught for many years. This teacher agreed to be my participant. Finally, a colleague from an ESL committee connected me with one of her colleagues at the school where she taught. Once the teachers and their principals permitted the research to take place on their school site, I recruited newcomer students with emerging print literacy from their classrooms based on teacher recommendations. Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012) was used wherein teachers who work directly with newcomer students in
elementary schools helped provide “useful information” (p. 206) as to which potential participants fit my criteria. Once the teacher agreed to be part of the study, I asked them to allow me introduce myself and my research to the principal of their school, as principals can add a further level of gatekeeper, institutional approval. Due to regulations in Ontario, I had to have a criminal record check processed for the school board where I complete my research.

3.3 Participants

The following is a brief introduction to the participants. I go into more detail about each school site and participant in Chapter 4. To protect student and teacher identity, pseudonyms are used for both people and school sites. School 1 consisted of one teacher participant and six student participants in Grade 5 who spoke languages from English and Arabic to Pashto. At School 2, there were four student participants who spoke a mixture of Eritrean, Arabic, Tibetan, Hindi, Slovak, Polish, French, and English. For this school, there were two teacher participants. Finally, at School 3, there was one teacher participant and four student participants who spoke languages such as Spanish, Hungarian, English, and Roma.

3.4 Data collection

I spent a minimum of 20 half school days or 50 hours at each school site collecting data and being sensitive to the timetable at each site. These half days were not consecutive and happened over three months (see Figures 1, 2 and 3). The use of multiple sites allowed for a wider demographic of students (Creswell, 2012). At each school site, I worked with a larger group of students but only collected data with newcomers with emerging print literacy practices.

At Thistle Meadow, the video prompts were integrated into the students’ program allowing me to introduce and teach each prompt before recording it. All the students at Thistle Meadow in this exclusive ELD classroom were participants. I often taught the entire class. I was unable to access Wi-Fi at any of my school sites, so I used my own data plan on my phone to record almost all the videos. At Thistle Meadow, the teacher and classroom volunteers allowed the students to use their phones as well for recording videos. There was also a classroom laptop that we could use. This meant that the children were able to watch and comment on each other’s videos with more ease. The students’ video responses as well as their written poetry became part of my data. Finally, throughout the research I took pictures of students’ written work asking for
their assent before doing so each time. In the next section, I outline my research tools and how they connect to my research questions. Then, I discuss the pedagogical moves I used while implementing these tools.

At Smokey Glen (School 2), I taught the Grade 4 homeroom class a number of times and the ESL/ELD class once or twice. All the of the students in the Grade 4 homeroom classroom completed the activities I had prepared, but I only collected data from the participants. The participants’ responses to the video prompts, which I go into more detail about in the next section under tools, were often collected in the hallway when the students had a moment to spare. A few video prompts were integrated into the students’ work with the ESL/ELD teacher or the homeroom teacher and I was able to record the videos at that point.

Finally, at Valley Forest, I taught the entire ESL/ELD class the Where I Am From poems and worked with the student participants on their other schoolwork finding ways to incorporate their languages when possible. Other students in the class would ask me questions as well, so I became part of the classroom environment. At Valley Forest, all the video prompts were recorded in the hallway after students had completed their assigned classwork.

3.5 Research tools

At the beginning of the research project, I entered each classroom and introduced myself explaining why I was in the classroom. Creating rapport with students is essential both as a researcher and teacher, so this is something that I was familiar with. I took care to not position myself as an authority figure or as a “helper” teacher. My research incorporated multiple data collection strategies. In order to better orient the reader, I have created a table that summarizes my research tools and how they relate my research questions.
Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools?

What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?

How do the students understand the relationship between these emotions and their identities and literacy practices?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary profiles</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plurilingual texts</td>
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<td>Field notes and observations</td>
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<td>Teacher interviews</td>
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*Figure 2: Research Questions and Methodological Tools*

**3.5.1 Focus group interviews**

The focus groups (Appendix F) were used to have the children participate in the research process. Although most focus groups have between four and six participants (Creswell, 2012), the number in the group depended on the number of participants who have signed-up to be part of the study at a particular school site. At all three of my school sites, I had to split the student participants into separate groups because of conflicts with assemblies, speaking different languages and attendance. In these focus groups, the children identified emotions that they saw or heard in each other’s videos on Flipgrid. First, they watched each other’s videos. Students were encouraged to identify emotions using their entire language repertoire. After they had coded each-others texts with emotions, I audio-recorded focus group interviews on why texts and people become associated with emotion. These emotional themes and explanations led my own analysis of the data.

Darbyshire et al. (2005) discuss how focus groups are increasingly being used with children “as children are generally comfortable and familiar with the process of discussing matters in groups” (p. 420). The main purpose of these focus group interviews was to allow children to use their own words to discuss how emotion and power connect to position their identities and literacy practices. In this discussion, students explained why they had chosen to label the texts with certain emotions. They identified where the emotion they had chosen was felt in the body and then were encouraged to reflect on what those emotions make them do. Finally,
the children discussed what is making them feel that way. These explanations and identifications were used in the analysis part of my research.

3.5.1.1 Body mapping and pedagogy of focus group interviews

To prepare for their focus group interviews, the students used a body map while analyzing each other’s multi-modal texts. The students identified emotions present in texts or portions of texts using body maps (Appendix K). They colored where they felt that emotion was present in the body for each emotional code they produced. Moreover, “Emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don’t necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 10). However, I needed to eventually find ways to translate the emotions for the purposes of my own understanding while analyzing the data. To conclude, emotions are complex and we are already communicating using different language repertoires. I hope that the body mapping can provide scaffolding during the focus group interviews.

Depending on the students, I sometimes needed to provide additional scaffolding. I worked through an emotional code with them first supporting them through a gradual release of responsibility process and even working with them individually before we started the focus group interviews. Fisher and Frey (2013) describe the gradual release of responsibility process as starting with the teachers holding the responsibility through focused and guided instruction before moving to the students taking more responsibility through collaborative and independent learning.

3.5.2 Multimodal literacy profiles

To better understand who the students are in this study, they collaborated with each other to create literacy profiles using the application Flipgrid. Lucas et al. (2008) suggest that linguistic profiles are tools that can be used to familiarize oneself with the backgrounds of the students. However, my profiles build on Lucas et al.’s idea to present a profile of the students’ literacy backgrounds as well as language. Although Lucas et al. suggest more traditional methods such as observations and interviews in their research, this research aims to engage the students in the process by allowing them to use technology, which in turn gives them more independence and choice. Moreover, Valdes (2014) writes that “many immigrant students are
often speakers of nonprestige varieties of their heritage language. They may speak a rural variety of the language or a stigmatized variety associated with nonacademic uses of language” (p. 27). This means that not all speakers of a certain language have the same linguistic repertoire. The *Flipgrid* portraits aim to capture that complexity. My previous research (Brubacher, 2013) found that newcomers with emerging print literacy often speak non prestige varieties of their languages. In this way, the multimodal literacy profiles are a tool for understanding students’ linguistic repertoires through the use of video and audio, which highlights students’ oral language practices. Moreover, it allows the students to take ownership over how their literacy practices are presented.

The *Flipgrid* application include already prepared prompts giving students’ choice as to what to respond to (Appendix D). Students are required to complete the grids having to do with background information. These background information videos were collected by my third or fourth visit to the school site. However, throughout the research process students chose to respond to prompts from other areas. The choice as to what is important in the research came from them. These prompts are somewhat open-ended in nature, allowing students to talk about what they want and allowing students to guide the research in directions that are important to them. I was also open to students creating videos on the topic of literacy practices that diverge from the provided prompts, which in general meant that the students could talk more about their media interests, especially video games. The plan was to have at least six grids from each student participant by the end of the process, which I accomplished with all students except the new student, Diyar, at Thistle Meadow.

One of the topics addressed in these *Flipgrid* prompts is the students’ linguistic repertoire. First, linguistic portraits are a type of profile that incorporate visual elements and body mapping into an understanding of how speakers’ construct their linguistic identities that have been used in a variety of studies (D’warte, 2015; Martin, 2012; Prasad, 2013). Students created a linguistic portrait through one of the *Flipgrid* prompts provided. At all three of my school sites, I was able to collaborate with the classroom teacher to have all the students create a portrait, even those who were not participants. As such, this activity became part of their program.
My choice to use *Flipgrid* was informed by two issues. First, I wanted to include the entire class at my research site in this activity in order to build greater inclusion for linguistic diversity in general. Doing semi-structured interviews with an entire class is not feasible. Therefore, the use of *Flipgrid* technology allows for greater inclusion. Second, I could better engage the students through the use of an application with videos than having them write a response in a journal, for example. However, if the student and parents object to being videotaped, I provided them with alternatives including video recording the back of their head or an object while capturing their spoken voice or responding orally to me while I write out their responses. Quite a few of the student participants chose this option. They were happy to have their voice recorded but not their face. I did not want the use of technology or video recordings to exclude students from my study.

### 3.5.2.1 Literacy portrait pedagogy and teacher assessment tool

A key component to this work is the creation of literacy profiles using the *Flipgrid* application. As the students work on their *Flipgrids*, they needed less and less support with completing these grids, but more than I had hoped. They were rarely able to respond independently or in partners, but this may also have been due to lack of access to technology. I created an assessment tool (Appendix H) for the classroom teacher, which I shared with Peter at Smokey Glen and Alexandra and Thistle Meadow. This was not meant to be a data source but instead pedagogical tools that allowed the teacher to incorporate this work into their teaching and assessment practices.

### 3.5.3 Plurilingual texts

Depending on the teacher and the class, it was not always practical to complete my own multi-modal identity texts. Therefore, the teacher and I sometimes worked together to modify existing assignments or even collaborated to create new programming that included translanguaging. Regardless, I collected the data from the *Flipgrids*, as it is essential to answering my questions, and the ‘sticky objects’ activity was important for scaffolding for the final activity on emotional coding. However, any other type of written text that incorporates translanguaging fulfilled the needs of my study in terms of producing texts that include students’ entire repertoire. I used these texts in the final analysis of the data.
I draw attention to translanguaging specifically because I wanted the students in my study to produce a written text that includes translanguaging. I had hoped to do this as a model for other teachers to demonstrate how newcomers with emerging print literacy in an English-only schooling system do not have to learn spoken English before they can start producing written texts. One piece of writing that I would like to see translanguaged with the students is poetry.

3.5.3.1 Written poetry

Although identity texts are powerful ways of capturing how students’ position and construct their own multi-dimensional identities, they can become another source of marginalization if they force the students to dwell on pain and trauma or present a version of themselves from the past that is no longer true to who they are in this space and time. Tuck and Yang (2014) believe that research that focuses on voice often focuses on pain because what “counts as voice and makes voice count is pain” (p. 229). The poetry the students worked on during my research was an opportunity to construct their own version of their identities (Appendix E). These poems are a reflection of who they are in this moment and space. The students reflect on objects and literacy practices in their environment that contribute to their identities. These poems were not meant to be a text that gives voice to their pain but instead are meant to be pieces of writing that allow them to position their own identities from their own perspectives.

The identity poetry for this project is modeled after George Ella Lyon’s (1999) poem, *Where I’m From*. This type of project has already been completed with refugee students; for example, Emert (2013), who worked with a group of refugee boys from Asia and Africa in a summer program to write poems adapted from an autobiographical response to George Ella Lyon’s (1999) poem, *Where I’m From*. They called their study a transpoemation: they took the poems and created videos using MovieMaker software. As the poetry was only a portion of my own study, I did not go into the depth of video creation and analysis of the original poem as in Emert’s study. However, many of the student participants did use *Flipgrid* to record a reading of their poems using different parts of their literacy practices. In addition, I added to Emert’s (2013) research by encouraging the students to write a similar style of poem that incorporates translanguaging. In this way, the students could use any part of their language repertoire to produce the poems. I did not want to hold them back by focusing on English only.
Another resource that informed our collaborative work is *Authors in the Classroom* (Ada et al., 2004). Central to Ada et al.’s ideas is that the teacher can become an author along with the students. The teacher, and in this case the researcher as well, write along with the students revealing their own identities. Ada et al. (2004) offer a range of writing styles including acrostic poems, additional self-affirming poems and poems that aim to strengthen self-identity to name a few. Although the focus of the research was on the *Where I Am From* style of poetry, all this research informed my work. I found poetry to be an excellent way of getting at who the students are and the emotions that shape their identities and literacy practices. To conclude, following Tuck and Yang’s (2014) reasoning, this poetry project is not designed to look at the students’ scars and voice their pain. Instead, it is a reflection of how they construct themselves in this moment and space and a window into what structures need to become in order to be truly inclusive spaces.

### 3.5.4 Field notes and observations

After each visit to the school site, I took time to reflect on the day and how the students interacted with our material. I attempted to separate my descriptive field notes from my own personal reflections (see Appendix G) starting with a factual recall of the data collection session at the school site and ended with any insights or thoughts that came to me. Creswell (2012) describes descriptive field notes as “a description of the events, activities, and people (e.g., what happened)” (p. 217), whereas reflective field notes are “personal thoughts that researchers have that relate to their insights, hunches, or broad ideas or themes that emerge during the observation” (p. 217). However, the role of the researcher is a complex one where sometimes I remained objective and at other times I participated along with the students. Paris (2011) tells us that “Learning about cultural and linguistic worlds from participants means being a participant observer at times, an observer at other times, and a participant at still other times” (p. 144). In this case, I was more participant than observer during my time in the classroom working with the students and teachers to participate in learning activities. I captured this complexity in my descriptive and reflective field notes. These field notes worked towards answering all of my questions in my research and were referenced throughout the coding and analysis of my data as a way to remember our shared moments in the classrooms.
3.5.5 Sticky objects

This activity builds upon Ahmed’s (2010) idea of happy objects that get stuck with emotion. Generally speaking, when Ahmed refers to objects, they mean abstract concepts and ideas (Benesch, 2012). Later, in the focus group interviews, students ascribed emotions to their language and literacy practices and identities in general. However, to prepare them for this important data collection strategy, I had students present objects that are important to them and then ascribe emotions and value to those objects (Appendix J). This is essentially a play on the classic ‘show and tell’ activity. Ahmed (2004) writes that “naming emotions involves different orientations towards the objects they construct” (p. 14). Therefore, this ‘sticky objects’ activity is an additional window into who the students are, as the names the students assign to an emotion reveal their orientation towards that object. At my three school sites, I showed students images from the wordless picture book Here I Am. In the story a child has arrived in a North American city where they do not know the language. In their pocket, they carry an object from their home country that is associated with strong positive emotions of family and community. At Thistle Meadow, students wrote responses, drew pictures and came up with an emotion that they associated with their object. At Smokey Glen, I worked with some of the participants on this activity. They wrote two or three sentences. Finally, Gina, at Valley Meadow, had them integrate this activity into their existing work on understanding nouns. I then took pictures of their work, which I included in my data on student work. Part of my goal was to have the students use all of their literacy practices in this activity.

3.5.6 Semi-structured teacher interviews

I interviewed teachers using a semi-structured guide (Creswell, 2012) at the beginning and end of each case study to gauge the teachers’ interest in using translanguaging and the study of emotions as well as how they position the identities of their students with emerging print literacy (see Appendix C). I began the interview by asking about the teacher’s background and previous experiences with literacy and language education. However, key to the initial interview was discovering which students could be potential participants for the study. This is why the pre-interview is an important part of answering the question of who the students are. The final interview was a reflective piece where the teacher discusses how they have observed students interacting with the research. This post interview included more information on who the students
are and how emotions shape their identities and literacy practices. These interviews were completed after school and at lunch time, in person.

3.6 Data processing and analysis

Multiple sources of data were collected and processed during this research project. The semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Field notes were recorded within a week, if not on the day, of my visit to a site. Photographic and video data of students’ work was collected for analysis as well. Pictures were taken of students’ translanguage writing and plans of action, as well as their body maps and objects connected to emotions. These pictures were saved digitally, as it is important that students be able to keep their original work. Videos from the Flipgrid application were downloaded and transcribed as well for analysis. Some of the material needed to be translated or read closely for meaning before I could begin the analysis of the data. Translators were hired for Spanish and Arabic. A translator volunteered for Hungarian and a close friend translated some Pashto. The Spanish, Hungarian and Arabic translators were all PhD students at the time they supported this project. The Pashto translator had completed her PhD and worked in international development as a researcher for many years. Where possible, I tried to find translators who were familiar with the version of the language the students spoke. The Arabic translator was also from Syria, the Spanish translator was familiar with Mexican Spanish, and the Pashto translator was from the same region of Afghanistan as Diyar. For Hungarian, the translator was not from a Roma background. However, she was able to translate all of the words, so it appears the students did not use any Roma in their videos. Unfortunately, after many attempts, I was not able to find a Tibetan translator who I could afford on my student budget, so much of that data is not used in this current study.

The semi-structured interviews with the teachers were a way of triangulating my data with the field notes, students work and focus group interviews. Delamont (2002) finds that triangulation, whereby the data is looked at from multiple perspectives, is one way of checking for reliability. Therefore, my interviews with the classroom teachers serve to validate and challenge my own reflections and assumptions. Understanding emotions is a complex endeavor. The teacher sometimes had some insights into the children’s emotional responses to activities, discussions, and experiences in class as the teacher had spent much more time with the children.
There was key information that I was not aware of about each child. Combining the teacher interviews with the student work and my own perspective added a richness to the data viewed from multiple positions.

Data analysis began with important themes related to emotion that the children had identified in the focus group interviews. I listened to and read the data multiple times, taking notes and highlighting themes that occur across the multiple case studies as well as emerging themes that are unique to a specific school site or participant. I first began coding the data in Word files, but when NVivo became available for free for students, I moved my data to NVivo for analysis. This allowed me to clearly see which themes were more predominant in the literature and that I should include in my analysis. I began first with the students’ focus group interviews. Students discussed the emotions they associated with each other’s work and where they thought these emotions were coming from. I then analyzed all the data using the emotional themes the students identified in their discussions and building on any other themes that arose.

All of the data was analyzed thematically and deductively. Using my theoretical framework, I used concepts to understand the data. Content in the data related to my questions around identity, emotion and language and literacy practices was highlighted. I did not use grounded theory. However, within categories new themes would present themselves inductively. I would then find ways to understand these themes in terms of my theoretical framework. For example, there were emergent themes such as food. This theme connected back to the sticky emotions category of trauma. In general, my theoretical framework informed how I approached the data by organizing the data into the following categories:

1. Social positions—This category can include any demographic information on who the students are. It can also include codes pertaining to how they are positioned in terms of age, race, ability, gender, class etc.
2. Literacy practices—This category includes codes pertaining to the students’ languages and literacy practices in general. Students’ plurilingual literacy practices are addressed with this category as well as translanguaging from texts.
(3) Sticky emotions—This category begins with the emotional codes the students have created in the focus group interviews. I add codes that pertain to emotion that I see arising from the data.

(4) Reflective researchers—This final category adds to the research on child as co-researcher. Any themes that pertain to them using their knowledges to analyze the multi-modal work.

My first analysis chapter, Chapter 5, on who the students are was completed after this process. In other words, I did not look at who the students were until the end of the analysis and writing of Chapter 6 and 7 on the students’ identities and literacy practices as they related to their emotions. Originally, this was my last analysis chapter, but now it is Chapter 5. For this chapter, I mainly focused on the Social Positions codes. I also re-analyzed the Where I Am From poems and Literacy Profiles for emergent themes using my social positioning theory to understand the data.

3.7 Timeline

In the following section, I explain the timeline of my research. First, upon the successful completion of my proposal and approval of my committee as part of the comprehensive exams process in September 2018, I submitted my ethics protocol to the university immediately. By November after some minor revisions, I was approved by the University of Toronto ethics department. I then submitted for school board approval. This was done based on school board timelines. By the beginning of January 2019, I received ethics approval at one of my chosen school boards and I was able to contact schools and begin my research over the next six months. My times at different school sites overlapped. I completed my field work by the end of June.

3.7.1 Flexible plan for each case study

I spent at least 50 hours at each school site. How these hours were organized depended on the realities of the local context. Ideally, I wanted to be with the students for two half days each week over three months. However, at Smokey Glen, I had a full day as well. The school was harder to get to, and I collaborated with two teachers. To gain an authentic view, I preferred to operate within existing structures of the research site: school schedule including recess and lunch breaks, push in or pull-out models of support or specialized programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 3 pm</td>
<td>Initial visit (met principal and created observation schedule with Alexandra), school assembly and met students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 29, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 3 pm</td>
<td>Student recruitment and Alexandra’s initial interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to noon</td>
<td>Student recruitment, rapport building and guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 6, 2019</td>
<td>2 to 4 pm</td>
<td>Parent recruitment/consent calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 7, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to noon</td>
<td>Data Collection (Guided reading and <em>Sticky Objects</em> activity) and more parent consent phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19, 2019</td>
<td>12:45 to 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Guided reading and <em>Sticky Objects</em> activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 20, 2019</td>
<td>12:45 to 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Focusing activities, guided reading and <em>Something Important about You</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 25, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Focusing activities, guided reading, Diyar’s first day in class and one-on-one literacy work with Diyar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 27, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (School bulletin boards, <em>Linguistic Portraits</em> videos and Alexandra absent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Emotion activities, guided reading) and co-planning for poetry activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Field trip discussion, focusing activities metaphor and poetry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Meditation, guided reading, guest teacher and autobiographic writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 2:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Introduce Where I Am From poems, guided reading, and <em>Linguistic Portrait</em> catch-up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Guided reading and <em>Literacy and School</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Meditation, guided reading and poetry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 10 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Diyar and Karo’s work, went home early due to personal illness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Guided Reading and poetry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23, 2019</td>
<td>12:45 to 2 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Guided reading and <em>Reading/Writing</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24, 2019</td>
<td>12:45 to 2 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Focusing activities, guided reading and <em>Where I Am From</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 12:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Food assembly partially led by Karo and Amira, Focus group interview # 1 (Karam, Fatima, Yara and Serena), Alexandra’s final interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3, 2019</td>
<td>9:30 to 10 am</td>
<td>Focus group interview # 2 (Karo and Amira)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3 Thistle Meadow Timeline*
### 3.7.1.2 Smokey Glen Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 22, 2019</td>
<td>1:30 to 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Rapport building, classroom visit with ESL/ELD class and conversations with teachers about potential participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 24, 2019</td>
<td>9am - noon</td>
<td>Rapport building, classroom visit with Peter’s Grade 4 class and scheduling of teacher interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 30, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 3 pm</td>
<td>Rapport building, consent forms and student recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5, 2019</td>
<td>3 to 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Elitsia’s interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 11, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to noon</td>
<td>Data Collection (Grammar sheets with Rabten one-on-one; Peter’s class was the class novel and <em>Here I Am</em> picture book for <em>Sticky Object</em> activity); student recruitment/consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 22, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to 3 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Grammar and introduction to <em>Flipgrid</em> with Rabten; book reports with Peter’s class; after lunch <em>Sticky Objects</em> and <em>Here I Am</em>); co-planning with Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 26, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to 3 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>What’s Important to You</em> and <em>Places I Have Lived</em> video with Rabten; <em>What’s Important to You</em> video with Senait, Tomas, Aashi, and Soman; <em>Places I Have Lived</em> video with Senait and a written version as well; <em>Linguistic Portraits</em> preparation with Peter’s Grade 4 class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>Writing</em> video with Rabten; continued work with Peter’s Grade 4 class for the <em>Linguistic Portraits</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>School and Literacy</em> video with Rabten; novel study with Peter’s class; Aashi’s <em>Places I Have Lived</em> and <em>Linguistic Portrait</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>Where I Am From</em> poems with Peter’s class and Rabten); co-planning with Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Sentence work with Tenzin Rabten; <em>Where I Am From</em> poems with Peter’s class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to noon</td>
<td>Data Collection (One-on-one with Rabten doing poetry, whole school assembly with opera company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 3 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Morning with Peter’s class finishing up poetry and collecting videos with Aashi and Tomas; Afternoon with Rabten one-on-one completing poetry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to 3 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection and Focus Group Interview at lunch with Tibetan students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3, 2019</td>
<td>12:45 to 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Pictures of student work; completion of any unfinished videos); Organizing final collection of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 4 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Pictures of Tomas’ work; Focus-group interview with Tomas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.7.1.3 Valley Meadow Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Initial Visit (Learned more about the classroom and students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Student Recruitment and Data Collection (Taught the initial <em>Sticky Objects</em> activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>Sticky Objects</em> writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (<em>Sticky Objects</em> writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (supporting with schoolwork and continued with student recruitment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3, 2019</td>
<td>9 am to 1 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Writing about verbs; Hunor, José and Luis’ <em>What’s Important to You</em> videos; Gina’s Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8, 2019</td>
<td>1 to 3 pm</td>
<td>Data Collection (Roma Celebration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Luis’ <em>Places I Have Lived</em> video)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Hunor, José and Luis’ <em>My Languages</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Math and picture dictionaries; José’s <em>Places I Have Lived</em> video; José and Luis’ <em>Reading</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Prepositions; Luis and José’s <em>Internet</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (Balinte’s <em>Writing, What’s Important to You</em> and <em>Places I Have Lived</em> videos; Hunor’s <em>Writing</em> video; Luis and José’s <em>Writing</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (translanguaging and schoolwork; Balinte’s <em>Learning Outside of School, My Language, My Schools, My Teachers and Reading</em> videos; Hunor’s <em>Reading, My Teachers and Internet</em> videos; Luis and José’s <em>My Schools</em> videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (videos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (assembly, mathematics, ‘Where I Am From’ poems introduced to the entire class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (continued with writing of the ‘Where I Am From’ poems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 16, 2019</td>
<td>9 to 11:45 am</td>
<td>Data Collection (pictures of student work, continued writing of ‘Where I Am From’ poems; coordinating Focus Group Interviews)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My general timeline for each case study, which may not involve consecutive days is as follows:

- Prior to beginning the research, bring consent forms to the school sites and explain the research to the principal and teacher participant.
- Day 1: Collect consent forms asking the teacher about contacting parents for any child who has not returned their forms. Try to build rapport with the students and teacher as well as other staff in the school. Show the class the Flipgrid application to create interest in the project. Arrange a time to pre-interview with the teacher.
- Day 2 to 3: Confirm with the teacher which students, who have returned their signed consent forms, would be appropriate for the research looking for as much diversity as possible. The research focuses on focal participants but the entire class can join in the activities. I take time during these initial days to introduce a trans languaging view of language and literacy to the students and teachers. This could be through class discussions that positively frame students’ entire language repertoires. This should be informal and not didactic. I also collect data using Flipgrid on students’ background information. I also start to discuss emotions with the class. To do this, we do the ‘sticky emotions’ activity.
- Day 4 to 15 (approx.): Collaborate with the classroom teacher to work on a variety of written trans languaged texts depending on the needs of the school site. These could be the “Where I Am From” poems or existing work that incorporates trans languaged texts. I tried to have at least one trans languaged text from the students by Day 10. Students continued to create videos on the language and literacy practices using Flipgrid. Ideally the students would have completed at least another three videos.
- Last Day: Data collection with participants only in the focus group interviews. Participants use body maps to identify an emotion they see present in one piece from each other’s work. They used the body maps and then have focus group interviews.
a number of emotions had been identified, students began to categorize each other’s videos and written artifacts using these emotional themes.

3.5.2 Timeline: Post data collection

Over the summer of 2019, July and August, I completed transcription of my interviews. Additionally, the translation of the students’ work began in the summer and early fall. I then began the process of coding and categorizing the data completing this stage by December 2019. This coding process began with the emotional codes the students had identified and then adding my own emerging codes as they relate to emotions, identity and literacy practices as the analysis continued. At this point, I had clear themes for situating my analysis where I connect the data back to the literature. I then wrote my analysis chapters over the following year. I began with Chapter 4, which was a summary of all of the participants and field cites. I then moved on to writing Chapters 6 and 7, which were elaborations on the emotional themes and answered my questions around identity and literacy practices. Finding that I needed more of an analysis of who newcomers’ with emerging print literacy were, I then created Chapter 5, which broke down a number of pieces from the literacy profiles and their Where I Am From poetry. Finally, in the summer of 2021, I wrote my Chapter 8 conclusions.
Chapter 4: Case Study Descriptions and Participant Vignettes

The following chapter lays out both the setting of each case study and the student and teacher participants. I begin each section by introducing the case study site and briefly describing the community where the schools are located. I then describe the classroom(s) where I completed the research highlighting what can be observed and how the room is organized. This is followed by an introduction of each of the teacher participant(s) and then all of the student participants. To make these descriptions and vignettes easier to follow, I have created case study tables when I begin describing the participants for that school site.

4.1 School 1: Thistle Meadow

The first school is located in an urban setting and is surrounded by a large number of apartments and subsidized housing complexes. Sixteen percent of the students in the school are designated as English Language Learners with 91% of the students speaking a language other than English at home (EQAO, 2019).

The school has many students, which means that it can offer both a Grade 4 and a Grade 5 specialized half-day program for newcomer children with emerging print literacy. The Grade 4 students participate in this specialized class in the morning and the Grade 5’s in the afternoon for five days and then they switch. The students are with a mainstream class for the other half of the day. They refer to this mainstream class as the big class. The specialized half-day program is for students who are in the English Literacy Development (ELD) program in Ontario, which is designed specifically for newcomer students who they consider as having limited or interrupted prior schooling. However, the school also has English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) teachers who work with other plurilingual students who are integrated into their grade level classrooms for the whole day with some small group support. The children in the ELD program are very welcoming towards me and are of Afghan and Syrian backgrounds.

On my first day at the school, there is a plurilingual concert where visiting musicians play instruments and use languages from different cultural backgrounds. Urdu is one of the languages spoken by many students in the assembly, as the school appears to have a predominantly South Asian population. However, in general, the school is an English-only space, which can be seen through the bulletin boards posted around the school. The school does have an International
Language program (OME, 2012) where children are offered language instruction in Urdu or Pashtu after school once a week for two to three hours. There is a different school two kilometers away that offers similar classes in Arabic that presumably the children can attend.

4.1.1 The classroom

There is a long corridor with desks and hooks for the students’ winter coats leading into the classroom. To the right is a series of windows that look out into an atrium where the students planted a garden later during the school year. The actual classroom is about half the size of a mainstream class. This is not a surprise, as there are only eight students in the Grade 5 class where I decide to do my research. Alexandra has set up the corner of her classroom with a classroom divider where students can go if they need some quiet time. This is what she refers to as her calming corner or corner of Zen. She tells me that students can go to the space for twenty minutes or so, only one at a time with no questions asked. In the calming corner, there is a tent with different textile objects and a head set and stereo. There are a large number of resources for the students and teacher to use in the classroom including a class set of iPads, a laptop attached to a projector, numerous bins of mathematics manipulatives, mini whiteboards, a Fountas and Pinnell guided reading series, and desks, to name a few. Alexandra has posted information about the zones of regulation (something all the classrooms in my study had posted and appears to be required by the school board). The zones of regulation categorize emotions into four colors giving children common ways to speak about complex language. Everything is written in English with no evidence of the students’ languages.

School 1: Thistle Meadow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Length of time in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>ELD Teacher</td>
<td>Spanish, English</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gr. 4/5</td>
<td>Unknown (immigrated from Cuba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karam</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2 Thistle Meadow teacher: Alexandra

Alexandra tells me that she has always wanted to be a teacher since she was little and gave homework and notebooks to kids in her neighborhood in Colombia. She feels that she was born to teach. She states that she has always been a Grade 5 teacher, but when she was in Malaysia she worked in a private school as part of the English as a Second language (ESL) department. Because of this and because she had been an ESL student herself with Spanish as her first language, she requested to teach this specialized class upon returning from her one-year leave for Malaysia. She has also learned to speak Kiswahili while volunteering in Africa and Bahasa while teaching in Malaysia. This is only her second year as a specialized English Literacy Development (ELD) teacher. All of the following students are in Grade 5:

4.1.3 Thistle Meadow student: Fatima

Fatima was born in Syria, arriving in Canada seven months prior to the case study taking place. Before coming to Canada, the family lived in Lebanon. She speaks Arabic and is learning to speak English. She has a brother who is seven years old, whom she loves a lot. Fatima is quite attached to a school board employee who comes to the school a couple times a week to support the students’ leadership and social-emotional growth. She describes this employee as helping her when she is angry. Fatima often uses Arabic and has close friendships with other Syrian students in the classroom. She has strong opinions and is not afraid to express what she feels.
4.1.4 Thistle Meadow student: Karam

When I first arrive, Karam is the only boy in the class. Like Fatima, he is from Syria and speaks both Arabic and English. However, he lived in Jordan between leaving Syria and arriving in Canada. Karam is passionate about music and often listens to songs like *Taki, Taki*, which is in Spanish and English. He likes to sing and dance along to the music. One of his favorite games to play is a videogame called *Babji*, which he plays a lot. Karam has a sense of humor and likes to make people laugh. He has many strong opinions about what he likes and dislikes, which he expresses often. The teacher keeps Karam and Fatima separate, as she tells me that they encourage each other to go off-task and not get their schoolwork done. Karam has been in Canada much longer than Fatima, and the teacher is concerned that he is not focused on school and is not progressing as he should.

4.1.5 Thistle Meadow student: Amira

Amira’s family has lived in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Canada. She speaks both English and Arabic and lists Spanish as a third language because she listens to Spanish music. She also describes rap music as being a fourth language that she knows. She loves to read books about magic and girls who have special powers. Amira is a confident reader and person in general. She is well liked by the other students in the class and participates in leading an assembly for the school. She seems to like all of her teachers and describes them as being “super nice.” She smiles and laughs a lot following classroom routines and completing her classwork. However, if she disagrees with something, she is not afraid to express her opinion.

4.1.6 Thistle Meadow student: Yara

Yara has lived in Syria, where she was born, as well as Jordan and Canada. She had to leave family behind in Jordan, which makes her very sad. She speaks both Arabic and English. One of her favorite books is from the Judy Moody series because it’s funny and a chapter book. She is good friends with Fatima and Amira. The three girls often speak Arabic together and include Karam in their laughter and discussions as well. She loves her school and family and describes her mother as being strong like a lion who takes care of her and makes her good food. She is generally very positive about her schooling experiences and literacy practices.
4.1.7 Thistle Meadow student: Karo

Karo was born in Afghanistan but her family moved to Pakistan when she was four. Karo tells us that she came to Canada three years ago. However, the specialized class she is now in was not available to Grade 3 students, so she did not receive ELD instruction until Grade 4. She loves Canada because of school and there being places to play. She speaks both Pashto and English. She describes both her mom and dad as having taught her a lot outside of school. She loves food like burgers and cupcakes and gets excited when she cooks. She has a little sister who she loves very much and who she describes as cute. She is often placed with Karam, as they work well together and are at the same place in their reading program.

4.1.8 Thistle Meadow student: Diyar

Diyar arrives at the school well into my three-month case study with the class. Although I have limited time with him, I can collect some data on his reading and writing. However, Alexandra does not have him participate in the literacy profiles or the focus-group discussions. This is partly because he has just arrived and she wants to use the time to build a relationship with him, and because she has him completing different work, which I tried to capture as much as possible during the case study. Diyar is from Afghanistan and speaks Pashto. He has not been to school and is not familiar with many written words in Pashto.

4.1.9 Thistle Meadow student: Serena

Serena does not meet the criteria for this study, as she writes quite extensively in Pashto under her father’s guidance, as seen from her bilingual diary. However, she has signed consent forms and participates in all the activities including the focus group interview, so I describe her here. Serena has an artistic sensibility and is often seen producing beautiful artwork during class activities. She also picks up the concept of metaphor quite quickly, incorporating it into her writing and poetry. Her favorite film is The Breadwinner, which is interesting, as she is from Afghanistan (Kabul and Kandahar) originally. She has also lived in Oman. She lists Korean and Chinese as languages she is familiar with because she hears them spoken in drama. She loves to read books like The Amulet.
In order to provide some context, partway through the study, Serena showed me her personal diary that her father had instructed her to write. He asked that she write in Pashto one day and English the next in order to develop both of her written language practices.

Figure 7 Thistle Meadow, Serena, Journal Writing

Serena told me that her dad told her to write a journal entry every day and to write in English one day and Pashto the next day. I took pictures of her writing, which I have included above.

4.2 School 2: Smokey Glen

Smokey Glen is my second school site and is in a more suburban area of a large city. It is close to a lake and difficult to access via transit. The school is surrounded by both expensive condominium high-rises and more affordable rental housing. Ten percent of the students are designated as English Language Learners and 31% speak a language other than English at home (EQAO, 2012). The school has students from a range of cultural and economic backgrounds. There are several Eastern European students, and there are also a large number of Tibetan students. However, different newcomer groups have come and gone through the school over the years. For example, the teachers tell me that there were a number of Hungarian Roma children at the school a number of years ago. There are not any International Language classes offered at the
school. The closest Tibetan class offered through the International Languages program is six kilometers away. Eritrean is not available at all.

The school is smaller in size with only one class for each grade level, K to 5, with some split classes. There is a strong sense of collegiality in the school with a friendly atmosphere in the staff room where I feel welcomed at lunch. As this is a small school, the teachers seem to know each other quite well. On my first day at the school, I meet and discuss potential participants with the English-as-a-Second language (ESL) teacher.

4.2.1 The classroom

Many of the participants at this school are integrated into mainstream classrooms for most of the day. This means that I ended up spending a great deal of time in a Grade 4 classroom as well as with the ESL/ELD teacher. Most of my work in the ESL/ELD classroom is with Tenzin Rabten, who has just arrived in Canada this past year. The Grade 4 classroom consists of Senait, Tenzin Sonam, Aashi and Tomas as well as approximately twenty other Grade 4 students.

4.2.1.1 The ESL/ELD classroom

Due to the smaller size of the school, there is only one full-time ESL teacher who works with a mix of both ESL and ELD students in the morning where she plans and implements their entire literacy and numeracy program. The students stay in this program for one year. In the afternoons, she supports teachers with students who are integrated into their mainstream grade level classrooms. The ESL/ELD classroom is located on the second floor of the school. It is a small room that can fit ten students comfortably. The door of the classroom has Welcome signs in many different languages. However, once inside the classroom everything is in English. There are desks in groups for students to sit at as well as a round table. The teacher has a SMART board to use for her lessons.

4.2.1.2 The Grade 4 classroom

The Grade 4 classroom is as you would expect. There are student desks and a teacher desk with blackboards, windows and student work posted on the walls and in the hallway. Peter has his students sitting with their desks in groups of four or five. There is also a roundtable at the back of the classroom for conferencing and a sink and hooks for students’ jackets. Peter has set
up a rocking chair with a carpet at the front of the classroom. There is also a projector that connects to the classroom iPads. There is no evidence of students’ languages posted anywhere in the classroom.

School 2: Smokey Glen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Length of time in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elitsia</td>
<td>ESL/ELD Teacher</td>
<td>Russian, Macedonian, Serbian, English</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gr. 1 – 5</td>
<td>Immigrated to Canada in the 1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Homeroom Teacher</td>
<td>English, Jamaican Dialect</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senait</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Eritrean, Arabic, English</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenzin Rabten</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Tibetan, Hindi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenzin Aashi</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Tibetan, Hindi, English, French</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Slovak, English, Polish, French</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8 Smokey Glen Participants*

### 4.2.2 Smokey Glen teachers

Again, as I am working in two different spaces with the students, there are two different teachers for this school site. Elitsia, the ESL/ELD teacher, is my first contact at the school and then she connects me with Peter, a Grade 4 homeroom teacher.

#### 4.2.2.1 Smokey Glen teacher: Elitsia

For Elitsia, going into teaching was a practical decision. She grew up in communist Southeastern Europe as part of the Soviet Bloc. Teaching was the one place where she felt you could be ideologically neutral, at least with young children. However, once she was done with her schooling, communism was over, so she did not even have to engage in what she calls low level brainwashing. The political change also allowed her to use her second major to become an
English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teacher. The structure of the EFL program in Eastern Europe was similar to core French in Ontario in that she taught English one period a day from Grade 4 onwards. As a young student herself, she had to learn Russian, which is a Slavic language like her first language. She is also somewhat familiar with Macedonian and Serbian. She describes herself as a good writer and has had poetry published in her first language. Elitsia has been an English-as-a-Second-Language teacher at her current school for many years. However, she has also taught in other positions, for example, serving last year as the school librarian. Although she has been an ESL teacher for many years, this is the first year that she has taught in a contained program where she teaches a small group of students their entire numeracy and literacy program. This is a model she is unfamiliar with.

4.2.2.2 Smokey Glen teacher: Peter

Peter is a Grade 4 homeroom teacher, but he began his career by working in a Special Education class for several years. He has been at Smokey Glen for eight years now and describes it as a very diverse school with a great deal of newcomers. Peter states that the demographic is constantly changing, with different cultural groups moving through the school. He personally found the linguistic portraits activity we did in class enlightening because in his words the activity made him “dig deeper”. For example, he realized that his mother’s Jamaican dialect was a language he had been exposed to. He wants to find ways to help his ESL students along, because they are often with him in class and he is concerned that there will not be an ESL program at the school next year.

4.2.3 Smokey Glen student: Senait

Senait is a Grade 4 student in Peter’s class and has been at the school for two years. According to Elitsia, Senait is from South Sudan and has lived in several refugee camps. However, Senait lists both Eritrea and Sudan as countries where she has lived, and that her family lives in Eritrea, so it is very special to her. She speaks several languages including Eritrean, Arabic and English. Senait moves away early in the case study, as her mother gets a subsidized apartment in another part of the city. She leaves the school with little notice, but I am able to collect a sample of her writing and a linguistic portrait.
4.2.4 Smokey Glen student: Tenzin Sonam

Sonam was born in Tibet and speaks Hindi, English, Tibetan and a little bit of French. He likes to play games that you can download and that do not use any Wi-Fi, like Pokémon. He has lived in four different places. He was born in Tibet where he lived for five years before moving to India briefly. The family then lived in Ottawa before moving to his current school and home. As Sonam has been studying in Canadian English schools since Grade 1, he does not qualify as part of my criteria. However, he wanted to be part of the study and he participated in all the activities including the focus group interview. Other students who are focal participants refer to him throughout the data, so I have chosen to include his profile here.

4.3.5 Smokey Glen student: Tenzin Rabten

Rabten is in Grade 5 but goes to the ESL/ELD classroom in the morning for his numeracy and literacy instruction. Rabten lives with his dad, as his mother has passed away. He has attended three different schools in three different countries: Tibet, India, and Canada. He can speak and understand both Hindi and Tibetan. As he is just learning English, we use the oral component of Google Translate to speak to each other using Hindi and English. Some of his favorite things include Pokémon, soccer, Fortnite, and his mom, who he loves very much.

4.3.5 Smokey Glen student: Tenzin Aashi

Aashi speaks three different languages with her friends at school: English, Tibetan and Hindi. She describes herself as learning French. Her favorite books to read are graphic novels. She states that she went to school in Tibet and learned Math, Science, Dancing and English. She loves her family very much. She writes in English because she has forgotten how to write in Tibetan. She has a close friend who she sits with in class. Her friend also speaks Tibetan. Her teacher Peter is concerned that she feels intimidated by her friend, because the friend is a strong student and Aashi asks for a great deal of extra help with her written work, especially. Aashi is quite soft-spoken and requests that only I view her videos that we record during throughout the case studies. She comes across as shy.
4.3.6 Smokey Glen student: Tomas

Tomas is originally from Slovakia. It is unclear exactly why, but he has missed some schooling due to his health. He states that he did not do Grade 1. He describes himself as speaking Slovak and English, as well as a little bit of Polish and French. He states that he arrived at the school two years ago and did not speak any English. With my prompting, he occasionally uses some Slovak words in his speaking. He had a big house in Slovakia, which he misses, but he likes the sun on his face and the lake in Canada. He felt scared when he came to Canada because he did not know English. Tomas feels that he needs to get better with his writing and write more. He did not learn to write in Slovakia, partly, because he missed so much school. He lives with both his parents and likes when they buy him things.

4.3 School 3: Valley Forest

Valley Forest is in an urban area but close to a large park and green space. There are many apartment buildings in the community as well as single homes. Forty-two percent of the children in the school speak a language other than English at home and 14% of the students are labelled as English Language Learners (EQAO, 2012). Although Valley Forest has been around for a long time, the school has recently been rebuilt and has beautiful new facilities. There is a large gymnasium, which is used for whole-school assemblies.

Partway through my research at the school, there is an assembly to celebrate Romani culture and raise awareness of issues facing the Romani people. The school has a large amount of diversity including students from all parts of the world. For example, in the classroom where I complete my research, there are students from Mexico, Paraguay, Hungary, Syria, Bangladesh and Greece, to name a few. The school offers International Language program classes every Wednesday after school in Bengali, Mandarin Simplified, Spanish and Tamil. There are no Hungarian or Roma courses offered at any school in the city.

It is a large school, so there are at least two full-time ESL/ELD teachers. One teacher works with the junior (Grade 4 to 6) level students, which is where I complete my case study, and the other the Grade 7 and 8’s. Like Smokey Glen, the ESL students and students with emerging print literacy are combined into one class for the morning and then integrated into their mainstream classroom with some supports in the afternoon. The teacher, Gina, states that she
chose students to be in the class based on who is the ‘neediest’. It is her first year working in an ESL classroom.

### 4.3.1 The classroom

Gina has been given a regular sized classroom for her ESL/ELD students. There is enough space for up to thirty students, but she keeps her class at about the size of fifteen. Students sit in groups of four and tend to sit with friends who speak the same language as them where possible. There is student work posted on the walls and Gina has had the children write out the different emotions in the zones of regulations in their languages. She has many resources such as a Smart board, iPads, and bilingual picture books. There is a wall of windows that look out onto the school playground and she has a snack table set up near the door where food is always available. Near her teacher desk, Gina has set up a conferencing table where she pulls different groups of students to work on their class work throughout the morning.

**School 3: Valley Forest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Length of time in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>ESL/ELD Teacher</td>
<td>Greek, English, Italian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gr. 4–6</td>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunor</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Hungarian, English, Roma</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Hungarian, English, Roma, French</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 9 Valley Forest Participants*

### 4.3.2 Valley Forest teacher: Gina

Gina has been a teacher for twenty years at her school and has taught almost every grade and position. She tells me that her teaching package has changed almost every year, but she did
teach Grade 1 for many years. She originally started her early childhood education (ECE) training but then decided to become a teacher instead. Gina is well respected by the principal and is often called on for leadership positions in the school like organizing EQAO testing and running the school when both administrators are absent. I know this because she is called away from the classroom to perform these roles during my research. She has a laid back, dry sense of humor that comes out the more you get to know her. Gina has an understated confidence. Gina was born in Canada, and she grew up speaking Greek at home. Her husband is Italian, so she is somewhat familiar with that language as well. She can often be found translanguaging with other Greek speaking colleagues and the Greek student in her classroom. Although this is her first year as an ESL teacher, she has always had newcomer students in her class in some capacity. Gina feels that she understands how to modify grade level programming for plurilingual students but is unsure of how to program for students in the morning ESL class. What she focuses on is learning the English language and preparing the students to be in Canadian curriculum-based classrooms. She encourages students in the early stages of their English language development to write in the first languages.

**4.3.3 Valley Forest student: José**

José is in Grade 6. José’s dad was born in Canada and his mom was born in Mexico. Much of his prior schooling was in Spanish in Mexico. The family has lived in several places in Mexico, including Cancun and a place called *Day of the Sun*. He describes his school there as being hard and the teachers as giving him lots of homework. His teacher, Gina, informs me that José’s father thinks his Mexican school was not very good. José is happy with his school in Canada because people do not mock or bully him here. He likes his current school because he says the children treat him well and are honest. Painting and drawing as well as writing and doing Math homework are activities he enjoys. He also likes to use WhatsApp to communicate with his grandma and grandpa in Mexico. He describes his grandparents as having given him their love while they cared for him in Mexico. He also loves his brother, Luis, because he is always there for him. José has been to school, but various people who understand Spanish describe his writing skills as being at a beginner level.
4.3.4 Valley Forest student: Luis

Luis is José’s brother. He is in Grade 5. Luis describes himself as being from Mexico. He states that he was born in Playa del Carmen. He has also lived in Merida and Oaxaca. Luis loves to play soccer. He loves his grandparents, his mom and aunts and uncles because they always helped him with his homework. He misses them very much. His brother also helps him when he does not understand something. Writing in both Spanish and English are pleasures of his. His favorite books to read are the Sonic books. He likes the pictures. Luis likes to play math games on the computer, as well as listen to music and talk to his aunts. He also uses the translator function on the computer to do his homework. Luis likes to write in Spanish because it makes him feel good. Like his brother, José, Luis’ Spanish writing is at the primary level.

4.3.5 Valley Forest student: Hunor

Hunor tells me his language is Hungarian but he speaks Roma a little bit with his grandpa. He has also learned English and a little Arabic at school through friends and his grandpa. Hunor was born in Hungary but the family moved to Budapest because it was not good for them there. They left but then they went back to Hungary. I am unsure of what this means, as Budapest is in Hungary. I assume that he means a more rural part of Hungary. His older brother and grandma came with them, so they bought a big house in Hungary. This same older brother has a child, so he eventually moved away. Hunor loves when his teacher gives him free time to play on the computer. His favorite activity is playing Fortnite. He plays it when he wakes up in the morning but he lets his little sibling play games in the evening. Hunor is in Grade 6. He likes to go to parties where there are chips, cola, and music. He is well liked by the other students, has a dry sense of humor, and can often be heard speaking Hungarian with his friends.

4.3.6 Valley Forest student: Balinte

Balinte speaks English, French, Hungarian and Roma. He states that he used to be able to speak Roma when he was five or six but now, he’s not so sure. He would speak Roma with his aunts and grandparents. He used to live in Hungary where he had a great deal of nice teachers. Balinte, however, thinks it’s better in Canada. He describes both his school in Canada and his school in Hungary as being very big, except his current school has three gymnasiums. When he was eight years old, the family moved to Canada. Balinte is in Grade 6. His favorite book is
called *Squash*, and it is written in English. He found it hard to read in Hungarian when he was little but he tried really hard. He loves his family, especially his mom. He jokes around a lot with his brothers. Balinte says he enjoys writing in his ESL class.

### 4.4 Conclusion

Each school is wildly different in how it structures its programs for the newcomers with emerging print literacy and the demographics of its students. At the first school site, the newcomers with emerging print literacy are part of a specialized program that does not include other pluriilingual students. At the second school site, most of the participants are integrated into a mainstream Grade 4 classroom with one participant learning in a specialized ESL/ELD program. Finally, at the third school, the participants are all in an ESL/ELD class for half the day. There has been much debate as to how programming for multilingual students should be structured with some schools opting for a push-in model and others a pull-out model (Baecher & Bell, 2017). Push-in models would mean that the children stay in their homeroom class for the entire day and pull-out means that the children would leave their classroom for a specialized program for at least part of the day (Nes et al., 2018). The variety of program models at my three case study sites reveals that even within this one district each school has a different approach towards teaching their plurilingual students, in general, and their newcomers with emerging print literacy, specifically. There does not appear to be consistency. Some of this may be due to the size of the student population and, therefore, the school’s ability to support a pull-out program or philosophical differences in how to approach teaching newcomer children with emerging print literacy. The structure of the programs was not necessarily part of my research question. The students did not comment or reflect on their program structure in any way. The teacher participants all talked about the models for instruction during their interviews expressing uncertainty about which students should be included in their programs. In one case, the teacher participant even questioned the prevalent model in her school. Regardless, each school structures its programs differently. For more information about how ELD and ESL programs are structured in Ontario, refer to *English Language Learners Policy and Procedures*. 
In all three of my studies, the teachers talked about at least one student in their group who they thought had special education needs. This is not surprising, and I would assume this is true in most classrooms. However, in one case study, at Smokey Glen, at least four of my potential participants were talked about as having special education needs. One potential participant was not included in the study because she was placed in a special education class at the beginning of the research period.

So the girl that has been here a couple of years, when they landed in Canada, she went to Ottawa. So she came here from Ottawa in Grade 3. And so now she’s in Grade 5. It is unclear whether, how much literacy she has. Her penmanship is very good. Other than that, she doesn’t seem to be, to have the concepts, the literacy concepts, of idea, the main idea, supporting details. If you try and talk about such things it’s very hard for her. But also,
she’s extremely shy. So it is hard to tell what she has and what she doesn’t have. And, news flash, as of this week, that girls in now part of the Special Education program. They have formally moved her into the Special Education program. (Elitsia, initial interview)

As mentioned earlier, many of the newcomers with emerging print literacy at Elitsia’s schools are in a mainstream classroom and not a specialized program. At the other two school sites, all of the students were in a specialized program for at least half of the day. I wonder how push-in models for newcomers with emerging print literacy that schools have not properly thought through and structured for student success can lead to an overidentification of students as needing special education.

Alexandra, one of the teachers in a pull-out model, expressed that if she did not get the students reading and mathematics skills to a certain level, the students would immediately be put in special education upon leaving her class. All of this leads to the conclusion that the system in general sees newcomers with emerging print literacy as having problems that are inherent in the child rather than being shaped by systemic issues. When integrated into mainstream classrooms, their literacy practices are viewed through a medical model for interpreting the children’s ability as cognitive and neurological.

Besides school structure and identification as special education, there were also many differences in the demographics of student participants. The languages spoken are quite different depending on the school. At the first school site, the students speak Pashto and Arabic. At the second school, there are many Tibetan speaking students and at the third, the participants are Spanish and Hungarian/Roma speaking. In many cases, the languages the students speak are tightly connected to their racialized identities. In this way, the evidence of different languages appearing in clusters across different communities in Ontario is further evidence of the racialized segregation happening in Canada. Researchers such as Kim (2005) have found that the segregation of white communities is similar in Canada to the United States. They further found that there was less segregation of Black communities in Canada but more of Asian communities. This racialized segregation has been viewed by sociologists as evidence of racial inequality (Charles, 2003). Murdie and Ghosh (2009) have found that ethnic concentration does not always reflect a lack of integration; however, there is cause for concern with disadvantaged new
immigrants who are concentrated in the inner-city. To conclude, whether this ethnic concentration is understood as racial segregation or not, these three studies do show us that families are concentrating in communities with people of similar backgrounds to themselves. When this is happening in inner city communities of lower socio-economic status, attention must be placed on erasing systemic barriers the children face in receiving an equitable education.

The teacher participants all come from diverse backgrounds and schooling experiences. At least one of the teacher participants, Elitsia, received her teacher education in an Eastern Bloc country. Alexandra was born in Colombia and attended school there; however, I am uncertain of where she received her teacher education. Both Peter and Gina, have some exposure to immigrant communities and plurilingualism, Jamaican and Greek/Italian specifically; however, they appear to have been born in Canada. Marom (2019) writes that many internationally trained teachers struggle to find work as educators in Canada beyond occasional teaching. In this way, the immigrant teacher participants in this study are exemplary, as they have found full-time permanent employment as teachers in Canada. Furthermore, Marom (2019) finds that internationally trained teachers are often forced to adapt to the local pedagogical approaches to teaching. This places further pressure on immigrant teachers to conform to Canadian teaching practices. In these ways, the different approaches to working with students in the three case studies where I teach may be indicative of the variety of education and language experiences of my teacher participants.
Chapter 5: Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy?

All the participants in this research brought varying experiences with schooling, life and literacy. Their identities have traversed across different continents and with a range of languages and cultures. Before we delve into understanding how emotions shape the students’ literacy practices and identities, I want to reflect on who exactly newcomers with emerging print literacy are? The vignettes presented in Chapter 4 are summaries of what I learned from the data, but what are some of the common themes and experiences? Fruja Amthor (2017) calls for an approach to understanding immigrant and refugee youth that is both dynamic and intersectional. There are as many ways of being a newcomer, if not more, as there are ways to not be a newcomer. Furthermore, newcomers with emerging print literacy continue to be understood as being limited within school and policy settings (Bigelow & Pettitt, 2015). Being a newcomer is a social construct. Governments and regulations, which are often constructed, developed, and defined by white people, decide on labels to assign to the often-racialized bodies of new immigrants. In these ways the students’ identities as put forth in this chapter are understood as ever evolving and as always being in process (Hall, 1996). Connecting back to my theoretical framework, they change across different spaces and time. The group of students defined here are even more than newcomers; they are newcomers with emerging print literacy. I draw attention to this group of students because they have the considerably harder challenge of not only having to immigrate to a new country and in many cases learn a new language, but also having to learn about print literacy. If teachers, schools, and researchers are to work together to create programming and environments that are responsive to the students’ needs and literacy practices, then they must begin by understanding who this group of students are. The label of newcomer is a construct of governments, territories, and borders and, therefore, must be approached with caution.

I began this analysis by looking at some of the plurilingual texts the students created, namely their Where I Am From poems and then examined how they talk about their languages, previous schooling, places they have lived and interests in their literacy profiles. At times, I also read this data by connecting students’ ideas back to my field notes and the teacher interviews. The poetry the students write asks them to reflect on who they are in this moment and space. Sometimes the children focus on religious or cultural customs and other times on nature and their
homes and community. In their videos, migration, multiple languages, and personal interests are discussed. I analyzed these multimodal works created by students for emerging themes. Some of the themes included family, religion, cultural plurilingualism, monolingual English writing, and regional migration. Although none of the children discussed racism or even race in their poems, they are predominantly racialized students. To avoid reproducing colorblind racism (Carr, 1994), I think it is important to address how racism is present in the students’ lives, at least at a systemic level.

Finally, many studies choose to purposely connect their analysis to students’ immigration status (Fruja Amthor, 2017; Stewart, 2011). I chose not to, as newcomers with emerging print literacy are much more than their immigration status. In part this is due to ethical issues: I know for myself as a teacher, I am not to ask students about their immigration status. A students’ immigration status bears no reflection on my work with them. Moreover, not one student discussed their immigration status during the research process. Within this study, unsolicited information on the students’ immigration status tended to come from teachers. This may be because three of the five teachers come from abroad, so this is something they have learned to care about. Some of the teachers made larger observations about a certain community’s status. For example, Elitsia at Smokey Glen discussed with me how many of the Tibetan students had a special immigrant status that was negotiated by the Dalai Lama: the families could come to Canada as immigrants but could not claim refugee status and access social services. However, none of the Tibetan students told me about their immigration status. Based on immigration patterns and discussions with teachers, I can infer that at least half of the student participants had refugee status, but I cannot confirm this.

In this chapter, I lay out six themes as they relate to the students’ identities. First, I begin with a discussion of family, drawing on examples of plurilingual written texts deriving from their Where I Am From poems. I then delve into the students’ racialization but apparent lack of discussion about racism across any of the data. Next, I discuss the children’s plurilingualism in reference to the linguistic portraits they created as part of the literacy profiles on Flipgrid. I contrast with this with students’ monolingual English writing drawing on their photographs of their written texts. The next theme is their cultural plurality. This really comes out in the
plurilingual texts and is connected to the final theme of regional migration, as predominantly seen in their literacy portraits but also in a plurilingual text as well.

5.1 Family

Family is a common theme with almost all of students and came up on several occasions with the *Where I Am From* poems. This may have been due to the structure of *Where I Am From* poem and its criteria; I had writing prompts that asked directly about family. However, family is a pervasive theme that appears everywhere in the data, which are discussed in more detail later in Chapter 7, as it was a student-identified theme from the focus-group interviews. Furja Amthor (2017) tells us that newcomers need to be involved in self-definition. Building on this thought, I start with the theme of family, as it is an important way in which the children identify themselves. In terms of the *Where I Am From* poems, I provide some examples here. For example, in his oral reading of his poem, Hunor tells us,

(Hungarian) “A testveremel jol erzem magam.”

(English translation) “I feel good with my sibling.”

And then, later in his poem, he states:


(English translation) “My mom's name is Brigita. And [pause] um I usually eat gingerbread cookies, goulash soup, pizza. The Christmas... The Christmas box I open. When we came with my Papo, Budapest.”

In his poem, Hunor mentions three different family members: his sibling, mother and Papo. They are important parts of his identity and how he sees himself. Like Hunor, Balinte also mentions his grandparent: “I am from photos of me and my grandmas.” Similarly, Rabten writes “I am from Hindi songs listen with my dad.” Through their poems these boys are acknowledging the important role that family plays in their lives. We can see the activities they do with their families like listening to music, the emotions they feel towards their family like feeling good
with their siblings and the artefacts they have like a picture of a grandmother. These multi-dimensional family connections reflect ever-evolving notions of how the students identify in different spaces.

In a similar fashion, Yara connects her own identity to her family in her Where I Am From: “I am from a lovely family. I am from a beautiful school and a family.” Here, Yara uses words such as lovely and beautiful to describe her family showing a strong sense of pride and love for her family. In her poem, Karo evokes the senses stating, “I am from smelling my mom cooks.” And then later including her family names “I am from Mimma and Miriam.” Haines et al. (1981) wrote about the importance of family amongst Vietnamese refugees many years ago, finding that the idea of family expanded beyond the boundaries of the household and included community. Building on this idea, researchers such as Isik-Ercan (2012) have talked extensively about the importance of including the families in children’s education through ideas like incorporating plurilingualism consistently and family presence in the school. Taking all of this into consideration, the students are communicating the importance of family through these poems. As educators and researchers, it is imperative for us to find ways to bring these family and community experiences into the classroom, if we are to create authentic programming that is important to the children. Again, this theme is discussed in great detail at the beginning of Chapter 7.

5.2 Racialized children and socio-economic status

During this study, I did not ask students directly about racism. Part of this was my own fear as a researcher of not being able to gain access to school spaces because of raising issues around racism in my study. For several reasons, my experiences as a student researcher have led me to believe that school boards and schools do not want to be critiqued from an anti-racist perspective. It is well-known that being allowed into school boards by local ethics committees is challenging. However, despite this, almost all the students in my study are racialized in a Canadian context coming from countries such as Syria, Tibet, Afghanistan, Mexico, and Eritrea. Three of the participants originated in Europe: two from Hungary, with both students identifying Roma as part of their heritage, and one from Slovakia.
Interestingly, the only time any of the teachers discussed the children’s race was in relation to the student from Slovakia, Tomas. The teacher wondered if his skin tone was too white for him to be considered Roma. That is, the only reason why race was questioned with Tomas is because of racial ambiguity. This was how the teacher wanted to locate Tomas, given that teacher’s ambiguity based on ‘reading’ Tomas’ skin color. For the other students, their racialized status did not need to be mentioned because it’s just so plainly obvious. Here, we can clearly see Hall’s (2006) idea that race is a social construct. For whatever reason, skin tone became an important part of labelling the student as Roma. Why this label mattered is unclear as well and leads one to believe that a student being understood as being Roma is important to teachers. That it means something. This student, Tomas, is often an outlier/exception to the themes identified in this chapter. Tomas did have access to schooling in Slovakia but missed a great deal of school due to personal illness. Tomas is the only participant who is a newcomer with emerging print literacy due to personal illness in my study, but his race is also ambiguous. Both pieces may contribute to the divergence in themes in this data surrounding his identity positioning and, ultimately, how the school decides to label him.

Unlike family, racism and race is not something the students mentioned at all in their Where I Am From poems. The lack of discussion of racism may be due to their age. It could be connected to their length of time in Canada and not having experienced minoritization or racism prior to migrating. It could be related to classrooms being constructed as color-blind spaces (Dei, 2006; James, 2011) where racism is not explicitly named. Canada has a long history of embracing multiculturalism in theory but ignoring racism in practice. There is a belief that we are all equal and all cultures are accepted when, in fact, racism and a Eurocentric system are the reality. This discourse was found in my previous research on policy for newcomers with emerging print literacy where racism was not discussed in any way (Brubacher, 2019). Likewise, an understanding of culture by applied linguists in Canada that understands how race and language are intertwined is highly lacking (Kubota & Lin, 2009). Following Lee’s (2008) work, teachers need to acknowledge and challenge these practices or they risk reproducing hegemonic discourses.

Socio-economic status is a theme as well, and it comes up throughout the data. Previous research has found that newcomers with emerging print literacy, or students that are referred to
as students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), often live-in communities with high levels of poverty (Hos, 2020). In this research, Senait leaves the school and this research early because her mother had finally gotten into subsidized housing after being on the wait list for a long time. This was a significant moment, as the family finally had found affordable housing within an over-priced housing market. Similarly, Elitsia describes the Tibetan students at Smokey Glen as living in cheap, poorly maintained apartments in the local area. At Thistle Meadow, the school is surrounded by overcrowded apartment buildings that have been a hot spot for Covid in recent months. Another theme that appears is the use of public transportation, like in the case of José and Bus 23 appearing in the first line of his poem. The Tibetan families are also described as hard to get a hold of, as the parents are often working multiple part-time jobs. We discover that Tenzin Sonam prefers video games that do not require Wi-Fi access, suggesting that access to Wi-Fi is not always possible or consistent. Finally, in two of my case studies the school snack program was heavily used by the participants with some students even wanting more than what is offered.

Again, the one exception to this theme of lower socio-economic status is Tomas, potentially, the only white student in the study. Here is his Flipgrid response to Where I Am From:

(English) I lived in Slovakia, but I felted happy because I had, my house was big and, and I have a lot of things there but not too many. In Canada, I’m feeling better because here I can see everything. I can see water. I see sun everyday and I feel, when I came, when I came to Canada, I was feeling a little bit scared because I never, I never, I never know how to speak English but I came to school, I learned. And when we buy a house, I was feeling better.

Tomas has positive feelings towards Slovakia using the word happy to describe his experiences there. He also describes material possessions like his big house and having lots of things. He then describes Canada as better because he can see everything like water and the sun. He does use the word scared to describe his initial experiences around learning English but then he learns English and they buy a big house, so he feels better. Tomas is the only student to focus so heavily on material possessions in this way when describing his migration patterns. He talks a lot about his
feelings but does not mention his family. Again, Tomas is potentially the only white student in this study and appears to be the only participant who lives in a house in Canada.

5.3 Plurilingual

This next section highlights the thoughtful and creative work the students created to get a more thorough look at their plurilingualism. As part of their literacy profiles, the students created a linguistic portrait that was presented and explained on Flipgrid. These portraits were one piece of their larger profiles. The creation of linguistic portraits with plurilingual students has begun to proliferate as a reliable and in-depth tool for collecting information on students’ language repertoires (Bajt, 2019; Busch, 2012; Prasad, 2014). These portraits allow researchers and educators to know how students use different languages in their lives, as they are dynamic and do not demand proficiency in a language to be incorporated as part of the child’s portrait. For example, without these portraits, I would not have known that Hunor and Balinte had learned some Romani from their grandparents, or that Sonam saw Hindi as a larger part of his portrait than Tibetan.

All these children appear to have been exposed to multiple languages. Some of them picked up new languages during regional migration, while others have already experienced their ancestral language practices eroding. Similarly, Bal and Arzubiaga’s (2014) research has found that refugee families participate in multiple literacy practices and languages throughout their daily lives. These children are not simply bilingual. They have been exposed to a wide range of rich literacy practices. Regardless, plurilingualism is the reality of these children’s lives.

To begin, Hungarian and English are the two languages that Hunor can be heard and seen using while in the classroom. However, he also lists Romani and Arabic as languages he knows a little bit from his grandfather (Papo). Besides the school assembly celebrating the Romani national holiday, where Hunor sings the Roma national anthem, this is the only time that he mentions his Roma roots or that he has had any exposure to the Romani language.
(Hungarian) Beszelek angolul, roman, magyarul, arabul. O ez angol [points to head of drawing], roma [points to chest of drawing], arab [points to stomach of drawing], o magyar [points to legs of drawing]. Arabul egy kicsit tudok. Roman is csak egy kicsit tudok es ez is [points to feet of drawing] o English english.

(English translation) I speak English, Romani, Hungarian, Arabic. Um, he is English [points to head of drawing], Romani [points to chest of drawing], Arabic [points to stomach of drawing], um Hungarian [points to legs of drawing]. I know a little Arabic. I only know a little Romani, and this is also, um English English.

Hunor also speaks about his languages in an additional Flipgrid prompt entitled My Languages:

(Hungarian) Azert van roma a Papomek is tudnak romaul, en is tudok egy nagyon picit. Tanultam toluk. Arabul is tud a Papom egy picit. Meg en is tanultam tole egy picit, meg a barataimtol.

(English Translation) There's Romani because my Papo also knows Romani, I know a little too. I learnt from them. My Papo knows Arabic as well, a little. And I learnt a little from him, and from my friends. (Hunor, Transcript and translation of video response to My Languages)
Through his literacy profile including his linguistic portrait, we catch a more expansive look at Hunor’s linguistic repertoire. He is more than the Hungarian and English we see him using in class but has also been exposed to racialized languages such as Romani or Arabic.

In the next linguistic portrait, we see and hear Luis choosing to begin his response in English and then ending his response in Spanish. Therefore, the first part of his transcription is written in English. I then have the Spanish part translated afterwards.

Figure 12 Luis’ Linguistic portrait

Me I like circle is good, nice me speaks Spanish I like language Spanish French little bit of French (Spanish) a me gusta jugar futbol yo soy de México yo soy español el azul es español el verde es ingles y de french es rojo
(English translation) I like to play football. I am from Mexico. I am Spanish. Blue is for Spanish. Green is for English and red is for French.

Luis chooses to create a plurilingual description of his linguistic portrait starting with English and then moving onto Spanish for the second part. He also writes the word for Spanish as Español.

In this portrait, he uses the word ‘like’ to describe how he feels about his Spanish. Interestingly, he talks about knowing a little bit of French, but not English. In other words, he has included English in his portrait but has not discussed his usage of English at all in the spoken components of his video. Half of his portrait is blue for Spanish and the other half is green for English, suggesting the importance the two languages play in his life. It is the blue, however, that dominates his brain and is there to represent his eyes and mouth suggesting that reading and speaking are in Spanish. In Luis’ case, his linguistic portrait is composed of two languages of European heritage, which both appear interchangeably.

Before her early departure from the research process, Peter and I did get Senait to complete her linguistic portrait.

Figure 13 Senait’s Linguistic portrait
(English) Hi. Hi. My name is Senait. I have four languages and English; I speak a little bit of English. And Eritrea, I speak a lot of it and like my whole bodies fill of it and Arabic, I speak lots of Arabic. And I listen to music, English music. So, bye, BYE (laughs and covers face).

My experience with Senait is that she speaks quite a bit of English, so it is interesting to hear her describe herself as speaking only a little bit. I was quite happy to see Senait describe herself in this portrait as speaking a great deal of Eritrean, as when I first met her, she seemed uncomfortable telling me what language she spoke. This is in stark contrast to both Luis and Hunor, who spoke their European languages quite confidently. Senait is quite confident about including her Arabic language too, but she doesn’t speak it. Finally, her laughter demonstrates her overall enjoyment of this activity, even if she finds it a little bit embarrassing and covers her face. Senait’s dominant color in her portrait is green for Eritrean, obviously, a very important language for her. I had to take a screen shot of Senait’s portrait from the Flipgrid video, which I have placed here. It is not clear. I could not access the actual linguistic portrait, as she moved from the school very quickly and was not able to get it before she left.

Tenzin Sonam is a Tibetan student and Senait’s classmate.

Figure 14 Tenzin Sonam’s Linguistic portrait
Hi guys. My name is Tenzin Sonam. My first language is Tibetan cause I was born in Tibetan. That’s why I color my hands Tibetan. My second language is Hindi and mostly my cartoon was Hindi. That’s why I color my legs that and my third language is English. I know a little bit English that’s why I color my body. And my legs. I don’t know that much French but that’s why I color my two ears. Bye.

Like Senait, Sonam describes himself as only knowing a little bit of English, even though my experience with him is that he knows a great deal of English. The color for Hindi is the most predominant color on the portrait, suggesting that even though it is not what Sonam calls his first language, Tibetan, it may be his most dominant. Finally, he has French on his ears, which he describes as ‘not know that much of’. Like Senait, Sonam does not speak any language except English while describing his portrait.

Finally, Fatima presents her portrait describing her language usage.
Fatima has chosen to have two colors for the language Arabic because, as she says, she speaks more Arabic. However, she does not use Arabic at all in this video. She then lists much of her portrait: ears, stomach, and heart as being in Arabic as well as her hair. She must have some connection to English because she has it in her smile, and she is speaking it in the video. This dichotomy of emphasizing Arabic in her picture and choosing to speak in English is quite striking. Fatima’s teacher had an English-only policy, which I discuss at length in Section 6.2.

It is interesting to note that in these linguistic portraits not one of these students talked about their language in terms of their home and their school languages. In their research, Seltzer (2019) worked to reconceptualize the notion of home and school languages with Grade 11 students in a New York school. In my study, some of the teacher participants tried to force this divide through English only classroom policies; however, the students never once conceptualized their language usage this way in their linguistic portraits. This was true even in classrooms where teachers tried to enforce an English-only policy that attempted to relegate students’ literacy practices other than English to the home. Although school spaces may be more regulated in how students can use language, according to Purkarthofer (2018), from students’ perspectives “neither families nor schools are spaces of uniform language regimes” (p. 218). Instead, the students seamlessly intertwined their languages altogether to create a linguistic portrait that was reflective of their literacy practices and identities.

The children’s plurilingualism is rich and varied. For Senait, English, Eritrean and Arabic all play important roles in her life. Tenzin Soman includes Tibetan, Hindi, and English. With Hunor, there is more of a sense of two predominant languages, English and Hungarian, but Roma and Arabic are still parts of his portrait. Both Fatima and Luis speak languages spoken by large populations of people, Arabic and Spanish respectively. Despite only mainly using these two languages, Luis still refers to French in his portrait and Fatima lists Arabic twice in two different
colors. I wonder how different ways of using Arabic have become part of her linguistic repertoire as she traversed across multiple borders while migrating to Canada. These portraits allowed the children to define how they used different aspects of their linguistic repertoires. As newcomers with emerging print literacy, this need for self-definition, as suggested by Fruja Amthor (2017), allows the students to elaborate on how they use languages regardless of the space they are in. Enabling the students to define their own language usage led to much more varied and authentic self-definition of their language usage.

5.4 Monolingual English writing

Most of the students in this study had not learned to read and write prior to arriving in Canada. In this way, it is not surprising that when it came to written texts, there was very little evidence of any language except English in the students’ work. However, this is also indicative of the children only being taught to read and write in English once they are in Canadian classrooms. This reflects the problematic assumption, critiqued by many researchers (Cummins, 2007; García & Wei, 2014) that only English should be used as the language of instruction at the expense of students’ plurilingual literacy practices. Moreover, Wiley (1996) has found that people with emerging print literacy are often “portrayed as a social disease” (p. 11). Wiley further writes that this occurs generally with plurilingual, racialized people and that print literacy in the West is very much entangled with schooling. In these ways, neglecting students’ full linguistic repertoire leads to deficit thinking about plurilingual students with emerging print literacy where their prior learning is not valued. Therefore, it is very concerning that the children in this research showed little evidence of being taught to read and write in anything besides English.

Another reason why this monolingual English writing is a concern is that by having the students learn to write in English and not in a language in which they are more proficient there is a further delay in them learning about print literacy at all. When only using English in their literacy programming, the students must be taught to write in a language they do not understand, which makes writing inauthentic and not reflective of their lives, or else they must learn English before any formal instruction around learning to read and write can be taught. Researchers have called for having newcomers with emerging print literacy take bilingual learning classes where they both learn to write in English and any other languages that they speak (García, et al., 2017;
Mace-Matluck et al., 1998). Heritage language programs in Ontario, for example, offer this possibility, but even better for the students would be to bring this practice into the full day classroom by having teachers plan along with the teachers from those heritage language programs. Even teachers who do not know the children’s language can move towards bringing translanguaging into the children’s written work, but in doing so they must be willing to give up some of their authority to the children themselves, volunteers, parents, and community members, as plurilingual language experts. These approaches allow schools to not add to the delay of children learning about print literacy by requiring them to learn English first or to learn to write using language they do not understand.

None of the teachers in this study, except Gina, was able to produce any written texts by the students in anything except English. José and Luis, two of Gina’s students, had some exposure to written Spanish in Mexico before arriving in Canada, so again, it is not surprising that there was more Spanish evident in their written texts. By having the students write in Spanish, the students’ oral language practices become connected to their print literacy. Also, their teacher, Gina, had more of a translanguaging pedagogy than the other teachers, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. This meant that José and Luis’ Spanish were not seen as a deficit, but instead as an important part of their education and learning. In the following piece of writing, José writes in Spanish after being directed to do so by his teacher. This is an initial writing sample collected by Gina when he first arrived in Canada:
Luis and José were able to understand written Spanish texts and use them in their learning. They used on-line translators to support them with their schoolwork. José also spoke about his preference for reading books in Spanish in his Reading response on Flipgrid:

(English translation) I like reading Spanish books because I can read them, but I cannot read the books in English. Therefore, I like more the Spanish books and less the books in English, because when I try to read the English ones, I do not understand them and the Spanish ones I do understand. Done.

However, despite his apparent enjoyment of reading in Spanish and the initial writing samples provided by their teacher, Luis and José rarely wrote in Spanish unless I encouraged them too.
and directed them through this process. In these ways, the students have already internalized the message that writing in English is what counts as print literacy.

Later during the case study, I worked with José on his *Where I Am From* poem. I had been working with the class for over a month, finding ways to bring a translanguaging pedagogy into the students’ academic work. I encouraged the students to write using any language. José’s teacher chose to have the students type their poem on their computers: hence, the picture of a computer screen below. Despite all this work and José often choosing to complete oral tasks in Spanish, for his writing, he was determined to complete most of it in English. It was only with encouragement from me that he included the Spanish words that he did in the poem. There could be many different reasons. He may have been wanting to appease me: even though I told him to use Spanish, my own Spanish is quite abysmal. He may have wanted to write something that his classroom teacher and myself could understand. The other piece is that even though the class often used translanguaging orally and socially, it was often not used in academic contexts.

![Figure 17 José’s Where I Am From Poem](image-url)
In this poem, we can see that José lists *Despacito* as a song he hears every day. This is not surprising, as this is a Spanish-language song. José wrote his Spanish words independently and includes more translanguaging in his writing than most students with words such as hola, sopa and feliz navidad. Nevertheless, most of his poem is written in English.

Like José, many of Hunor’s videos are in Hungarian. This is exceptional, as many students refused to use any language other than English in their videos. Hunor would provide bilingual videos at times, where he would speak in Hungarian and then translate it to English. I have included Hunor’s graphic organizer here for his writing. As you can see, Hunor chose to write his poem almost entirely in English despite being encouraged to do otherwise.
Hunor then chooses to read his English poem aloud in Hungarian in his *Flipgrid* video:

(English translation) Not with my dog do I usually... I my friend to go and we go into my house... it smells good. Flowers. I feel good with my sibling. I go outside, there's tulips next to the door. Um Hungarian. It means that in my language that good morning. The "Running Rich" I usually go with... I usually listen to. Miskolc is my city. My mom's name is Brigita. And... um I usually eat gingerbread cookies, goulash soup, pizza. The Christmas... The Christmas box I open. When we came with my Papo, Budapest. Then we came to Canada, we took a picture of ourselves. Cana... well, from Hungary we went to Pest and came to Canada.

(Hunor, Poetry)

It is apparent from the translation that Hunor did not like the Where I am from structure and chose to read his ideas more as a narrative. It is interesting to see him comply with the expectations of the poem structure in written English, but then read his poem aloud in Hungarian the way he wants to without the repetitive poetic structure of the Where I am from poems. In this way, the use of translanguaging does mean the giving up of some teacher authority but allows for more choice as the students create texts in the way they want.

José and Hunor were two students at Valley Forest who had learned some print literacy in Spanish and Hungarian, respectively, before immigrating to Canada. Senait, from Smokey Glen, like most of my other participants, had not. Moreover, in the other two case study sites, the teachers had not learned about or incorporated translanguaging into the classroom. In the early days of my case study, I asked Senait to complete her first Flipgrid video on What’s Important to Me. Senait wanted to write out her response first before she completed the video. This was
surprising to me, as I normally think of using oral language to support students’ written work. In this case, Senait used her writing to support her oral language. It also could be indicative of her being a studious learner who likes to prepare her work ahead of time. This is her written response:

**Figure 19 Senait’s Writing**

(English) I love my family because they are very special to me. When I came to Canada, they helped me meet new people and go to the new school. I am very proud. I feel happy.

(Senait, *What’s Important to Me*)

Senait uses a great deal of positive language to describe her family and her feelings about her new school. Generally, the students in my study were highly concerned about spelling and writing everything correctly. So much so that it prevented them from writing at all and they could constantly be seen erasing and rewriting their work asking their teacher for approval over their writing. Here, Senait quite confidently writes her piece in a way that she can comprehend.
and is authentic to her. There are only a few erasure marks on the paper. Senait chose to write to support her oral response and she was not overly concerned about following formal grammatical and spelling structures. There was a sense of freedom in her writing. She wrote for herself, so that she could understand. Despite this, however, there is no attempt by Senait in either her writing or her speaking to include Eritrean.

Later, in my case study at Thistle Meadow, I attempted to do some work with Rabten incorporating written Tibetan. At one point, he told me about the word for love in Tibetan, so we included it. Eventually we created a video of him reading the sentences and explaining his portrait. He rehearsed each sentence and then I would record it. When he read the sentences, he smiled and concentrated hard pushing himself to learn. He seemed very proud of what he was reading and saying. He did tell me that he had read a book in Tibetan but later he told me that he did not have any Tibetan books at home. I am unsure of his previous schooling. He can speak Hindi but does not maybe write it. He wrote one word in Tibetan and he told me it was the Dalai Lama. Here again we see a student who has almost no spoken English as part of his linguistic repertoire choosing to write in English.

At Thistle Grove, the classroom teacher took this English only stance even one step further and at the beginning of the case study, expected the students to write their responses in English and have it corrected by a teacher before they responded orally to their Flipgrid prompts. The students even told me that they only wanted to do their videos in English because they wanted their teachers and other students to be able to understand.
Figure 20 Karo preparing for her Places I Have Lived video

In this picture, we see Karo’s oral response that has been written out by a school board employee using the employees print literacy and understanding of English grammar. Karo then rehearsed her oral response and was corrected by this employee. This contrasts with other moments where Karo acts as a leader when her literacy practices are utilized to work with and support a peer using Pashto. The transcript below starts with the English translation and has the Pashto words the children originally spoke in parenthesis. Occasionally Karo speaks English, so there are not Pashto words in parenthesis.

Karo: (Pashto) te cherta wosegy?
(English translation) Where do you live?

Diyar: (Pastho) ze pe jalalabad ke osegam
(English translation) I live in Jalalabad

Karo: (Pastho) te khoshala ye?
(English translation) Are you happy?
Diyar: (Pashto) ze khoshala yem
(English translation): I am very happy.

Karo: (English) I said “are you happy in Canada or not.”

Karo: (English) He said, “I’m happy, I’m happy.”

At the time of this interaction with Karo, Diyar had just entered the research as a new student part way through the study. I have very little data with him, but in this short video we learn that he speaks Pashto and is from Jalalabad. In the transcript of the video, we can see some excitement from Karo that after talking with Diyar in Pashto, she has discovered that he is happy. This is an opportunity for Karo to use her plurilingualism in the classroom. It is also a rare moment when the teacher breaks her English-only policy. However, once again, it is done so orally, not in writing. As Wiley (1996) tells us if the literacy practices taught in schools are not reflective of what is being used in the community, then they are seen as being imposed by the school system. From this devaluing perspective, Wiley finds that deviations within students’ oral literacies may be more acceptable in the English only classroom, but those same deviations are not seen as acceptable in written literacy practices. In these ways, Karo is allowed brief moments of overtly translanguaging while speaking, but never in her writing for which the teacher and other adults hold authority over.

For both Senait’s and Karo’s videos, written English is used to prepare for oral responses. This is an interesting variation of the idea of using oral literacies to prepare for writing. In Karo’s case, the writing has been scribed and corrected by an English-speaking adult. Adults in Karo’s classroom often control her literacy practices, whether they are oral or written. Senait made the choice herself and used her own writing to support her speaking. José and Hunor used different components of their linguistic repertoire orally in both their Flipgrid responses and when doing schoolwork in class. In their writing, it was English that predominated. Regardless of the context, written English is being used in the classroom for academic purposes and not any other language. Velasco and García (2014) find that even if the goal is to develop writing in English, a translanguaging approach that incorporates the entire linguistic repertoire of the students has the most potential among any approach to writing; it is an essential part of how plurilingual students can self-regulate and advance their learning.
Van Viegen (2020) has found that with secondary school students of refugee background, using metalinguistic thinking, multilingual word walls, graphic organizers and mathematical concepts allows for student-directed critical exchange that allows children to fight back against marginalizing discourses. In these ways, incorporating translanguage into the children’s writing not only works towards enhancing their written English but develops their goal setting ability to speak up against marginalizing practices in their schools and larger communities. Research has shown that programs must incorporate students’ entire linguistic repertoire into all aspects of their programming. The students in my case studies were missing out on a fundamentally important aspect of their print literacy development by not having their entire linguistic repertoire included in the writing process. There is a giving up of authority by teachers both in terms of content and structure and the teacher’s ability to do error correction. However, the students begin to take authority over their ideas and grammar, which is ultimately what is most important: nurturing independent writers. In Chapter 6, I show how bringing translanguage into the writing of newcomers with emerging print literacy increases engagement, gives the students authority as language experts, and makes writing more meaningful to the students.

5.5 Sophisticated consumers of various cultural experiences

The children in this research by no means have static ideas of culture. More to the point, they seamlessly brought together different cultural products, arts, experiences, games, amongst others. This is not surprising when we see the level of plurilingualism and regional migration, which I discuss next, present in their life experiences. Moreover, Hornberger (2007) writes of the cultural flexibility young people display in their authentic literacy practices when they combine these different cultural worlds in multimodal texts. This point can best be exemplified through Rabten’s poem using the George Ella Lyon Where I Am From format. As a reminder, Rabten is a student from Smokey Glen:
Where I Am From

I am from sun and car.
I am from TV and Pokémon.
I am from read English book.
I am from yellow tree in the park.
I am from Tibetan and tash-ee-delee.
I am from Hindi songs. Listen with my dad to taha Ka Paka.
I am from my Samsung phone.
I am from amachelparkdesh in Tibet.
I am Tenzin.

Chinese noodle, Chinese noodle, and Momo.
I am from the Dalai Lama.

(Rabten, Poetry)
Rabten and I worked closely together to write this poem. To communicate, we used the Hindi option on Google translate. Finding Tibetan translators for this project was quite a challenge for me. I have some untranslated data that I am unable to use as part of this study. All of this meant it took time for us to understand each other. I scribed for Rabten, doing my best to get his thoughts on paper. He then wrote the above copy of the poem in his duotang and read it using Flipgrid. Rabten’s poem might be seen in some settings as linguistically simple, in that it does not incorporate many adjectives and very little context. However, the poem reveals to us that Rabten does not come from a static culture. This is seen through content that reveals linguistic and cultural complexity, which can be seen by his love of Chinese noodles, his dad’s choice of Hindi songs, Pokémon being a favorite activity, reading English books, having a Samsung phone and the Dalai Lama. He seamlessly combines foods, music, and activities from six different countries into his poem, all of them influencing who he is and how he sees himself. Rabten incorporates different languages and music into his poem drawing on a wide range of cultures and nationalities to describe his identity. Also, Rabten’s faith is a theme in his poem: in this case, Tibetan Buddhism. Throughout the study, I observed that Rabten as well as the other Tibetan children adorn themselves with religious symbols and colors, so it is not surprising to see this theme arise in Rabten’s poem as well. Rabten is a truly sophisticated world traveler who continues to have a strong sense of identity routed in his religion and culture.

Like Rabten, Karo’s Where I Am From poem, amalgamates languages, foods and cultures to reveal a multi-dimensional identity that lives at the intersection of many different cultures.
I am from a tree with birds that are singing.
I am from smelling from my mom cooks.
I am from using my homework every day.
I am from trees in Afghanistan.

Figure 22 Karo’s Where I Am From Poem
I am from Pashto, asalmalkom, I am good, thank you.  
I am from Despisido.  
I am from phones that play scales.  
I am for Afghanistan.  

I am from Mimma and Miriam.  
I am from pizza, rice and chicken.  
I am from a salem a lakem, Ramadan.  
I am from a special dress.  

(Karo, Poetry)

Karo’s connection to her Muslim faith is revealed through her referencing of the Islamic greeting As-salamu alaykum and her attention to Ramadan. Pashto and Afghanistan also appear in her poem along with the Spanish song title Despacito. The attention drawn to Afghan objects like trees and possibly the rice and chicken along with a Spanish song and pizza reveal her ever-changing and fluid identity that is searching for a place of belonging in this new country in which she lives. Like Rabten, she has a strong sense of faith but also a sense of worldliness that comes from being exposed to a range of cultures.

These students live at a dynamic intersection of different identities. Who they are, shifts across different spaces. As such, there can be no static understanding of who a newcomer with emerging print literacy is. I draw attention to this because often there is a negative association with regional migration, which I discuss next. However, here we can see how exposure to different cultures and ways of doing things have shown the students a multiplicity of lived experiences. This combats deficit thinking that flattens newcomers with emerging print literacy into being seen solely as limited in their schooling. These children bring much cultural knowledge and rich schema to the classroom learning environment. Finding ways to capitalize on their depth of sophisticated experiences is essential to creating a program that moves beyond a static understanding of their identities but instead embraces the multidimensional positions that they bring to the classroom. With newcomers with emerging print literacy, we can see quite clearly the truth behind Hall’s (1996) idea that the construction of identity is always in process.

5.6 Regional migration

Another data point I use to examine newcomers with emerging print literacy’s identities is through their video responses on Flipgrid to the Places I Have Lived prompt. Many of the
children in these videos discussed regional migration prior to immigrating to Canada. This could have taken the form of moving to a new country, like many of the Syrian students who lived for a time in Libya or Jordan; the Tibetan students who lived in India before coming to Canada; or Senait’s experience of moving back and forth between Sudan and Eritrea. This regional migration could also have happened within a country, like Luis’ experience in Mexico and potentially Balinte’s in Hungary. As we have little information about Diyar, I am unsure of his migration patterns or if he lived in a different region of Afghanistan before immigrating; however, we do know that Karo, who was born in Afghanistan, lived in Pakistan prior to immigrating to Canada. Tomas is the only student who appears to have immigrated directly from his home in Slovakia, but as mentioned earlier, Tomas has different reasons for having emerging print literacy, namely, his health.

Before I get into some of the Flipgrid responses, I begin by looking at Karam’s Where I Am From poem, as he is the only student participant to directly write about inter-regional migration within his poem.
I am from the trees still sleeping like me.

I am from an orange door.

I am from black and white soccer balls.

I am from a black and white soccer ball.

I am from a black box from the past.

I am from a black box that is fast.

I am from a black box that is fast.

I am from someone's name.

I am from someone's name.

I am from Syria and Jordan.

I am from a funny Shawarma.

I am from fasting for Ramadan and getting money for Eid.

I am from my BAX bike.
I am from the trees still sleeping like me.
I am from an open door.
I am from black and white soccer ball.
I am from cement roads.

I am from Arabic and Bye.
I am from Modi Arabi.
I am from a black bmx that is fast.
I am from Syria and Jordan.

I am from Mervat and Khalid
I am from Miami Shawarma.
I am from fasting from Ramadan and getting money for Eid.
I am from my Daraja.

(Karam, Poetry)

Karam lists two countries, Syria, and Jordan, as places he is from. Having lived in two countries before immigrating to Canada appears to be important to Karam. Interestingly, during one of his Flipgrid responses he does discuss his experience in Jordan stating: “Then I feel in Jordan, like I used to run from the school and then I don’t feel safer there.” Karam specifically points out in his poem that Jordan, as well as Syria, were places he lived and then further discusses running from school and not feeling safe suggesting that Jordan is a place that Karam attaches much importance. In these ways, regional migration has not been a positive experience for Karam and has left him with some negative memories about school.

Other children in the study discussed regional migration patterns as well, but only when directly asked through the Places I Have Lived prompt. Aashi tells us

(English) I have lived in Tibetan, Mil, Hindi and Canada. And at Tibetan, I feeled happy and um [inaudible]. After I, I. I lived with my Auntie house and um and it was a nice house. I always loved to live there and I came to Mil and I had so much different house there. I, I, I loved to live in Tibetan. I came to Canada and I feel, and my auntie house to live in there and after we got. (Aashi, Places I Have Lived)

I am uncertain of what Aashi means by Mil or if I am even transcribing this correctly, which is one of the problems of not having a translator. This means I am uncertain of all the places she has lived. She spends much of her video talking about her auntie’s house, so this must have been
an important place for her. The theme of love appears, but in this instance, Aashi uses it to
describe her love of Tibet. Interestingly, she lists Hindi, a language, as a place she lived.
According to Elitsia, many of the Tibetan children lived in a region of India near Tibet. I can
infer from both Elitsia’s description and Aashi’s video that Aashi did spend some time in India.
However, it is Tibet to which she attaches a loving memory. The house in Mil is described as “so
much different” and her reflections on Canada are left incomplete when states “I feel” and then
does not end her sentence. Instead, she jumps to a description of her Auntie’s house. Tibet is
happiness and love.

Although Senait was not present for much of the data collection period, completing the
Flipgrid video on places she had lived was something she did with excitement and confidence:

(English) Hi, you guys. I lived in many countries but I’m just going to do three today.
The first country is Canada. Canada is a country for me special. When I came here, I
wondered where Canada was but I learned more about Canada. I felt proud of this
country and I loved the country. My second one is Sudan. I’ve been in Sudan many times
and sometimes I miss Sudan and here’s lots of stores and kind people to me. That’s why I
like Sudan. My third country is Eritrea. Eritrea is special to me because that’s where my
family is. So I go back and forth, back and forth to Sudan and Eritrea. So I like, I like
Eritrea because its very special. My family are there and my friends are there. So that’s
the special country I like. Bye you guys. (Senait, Places I Have Lived)

Senait does not follow a linear timeline when describing where she has lived and instead starts
with Canada where she currently resides. She uses words like special, proud and love to describe
Canada suggesting that being Canadian is a strong part of her identity. For Sudan, she uses the
words like and kind. She qualifies her experience of missing Sudan as being sometimes.
According to Senait’s teachers, Peter and Elitsia, Senait lived in a refugee camp in Sudan.
However, Senait chooses not to present this as part of her identity in her video. Eritrea is also a
place that Senait likes and describes as special due to her family and friends living there. She
describes her migration experience between Sudan and Eritrea as going back and forth, back and
forth. It is interesting that she lists this twice, suggesting this must have happened quite often.
The circular nature of Senait’s migration experiences is not unique.
Senait is very clear about her experiences of living in different countries and the movement back and forth between these countries. However, Balinte is less certain of his experiences. His patterns are like Senait in that there is regional migration between countries.

(English) Hi. My name is Balinte. I’m gonna talk about where did I live. First, I born in Hungarian in 2008, August 25 and when I was five, we moved a country. I don’t know what the country’s name was. I forgot about it. We moved back to Hungarian for half a year. Then I came to Canada. Yeah. I was eight years old when I came to Canada. And I’m really happy to be here. (Balinte, Places I Have Lived)

Here we see the circular pattern of migration present in Balinte’s experiences as he moves back and forth between Hungary and another country. His lack of knowledge about this country suggesting that it was not significant to him.

With Luis, there does not appear to be a direct migration pattern between the place he grew up and where he lives now in Canada. All of Luis’ migration takes place within Mexico where he discusses living in different places such as Playa del Carmen and Merida. He also mentions Oaxaca, a region in South-West Mexico and Sultan, which may be in the North. Luis creates his video in Spanish, which I have had translated here:

(Spanish) Yo viví, nací en playa del Carmen. Nací ahí, nací en playa del Carmen y fui a Mérida y Canadá a México, a Oaxaca A nueva York a justan ahí vivi y ya...

(English translation) I lived and was born in Playa del Carmen. I was born there. I was born in Playa del Carmen and I went to Merida and Canada. Mexico, Oaxaca New York. A Sultan I lived there and that is it (Luis, Places I Have Lived)

Although Luis does not migrate between different countries in his region, there is much regional movement within Mexico.

Like many of the other students in this study, Yara’s journey from her home in Syria to Canada is not a direct one. Laughter was a common theme with the Syrian students in Yara’s class. When not focused on schoolwork, the students could often be found laughing and singing together, which is very much present in this video:
Yara’s description includes some time in Jordan where she had to leave family behind and feels very, very sad about it. She describes her new friends as nice and never making her sad. She describes loving to play and sing and then proceeds to act silly and make jokes while laughing. Yara’s description of *Places I Have Lived* is full of laughter in one moment and feelings of sadness of family members left behind in another.

In general, the students’ regional migration patterns put them at higher risk for having been “exploited, marginalized and discriminated against” (Stewart, 2019, p. 61). Although the children all had very different reasons for migrating, whether that be war, poverty, racism, religious persecution to name a few, the process of immigrating within your own region put them at higher risk for exploitation. During transition children can experience emotional and physical deprivation (Frater-Mathieson, 2003), as Karam wrote about in his schooling experience in Jordan. This regional migration can also reflect a search for jobs and education, especially in rural areas where access to schooling may be sporadic (Khan, 2021). Furthermore, it can reflect that the children are fleeing war and violence, as is the case of Stewart’s (2012) research, which found that many war-effected youth experience racism in Canadian schools. In these ways, it is imperative that this group of children do not experience the triple trauma threat by having to deal with poverty, racism and violence in their homes, in transition and in their country of settlement, Canada. However, this regional migration could also reflect something positive in that the children’s multi-dimensional identities have been exposed to many ways of being and knowing across the multitude of places where they have lived. In these ways, it is not surprising that the children would have connected with many languages in their literacy profiles and do not appear to have a static culture as reflected in their poems.
5.8 Conclusion

Through these data, we can see that the children are positioned as newcomers with emerging print literacy for a variety of reasons. Some of them like Diyar, who is in a Grade 5 classroom, have not attended formal schooling at all. His first days in school took place during this study. Other students like Balinte did attend school and enjoy comparing the difference between the school structures.

(Hungarian) Az iskolam Magyarorszagon nagyon nagy volt. Ketto tornateremben ...es mind ketto nagyon nagy volt. Volt egy foci palyank, es az iskola nagy volt. Nagyon nagy. Volt... igen. And... most en Kanadaban vagyok es az iskola ugyan olyan, majdnem, csak itt az iskola nagyobb es itt harom tesoterem van so... szoval ennyi.

(English Translation) My school in Hungary was very very big. There were two gymnasiuims and both were very very big. There was a soccer field, and the school was big. Very big. There was... yes. And... now I'm in Canada and the school is exactly the same, almost, except here the school is bigger and here there are three gymnasiuims so... so that's it. (Balinte, My Schools)

Some of the children come from countries where there are currently wars being fought: Syria and Afghanistan. Other students come from what appears to be relatively peaceful backgrounds in Mexico. Another student, who seems to have been wealthy in his home country, has missed a great deal of school due to medical reasons. And, finally, some students come from ethnic and religious backgrounds, Tibetan and Roma, that are known to have experienced racism and religious persecution. It is important to recognize that newcomers with emerging print literacy is not a static category and that teachers and schools need to be flexible in their responses and programming for these students.

There are many ways, however, that the students do converge. Many of the children discuss having a close relationship with their family. In the Where I Am from poems, a major theme in many of the students’ poems was family. In another theme, the students talk about connecting with a range of languages beyond the binary of L1 and L2. Interestingly, Sonam listed Hindi, which he described as his second language, as a larger part of his language repertoire than Tibetan, which he described as his first language. In addition to having a range of
languages at their fingertips, many of the students have lived in different countries and have even moved around within their own countries. Constant migration appears to be a recurring theme in many of their lives, as does poverty. In these ways, the students ever-changing multi-dimensional identities are layered and complex in the way they use literacy practices and migrate throughout the world, but also simple in their love of family and video games.

One of my concerns with using the term refugee or even children of refugee background to understand this group of racialized students, is that many children of refugee background already have extensive print literacy and have had attended school. For example, Serena was part of my study, but it became apparent when she showed me journal entries her father encouraged her to write that she was quite fluent in written Pashto. In this way, she is confident in her print literacy in both Pashto and English and does not fit the criteria for this study, even though she may have a refugee background. Making overgeneralizations about students of a specific nationality or background silos them into programs that may not be appropriate for them. This further adds to institutionalized racism that we should be trying to eradicate. On the other hand, there are children who are new to Canada and have emerging print literacy whether they are formally labelled as refugee or not. These children need extensive programming focused on accelerating their learning around print literacy. In these ways, understanding the divergence in who newcomers with print literacy was one of the purposes of this study. One of the terms that has been used more extensively in the literature is students with limited (and interrupted) prior schooling (DeCapua, 2016; OME, 2008) with some studies even combining this term with refugee (Brown et al, 2006). Moving away from a focus on what is missing or limited with the students, I hoped to highlight the students’ assets. Most of the Tibetan students appear to have attended school. Labelling their schooling as limited is deficit model thinking, forcing students and families to recount past educational experiences that they may prefer to ignore.

Here I have outlined themes I saw arise from the data across all three case studies. However, a major component of this study is understanding newcomers with emerging print literacy’s understanding of the emotions associated with identities and literacy practices. Fruja Amthor (2017) tells us that newcomers need self-definition. Building on this, in the next two chapters, I examine the data using themes identified by the students in their focus-group discussions as well as my own analysis.
Chapter 6: Literacy Practices

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the different ways that literacy and language are approached and understood in the classrooms where I researched. I closely examine the translanguaging corriente—how languages are used in the classroom—in the three case studies and then delve more deeply into the students’ print literacy practices and the emotions associated with those practices. Some of the different emotions discussed include linguistic pride and shame; print literacy humiliation; written language and desire, anger, and happiness; and excitement surrounding digital literacies. I also spend some time examining how to make complex thinking activities and write extensively about my experiences of bringing a translanguaging pedagogy into an English-only context and how students reacted to this sometimes novel idea.

6.2 Teachers’ translanguaging stance

Incorporating translanguaging into the K–12 classroom has begun to receive attention in the research on plurilingual students (García et al., 2017; King & Bigelow, 2020; Lin, 2019; Seltzer, 2019; Stille et al, 2016; Van Viegen, 2020). Building on this research, I had hoped to create rich translanguaging experiences with my teacher participants and closely observe how the students interacted with translanguaging in their classroom and the emotions that shaped those interactions. However, due to the short three month timeframe, I spent at each school site, my ability to complete translanguaging activities was dependent on the teacher participants’ translanguaging stances and the environment they had already developed in their classrooms. García and Wei (2014) tell us that a translanguaging space allows plurilinguals to integrate social spaces that have been separate in the past. This is a space for innovation and creativity where students do not have to separate their language usage into home and school but instead bring them all together. In this way, teachers who create translanguaging spaces believe that their students have a right to education and students’ complex repertoire is seen as a resource, not a deficit. Furthermore, when asking a teacher to incorporate translanguaging into teaching newcomers with emerging print literacy, we ask them to look at the literacy practices the students already have and build them as a resource into our teaching. Instead of seeing students’ spoken languages as a deficit, we see them as contributing to the teaching of literacy in the classroom.
One of my research questions is ‘How do students understand the emotions that shape and are associated with their literacy practice?’ However, an important influence over this understanding is the teacher and the environment created in the classroom as well as the expectations of larger society. Before I begin looking at the students’ emotions and literacy practices, it is important to understand the translanguaging stances of the teachers where this research took place. With a translanguaging stance, teachers take a holistic approach to students’ language repertoires by engaging them with complex content and texts, developing linguistic practices for academic purposes, making space for students’ ways of knowing and supporting students’ socio-emotional development and plurilingual identities (García et al., 2017, p. 50). The translanguaging corriente is visible and audible in the classroom, as opposed to being hidden. Using this to frame how I understand translanguaging being enacted in the classroom, I begin by analyzing the translanguaging stances of the four teachers with whom I worked and then examine how incorporating translanguaging impacted the emotions of students around learning.

All four teachers in this study approached incorporating students’ language repertoires into learning and the classroom from vastly different perspectives. In general, most of the teachers in this study taught content in English-only contexts. Peter, the Grade 4 classroom teacher at Smokey Glen, did not incorporate students’ linguistic repertoires into his classroom on the walls and bulletin boards, nor did Alexandra, who worked with a class of only students with emerging print literacy at Thistle Meadow. Elitsia, the ESL/ELD teacher at Peter’s school, had the students’ languages posted on her door, but the language practices used in the classroom did not always match what was displayed. Although there was attention to the students’ socio-emotional development, especially in Alexandra’s case where trauma-based practices abound, the students’ plurilingual identities did not appear to have been developed at all within these classrooms at Thistle Meadow and Smokey Glen. This can be seen by an interaction recorded in my field notes from early on in the research period:

Some of the girls started speaking Arabic to each other. Alexandra interrupted them and asked if everyone in the room knows Arabic referring to us, the teachers. They said, “no” and returned to English. (Field notes at Thistle Meadow, February 5, 2019)
Here the presence of adults in the room who were not familiar with the students’ language is used as justification for the silencing of the translanguaging corriente. This English-only philosophy was reiterated by Alexandra several weeks later when she asked me to separate two girls who were talking and laughing in Arabic. Alexandra reinforced with students that English is only what matters in school. This was particularly surprising as Alexandra is a dynamic teacher who developed strong relationships with her students and likes to try out new ideas related to trauma-informed practices. It is not clear how Alexandra developed this English only philosophy as she is an immigrant and plurilingual herself. In Chapter 7, Alexandra’s discussion of language and its connection to trauma is discussed at length.

Gina, from the third school of Valley Forest, however, not only allowed students to use their entire language repertoire during class time, which the students did with much confidence, but also had writing samples in the students’ languages to show me when I arrived to start the research process. Students used their entire linguistic repertoire to comprehend texts and content. This was mainly heard through the students’ use of their own spoken languages to support their academic learning. There was space for students’ plurilingualism and cultural knowledge. In terms of students’ plurilingual identities and use of linguistic practices for academic tasks, there was some work, but not much was present during the research period, except through the activities and modifications that I brought to the classroom. While I was in the classroom, I did not observe any carefully planned activities that included translanguaging in reading and writing. However, there was some evidence of it in her classroom with different languages included in bulletin boards, iPads for Google translate, bilingual picture books and students’ writing in exercise books.

As one of the only teachers with an audible translanguaging corriente in her classroom, Gina could be heard using different parts of her language repertoire with both her students and colleagues. The class where she taught was alive with students’ translanguaging corriente. In general, the language corriente tends to be stronger in bilingual classrooms than in English medium classrooms (García et al., 2017). In this way, Gina has taken on some of the qualities of a bilingual classroom, where the translanguaging corriente might flow more freely. She has brought these qualities into a multilingual space where English is predominant, which is equally as important but more challenging. The students did not have to suppress their plurilingualism
while in school. In these ways, the students’ linguistic performance was situated in their language practices that what you see and hear from the student is reflective of how they use language and not an English only school performance. This is exceptional because what Gina was doing in her classroom went against what the other teachers in this study “think should happen in schools” (García & Kleyen, 2016, p. 20). To summarize, both Smokey Glen and Thistle Meadow had little evidence of children’s plurilingual literacy practices being used as instructional resources; whereas, Valley Forest had much spoken translanguaging corriente and some print literacy that was reflective of the translanguaging corriente of the class.

6.3 Linguistic shame

Most of the students in Gina’s class demonstrated linguistic pride: pride in their backgrounds and pride in their culture. This was very apparent on the day of the Romani school assembly. Gina and some of her colleagues organized an assembly for the entire school to come to the gymnasium. A local Roma band came to perform traditional Roma music and led the children in signing the Romani national anthem. The students did not have to reject their cultural and linguistic experiences finding them loved and appreciated in the classroom.

Figure 24 Romani Celebration Day Poster
García and Kleifgen (2020) believe that teachers must do more than go with the *translanguaging corriente* flow, but rather must also carefully plan activities. There was always a sense that Gina went with the *translanguaging corriente* in the class not only allowing students to use whatever language practices they choose, but actively encouraging the use of the students’ entire linguistic repertoire by placing them in homogenous, same language groups.

![Figure 25 Plurilingual Word Wall](image)

This was modeled by Gina who jumped into the *translanguaging corriente* herself using Greek with colleagues and a student in her class. This pride also manifested itself in the children’s actions. Hunor, one of the boys in Gina’s class, could often be heard using different parts of his linguistic repertoire. He spoke Hungarian freely with his classmates feeling confident in using different parts of his language practices in the classroom. Interestingly, Hunor explained during his focus group interview how he preferred to speak English at home with his brother and Hungarian at school with his friend:
Like other students in this study, English is a ‘sticky object’ for Hunor. He wants to learn it and he wants someone who speaks it ‘perfectly’ to practice it with. However, what is different about Hunor is that he sees school as a place of play where he can use his Hungarian and he sees the home as a place to practice and learn English. In many ways his teacher and school have adopted a translanguaging approach, but Hunor still believes he must learn perfect English suggesting that regardless of how much a school adopts translanguaging as its philosophy there is still an external, societal pressure to ‘stick’ English with desire. Hunor did desire English but, in Gina’s classroom, this did not make him feel shame towards his Hungarian, which, as you will see as we progress through different parts of the data, he used freely with pride.

Building on this, linguistic shame is an area that is beginning to be understood in language education. Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) define “linguistic shame as embarrassment in using a language resulting from the social discourses and practices that denigrate the identities and outcomes attached to such language use” (p. 431). Moving onto
another school, the students at Smokey Glen, my second school site with many Tibetan students, did not demonstrate linguistic shame and appeared to be quite proud of their plurilingual identities. However, one student did. Senait showed a tremendous amount of linguistic shame. As a reminder, Senait is a student of refugee background from the South Sudan and the only student participant who could be racialized as Black in this study. Senait’s linguistic shame was evident in her hesitancy to even tell me what languages she spoke when I first arrived at the school site. When I asked her quietly at the side of the classroom what languages she spoke after doing some work to connect with her and her friends, she held her head down and her body became rigid. She spoke quietly, whispering her response so that it was inaudible to me. According to my field notes that day:

I tried to get Senait to tell me more about her language, but she was very quiet when she spoke about it. It took me a while to figure out what she was saying but I think she said Eritrean. She has family in South Sudan. She told me she speaks Eritrean and English with her mom, but then when I asked her if her mom spoke English, she said ‘no’. She said her uncles also speak this language and Arabic as well. (Field notes at Smokey Glen, Jan. 24, 2019)

As I got to know Senait more during the research process, I saw that she had friends in the class and a positive relationship with her teacher, but she was not open about her culture and language. Both of her teachers struggled to even tell me what languages she spoke and what countries she had lived in, except they did know that she was a student of refugee background.

This shame in not wanting to speak about her language was not necessarily true of the other students in the class. For example, there were many Tibetan speaking students who immediately told me that they spoke Tibetan and Hindi. I also discovered the school had several Eastern European students. A couple of weeks later while working with students in a small group, I once again asked them about their languages as can be seen by my field notes:

I knew how to say Dobry Den from when I lived in the Czech Republic, so Tomas was excited I knew how to say hello to him in his own language. Senait looked very shy when I asked about her language. (Field notes at Smokey Glen, Feb. 11, 2019)
Unlike these other students, Senait was the only student in her class that spoke Eritrean. I did not get to know Senait very well, as she moved out of the school area partway through the research, so it is not clear to me where this linguistic shame came from. However, it was apparent that her language practices were not recognized in her classroom. Moreover, the girls she was friends with from the class could be racialized as Black like her, but they came from a Caribbean background and not an African background like her. They did not share the same cultural and linguistic experiences.

However, Senait did respond well to activities I did with her class to promote linguistic diversity. Noticing Senait’s linguistic shame, I spoke to her Grade 4 homeroom teacher, Peter, about the possibility of doing some activities including poetry and creating linguistic portraits with the class. Peter explained that he had very little knowledge of English-as-a-Second Language pedagogy and was open to learning new ideas to make his class more inclusive. I began by having the class create linguistic portraits. This was one of my *Flipgrid* prompts, so it served a dual purpose, as it allowed me to collect data for the student participants and their language usage as well as promote a translanguaging pedagogy in his classroom. The lesson began with some YouTube videos where people said simple phrases in lots of different languages. The class became very excited when they heard their own language spoken. We then moved on to looking at a few sample linguistic portraits including mine, and then the students created their own. Peter told the class about his own usage of languages, including hearing his mother use Jamaican dialect.

Before doing the language activities with Peter’s class, I had worked with Senait and some other students that morning. The students were working on preparing their responses to my *Flipgrid* prompts. This is what I wrote in my field notes:

> Senait did the *Countries where I have lived*. Senait was fine to talk about her countries but did not want to say anything about her languages. After recess, we went to Peter’s room to do linguistic portraits with the entire class. I led a class discussion about how we used different languages in our everyday lives. I asked the kids what music they listened to. Almost all of the kids started talking about their experiences with different languages.
Senait became very excited and colored her whole portrait with her Eritrean language. (Field notes at Smokey Glen, Feb. 26, 2019)

Senait then started walking around the classroom proudly showing her linguistic portrait to the rest of the students telling them that she spoke Eritrean. This activity, in general, prompted many students and the teacher to become open about their language experiences offering support and encouragement for each other. Collecting information on the languages students speak is an essential aspect of a translinguaging pedagogy. Most importantly Senait’s linguistic shame turned to linguistic pride and excitement. Parts of her identity that had remained hidden were now seen as desirable by the class.

### 6.4 Written language and desire

During my own field work, it was my hope to bring translinguaging to the classrooms where I completed my research and, specifically, to the students’ writing. This was my challenge in that many of the student participants had not learned to read and write using their entire linguistic repertoire but were instead experiencing print literacy for the first time through English-only environments. Moreover, neither I nor the teachers I worked with knew how to write or speak large portions of the students’ linguistic repertoire. This made it difficult for us to communicate with the students in anything but English. At times, we used Google Translate and, at others, community members when possible. For example, Tenzin Rabten, who had very little English as part of his repertoire, spoke to me through Hindi translations on Google Translate. At Thistle Meadow, there was an Arabic speaking cooperative student of Syrian background from the local high school who was present as a non-participant at times during the study. The teacher participants in this study spoke an array of languages, but none of them spoke any of the child participants’ languages except English.

At Smokey Glen, my second school site, finding ways to have the children write in Tibetan was particularly difficult, as the children were young and had almost no print literacy practices in Tibetan. However, many of the Tibetan speaking children also knew Hindi. This made communicating orally with them easier, as there were more Hindi resources for me to access. One student, Tenzin Rabten, had recently arrived in Canada and was only beginning to incorporate English into his translinguaging repertoire. As neither of us were able to understand
each other’s literacy practices, communicating was something that took time. Many of the children spoke Tibetan and Hindi like Tenzin Rabten. They were happy to interact with him using more of their translanguaging repertoire, but relying on them as translators can be problematic, as it takes away from their own learning by adding a burden on the student. Tenzin Rabten was quite confident in Hindi as well as Tibetan. Therefore, we ended up using the oral component of Google Translate in Hindi quite a bit. This took time and a great deal of careful speaking and pronunciation, but it gave us a place to begin and allowed Tenzin Rabten to bring more of his translanguaging repertoire into the classroom.

While Tenzin Rabten was learning about print literacy in English, I had hoped to utilize his Tibetan to make his print literacy practices more meaningful and relevant. However, he was able to write very little in Tibetan or Hindi and appeared to be learning about print literacy for the first-time using English only. This made it challenging for me to work with him using print literacy practices that incorporated his entire translanguaging repertoire. He appeared to be confused, as if he did not understand what I was asking him to do when I suggested writing in Tibetan or even Hindi. Nearing the end of our research time together, when Tenzin Rabten knew me better, I tried writing out some Tibetan phonetically with him. This was a novel idea and I wanted him to know me and feel safe trying out written Tibetan before I attempted something like this. I incorporated translanguaging into his writing through the Where I Am From:
As can be seen in the fifth line of the poem, Tenzin Rabten has included the phonetically spelled word *tash-ee-de-lee* in his poem. On the seventh line, he has written *Laka Paka* and finally the ninth line includes the word *Amachelpardeshin*.

Normally when I was working with Tenzin Rabten on his writing in English, he would work hard almost as if he had to persevere through something he had to learn. This was the first time I saw him smile about his writing. Therefore, although learning to write in English was stuck with much desire, there was some awe about his phonetically written Tibetan. In this situation, his existing Tibetan literacy practices were utilized. Tenzin Rabten did not desire to write in his language. I had to encourage him to do so. I think this is what might discourage many teachers from moving forward with translanguaging in writing: it is not how they are used to teaching, so it is difficult and their students might not react well at first. Also, it appears that the students do not know where to begin and do not want to be seen making mistakes or not being knowledgeable in front of their teacher. But Rabten’s smile tells us otherwise.
literacy took on a new stance. It did not have to be only in English. Written Tibetan became a happy object. Something to be desired and learned.

Building on this point, for Rabten’s linguistic portrait, we worked together to construct the visual representation of his languages on his drawn body. Again, through communicating through Google translate using Hindi, I was able to gather some information on how Rabten uses languages in different parts of his life. However, I do fear that some of his thoughts may have been lost in electronic translation. This is one of the risks of using Google translate. We then used Flipgrid to record a video of Rabten explaining his linguistic portrait. The following is a transcript of Rabten’s oral response and then the portrait is after:

(English) This is the Hindi. This is the Tibetan. This is the English. I listen to music in Hindi. I dance in Tibetan. I speak Hindi and Tibetan with my friends. I speak Tibetan with my dad. I [untranslated Tibetan] Tibetan and English. I dream in Tibetan. I think in Tibetan and English. I, I read in Tibetan and English. Bye [wave and smiles].
Figure 27 Rabten’s Linguistic portrait
As we saw previously in Chapter 5, Rabten brings at least three different languages into linguistic repertoire. More to the point here, although much of the portrait was written and drawn by me, Rabten was able to contribute through the written Hindi and Tibetan words included here. The languages he uses with his dad and his friends and the languages he dreams, dances and listens to music in, become part of his written language. It is not until the end of his video that English appears for thinking and reading. Once again, already we see English and print literacy becoming interwoven in the early months of Rabten’s education in Canada.

Despite these translanguaging moments with Rabten, throughout my research, I often observed students sitting and looking at blank pages, refusing to write unless supported by a teacher and erasing and rewriting their work over and over. This happened at all my school sites with many of the participants. I was eager to hear the students’ thoughts on writing and was pleasantly surprised when it became the topic of Amira and Karo’s focus group discussion at Thistle Meadow. Here are some excerpts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amira</th>
<th>6:05</th>
<th>So, when I read, I feel happy, but when I write, I don’t feel that happy. I don’t like it that much.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karo</td>
<td>7:31</td>
<td>No. Not so much sentence. So much sentence my finger hurts when I write it in this hand. This, I can’t write it and I’m so mad. Angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amira</td>
<td>13:55</td>
<td>Cause if we get good marks we umm, we, we like ahh we will be good and we will know how to read and write and that’s important because when we want to work at a job, we need to know how to read and write and do everything and talk in English, so ahh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Thistle Meadow, Focus Group Interview)

Written English is seen as a desirable thing to which much emotion is attached. But this desire for English and a job as well as access to print literacy, writing, leads to anger. Karo’s hand even starts to hurt. She erases and rewrites her work. Amira and Karo’s classroom is one where English is the medium of instruction. The children are told not to use their languages and instead to learn to read in English. Writing becomes stuck with the emotion of anger or feeling mad or not feeling happy. They are presented with the standardized way to write a language through the books they read, but then must reproduce it. When they cannot, they feel anger.

Moving onto classroom, the teacher in Hunor’s class often overtly translanguaged, going back and forth between Greek and English with colleagues and students. Hunor felt good about his writing despite having only just learned to read and write in English. However, unlike Karo
and Amira who describe dislike, anger, hurt and sadness towards their writing, Hunor uses the word *happy* to describe how he feels about his writing. As a reminder, Hunor is a Hungarian speaker whose grandparents speak Roma:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunor</th>
<th>But more, more, more writing. I don’t know but when the teacher and he help me and said “doing this”. And I do and that’s why I learn writing about that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunor</td>
<td>I writing and my teacher said, “good for you”. And I said, “thank you”. And he said, and he said, and he said, “you’re feel good writing”. And I said, “yes”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Valley Forest, Focus Group Interview)

This theme of liking writing was also reiterated by José, a Spanish speaking student in Hunor’s class:

(Spanish) *Cuando yo escribo me siento bien, porque cuando yo escribo me siento muy activo porque escribir me activa a hacer cosas.*

(English translation) *When I write, I feel well because when I write I feel very active, because writing activates me to do things.* (José, *Writing*)

The classroom had many different languages including Arabic, Hungarian, Spanish, Greek and Bangladesh. There were bilingual picture books, Google translate was used a lot and the students’ languages were on the bulletin boards. The students spoke in their languages and were encouraged to do so. There was a constant negotiation between students as well as students and teachers on how to communicate and use language. It is not exactly clear why José and Hunor liked writing. It could have been that they had a very encouraging teacher. However, Alexandra, at Thistle Meadow was interactive, positive and encouraging with students outside of her English only philosophy. The difference is that for José and Hunor, writing did not always have to be an English only exercise. Moreover, their languages were everywhere in the classroom.

Not surprisingly, within a colonial context such as Canada, findings suggest that students desire to learn to read and write in English. In the first school, students’ literacy practices outside of proper English were not recognized. Multiculturalism was celebrated, but not students’ languages. Ahmed (2004) writes that “whether I perceive something as beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something” (p. 6). In this social context, students
attached feelings of dislike, anger, hurt and sadness to their English-only writing. These emotions then shaped the students’ perceptions of print literacy. In the second and third schools in this study, there was also a strong desire to learn to write in English. Tenzin Rabten worked diligently towards that end. Finding ways to bring Tibetan into writing, meant that becoming a writer did not have to result in him forgetting his Tibetan while only desiring English. His written Tibetan became a ‘happy object’. For Hunor, there was also a strong desire to learn to write in English only. This did not lead him to feel angry about his writing. José seamlessly used both Spanish and English is his writing, which he described as active. Translanguaging was an energizing process that allowed him to feel well about his writing.

6.5 Poetry and complex thinking

Many of us associate strong emotions with poetry. Whether it is boredom or delight with the experience of writing a poem or the feelings that the reading of verse elicit, poetry and emotion are deeply intertwined. Poetry can even work towards shaping how we understand our own emotions and experiences. To prepare the students to write poems, I started with the concept of metaphor. As a teacher, I like to have my students work through challenging concepts and ideas, even those who are still learning to decode simple vowel sounds. With Alexandra’s Grade 5 class, I was able to work with the students to have them think about metaphor before having the whole class complete the *Where I Am From* poems that came next. I began by reading through a bilingual poem called *Search for my Tongue* by Sujata Bhatt. Alexandra did not support my use of translanguaging in my teaching, so we then continued the teaching of poetry in English only. We looked at poetic devices. As Alexandra’s class was generally made up of only students with emerging print literacy, I spent more time scaffolding how to create metaphors by using visuals. I believe strongly in the idea that these students are very much capable of complex, higher level thinking tasks, which challenges the notion critiqued by Wiley (1996) where print literacy produces cognitive effects like being more analytical and logical. I introduced the idea that *the sun is a burning fire that makes you melt.* One student, Serena, understood the concept of metaphor quite quickly. The other students provided describing words but not metaphors. It took them longer to start producing metaphors on their own, but many of them eventually got there. The students were asked to draw a picture of something special from a trip they had taken to a national park the day before. I asked them to think of a metaphor about
an animal, plant or object from their trip. The students presented each of their metaphors to the class, which I recorded. I share a few of their excerpts here:

Amira: (English) I am the moving queen making splashing sounds. When I grab the rocks, the soft and slippery. When I grab the rocks, they feel soft and slippery. Loving sounds I make.

Serena: (English) I’m the bird. I’m the airplane for myself. I’m the one who never gets touched. My wings are propellers. I am the one who knows what’s going to happen. Sounds and smells from everywhere. Cunning and sneaky, I’m the one who scares the worms.

Yara: (English) He is so soft like my fur jacket. When he came on my hand, he was holding my hand very tight. When he took the seeds, he flied very fast and he was so cool at flying and then I was putting my hand up as I was talking with my friend, my friend Fatima. He came past my hand and grabbed the seed. I was so scared at that time.

Amira incorporated both alliteration and the majesty of the animals they observed using metaphor. Serena exceeded our expectations showing a natural affinity for poetry. Yara compared her animal to her jacket and then invoked the senses and discussed her feelings. These students picked up this complex, grade level task quite quickly.

Not all the children understood the concept of metaphor, but, in my experience, that is quite typical, as some students are more inclined to figurative language and others prefer factual, non-fiction type texts. Although Fatima was not able to produce a metaphor at this point, having her read and present her retelling of their trip the previous day was a place of growth. She was not frustrated by the activity, but rather engaged in discussing the fun she had the previous day.

Fatima: (English) I want to catch the bird, but he runs away and he and I went up the bird. Opens his mouth. And he’s so smart. Swim all together.
Although this activity did not include overt translanguaging in its writing, retelling her experiences on the field trip the previous day was an authentic experience for Fatima that allowed her to write about something she had enjoyed.

For some context about this English-only writing, as well as their teacher, Alexandra, and myself, there were two other non-participants in the class that day: a staff member and a co-op student. This meant that the students almost had one-on-one support from an adult for this activity. This included vocabulary building, discussing ideas before writing, scribing and editing. I am not sure exactly how all these other adults supported the students in their creation of these metaphors, as I was working closely with Karam. Here is what he presented to the class:

Karam: (English) My cat is a gentle deer. The deer is a scared rabbit.

With Karam, I discussed ideas with him orally to make sure he understood and could explain metaphor and then scribed his response for him in English. The text at the top of the following picture is his writing. The text at the bottom is what I wrote after we co-constructed the ideas together. Karam wanted to write about his cat and not the school trip. He stated that the best part of the school trip was the bus ride. He wrote a sentence about his cat at the top of the page. Later, I modelled the deer being a scared rabbit after he had drawn a picture of a deer. We generated ideas together. The writing below the deer is mine, but with the ideas from Karam.
As both an educator and researcher, I think it is important that we view all our students as capable of complex ideas and thinking. Yes, the children were in the process of learning how to read and write, and their program needed to focus on teaching them those skills. However, this does not mean that they cannot engage with complex, grade-level ideas at the same time. In this way the children could start to see themselves and each other as authors, as creators of complex written texts that move beyond phonics building and basic comprehension. The students did not have to move away from their existing experiences to create a written text. They could be writers too. Writing could be personal, relevant and complex. However, working through this activity in an English-only context required a great deal of direct work with adults and teachers. This is not sustainable: to have students working in an almost one-on-one situation with teachers. Instead of bringing in so much English and teacher authority into the classroom enhancing this activity with translanguaging could take away from that authority but also allow for more collaboration
between students. Students could use their expertise from their linguistic repertoire to support each other in creating plurilingual written poems. Translanguaging can be a transformational process where the very notion of teacher and student is eroded, emancipating people by creating true democratic processes in the classroom (Anwaruddin, 2018). In these ways, the teacher acts as the facilitator as students’ knowledge is seen as an asset without the teacher having to exert so much authority as an expert English user.

6.5 Print literacy humilation

Although reading was not necessarily the focus of my initial research, reading was talked about and observed in all of my case studies. Part of the arrangement with Alexandra at Thistle Meadow was that I help implement her guided reading program in return for having access to her classroom for research. This meant half of the time I was completing research, I was teaching the students using a formalized reading program. The other half of the time, I could have the students engage in activities I had prepared. Montero et al. (2014) have found that the use of guided reading and running records (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012) can have a tremendous impact on acceleration of secondary school refugee children with limited prior schooling’s emergent print literacy. Their study suggests that these students need literacy instruction, not just language instruction. They use the term balanced literacy to describe a program that incorporates oral, reading and writing skills by using centers to teach a range of skills while the students are not working with the teacher in a guided reading group. They also clearly state that literacy needs should not be reduced “to a basic skills or mechanics approach” (Montero et al., 2014, p. 61). A key component of guided reading is that students can decode 90 to 94% of a book independently (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). However, Montero et al. (2014) also focus on the socio-cultural aspect of book choice finding that non-fiction texts that the students can relate to are much more impactful and effective. Instead of purchasing a complete Grade level program for guided reading, they carefully selected books that would have some socio-cultural context for the students. In fact, researchers and teachers involved in Montero et al.’s (2014) project have created an online repository of leveled readers written by students and available for free, as they found it difficult to find texts that were culturally relevant (ERGO, 2020).

Looking back at my field notes from February 2nd, 2019, the first day I worked with a student on guided reading, I was placed with Karo and had to complete a scripted lesson from the
Fountas and Pinnell reading program at the Grade 2 level. One book was non-fiction and about dog sledding where both of Karo and I had to learn the new word mushing. The program then required her to write three sentences about dog sledding as evidence of her learning. Afterwards, we read another book about birds. There was a phonics activity where were learned about different long $u$ and $o$ forms. The final book was fiction and about two kids being babysat by their grandfather and making popcorn together. Afterwards there were some comprehension questions for me to ask. Karo was able to decode about half the words correctly and was able to demonstrate comprehension of the story at the end when I asked questions. I would occasionally correct her errors but did not want to do so too much, as she appeared to me to be very confident in her reading. This is part of my own pedagogical approach, finding that error correction leads to students withdrawing from even trying to read and write. I want my students to feel excited and engaged with print literacy. I want reading to be a desirable object and process that pulls them towards print literacy without negating who they are.

The guided program that I was asked to use with the students was not culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) in that it was not reflective of the students’ previous experiences or literacy practices. The entire scripted guided reading program was entirely in English and often was not relevant to their lives. On the one hand, while completing the guided reading program, Karo felt confident. Having access to print literacy in English was stuck with desire for Karo, as it was the other students in the class. She was able to accomplish the tasks assigned and see herself progress through the different literacy levels set up by the program and her teacher. Moreover, researchers have found that newcomers with emerging print literacy must be taught to read and be provided with a reading program (Montero, 2019). On the other hand, this program was highly prescriptive and not responsive to Karo’s identity and plurilingualism, forcing her into an approach to reading that did not value her literacy practices.

I visited the school five days later on February 7th. I began the day working with Karam, Karo and Fatima with their guided reading program. We read two of the same books from February 2nd and then introduced a new book that combined fiction and nonfiction and was about visiting a dairy farm. Karo continued reading as usual. She made quite a few errors but comprehended the story. Karam and Fatima did not want to read at first. Based on my fifteen years of teaching and working with children with emerging print literacy, I intuited that Karam
and Fatima were embarrassed of their reading skills and needed some positive feedback. After encouraging them by telling them that being a good reader means that you try to read and learn the words, they agreed to join. Not only was English a sticky object, but so was print literacy.

Karam was able to decode a quarter of the words. I followed along with my finger and supported him a lot by reading words he could not decode. Fatima could decode almost none of the words. I would help her with all of them and used a great deal of encouraging language. Despite all of this, both Karam and Fatima mocked each other, teasing the person who was reading and making fun of them. In many ways, I was being forced into the role of the teacher who is delivering a monolingual program without relevance to the students. This frustrated me. Many years ago, when I had first started teaching and was not as adept at creating a translanguaging environment, a similar thing had happened with my students. My students mocked each other’s literacy practices. If, as a larger school system and as individual teachers, we do not create translanguaging environments in our classrooms where all students’ literacy practices and lives are included and respected, we add to the denigration of students’ identities. Moreover, a program that uses an autonomous approach to print literacy instruction, where decoding texts is emphasized over social context, such a program ignores students’ individual lives and the power imbalances within structures such as schools (Wiley, 1996). Being put in a position, where in that moment I had to react to student behavior as opposed to being proactive and creating an inclusive learning environment, I told them that this was one thing that I would not allow: laughing at other students who were trying to read.

Karam and Fatima were off task quite a bit talking, laughing, making jokes. After they read more and got to know me, I spoke a little bit more sternly when they laughed at someone for not knowing a word. They were humiliating each other over their reading ability. They were externalizing the shame they themselves felt about their own literacy practices by humiliating each other. Building on Liyanage and Canagarajah’s (2019) idea of linguistic shame, I am labelling this phenomenon as print literacy humiliation. In the case of some of the children in this study, this shame became so pervasive that it led to them actively humiliating each other. This humiliation suggests an active stance by the participant in that they become involved in the shame making.
There were a couple of phonics activities where students had to use magnetic letters to spell words that I read to them. The phonics work this day was on the sounds *oy* and *oi*. Again, I personally felt frustrated, as I was delivering a program that I would not choose to teach as it was not culturally or linguistically relevant. The shame the students felt about not being able to use the English found in the texts prompted them to laugh at each other and try to cause humiliation in their peers, and I was a part of that. Based on these observations I decided to find ways to bring in the students’ languages. I wanted the children’s literacy practices to become stuck with desire as well, a desire to know more about writing in their entire language repertoire.

### 6.6 Bringing translanguaging and writing into English-only contexts

How does one make the translanguaging *corriente* more overt in an English only classroom? Teachers must do more than go with the translanguaging *corriente* flow but must also carefully plan activities that draw on students’ existing literacy practice making them a central part of learning in the classroom (García & Kleyen, 2016). Translanguaging is a teacher’s pedagogy and content standards are the content of what a teacher has to teach. Knowing that Alexandra’s class at Thistle Meadow was a predominantly English-only space, I had to think creatively about ways to bring students’ literacy practices into the learning. One way to do this was to build some vocabulary around emotions. At the very beginning of our case study, I introduced the idea of sticky emotions to the class. I began with the word *proud*. In my field notes that day, I wrote:

> We talked about the word proud and students wrote the word in Arabic on the board for me. There was lots of shouting and discussion in Arabic as they agreed on how to spell the word. The Pashto speaking students did not know what the word for proud was in their language. I asked them to ask their parents and tell us next class. They wanted me to look it up on Google translate. I did and then wrote it on the board for them. I heard an “ohhh” of recognition from the class. (Field notes at Thistle Meadow, Feb. 17, 2019)
Here, I had planned a simple way to incorporate written Arabic and Pashto into the class. The students relied on each other’s literacy practices to write the word in Arabic. The two Pashto speaking students in the class chose to use Google translate and were intrigued by how the word proud was spelt in their language, reading it and recognizing it once I had written the word. Despite the children having emerging print literacy in Arabic and Pashto, they were still able to rely on each other and classroom resources to collaboratively construct the written word for proud. In this moment, it was their literacy practices and not written English that became stuck with desire.

In many ways, I would have preferred to bring in my own texts for these guided reading sessions by finding bilingual books and including more culturally sustained, student-generated texts, moving away from a strict program to one that was more reflective of the students’ lives. Instead, I opted to find times when I could incorporate translanguaging into the existing program. A few weeks later when I returned on February 25th, I ended up working with Serena, Amira and Yara. They had progressed out of the Grade 2 level Fountas and Pennell program and were now working on more complex texts. Alexandra had gone out of her way to diligently create a phonics program for this group of students following the same format as Fountas and Pinnell: a series of books with phonics and writing activities.
That day Karo joined us as well. Karo was very excited. This reading group was something she desired to be part of, the higher-level reading group. She joined this new group because Alexandra had to work with a new student who had just arrived, Diyar, and it made it easier to move Karo to my reading group.

The guided reading lesson included a phonics activity that focused on the difference between the short and long vowel sound for \( i \). The new book was about writing lists. Knowing from my prior experiences as a teacher that recipes were an easy way to include students’ written languages, I decided to capitalize on this opportunity to try having the students write in Arabic and Pashto. I began by inviting the students to write in Arabic, Pashto and English, giving them the opportunity to write only in one language or to write both languages separately, whatever they felt comfortable with. The children all had different reactions to my request to write in Arabic, Pashto and English. Based on my observations in the classroom, this was an English-only space. Therefore, I would conclude that my request to have the students write in Arabic and Pashto was a novel experience.

Despite the instructions to include Arabic in her writing, Amira had difficulty thinking of the words in Arabic and then translating them to English. She decided to write out the ingredients in English first and then wrote the Arabic words when she knew them. I have included a picture of here plurilingual ingredients list to the below:
Unlike Amira, who tried to include Arabic in her recipe, Yara wrote her recipe in English only. However, when Amira had been having trouble with Arabic earlier, she had jumped in with spoken Arabic trying to help her to find the words. Despite this, Yara did not want to use any written Arabic in her recipe or even try and sound out the words. It is interesting to see this dichotomy in Yara: the helpful plurilingual peer, but the English monolingual writer. In Yara’s case, knowing how to speak Arabic and helping others was desirable but writing in Arabic was not desirable. However, with Amira there was some excitement with using written Arabic in the classroom and she was receptive to receiving support for Arabic from her friend. I am uncertain of the reasons for the two girls to have such different reactions to the direction to write in Arabic, but it does show that educators need to remain flexible, especially when implementing new ideas.
Another student, Karo, wrote her “pezza” recipe in English and wanted me to tell her the spelling for almost every word. I told her that spelling on her own by sounding out the words and not having perfect English was better than me telling her what I perceived as correct writing. She appeared anxious about spelling words on her own. I came to realize that this anxiety around writing was typical for Karo. Like many students I observed during all of my case studies, spelling perfectly in English was of great concern to students.

In terms of the written Pashto, Karo did not know how to write in Pashto. Serena, who was also from Afghanistan, wrote each of the Pashto words for Karo. Serena acted as a Pashto expert supporting her peer’s writing. The girls relied on each other, their literacy practices were acknowledged, and then further developed in the classroom. And, finally, Serena did her own recipe independently and with confidence in both Pashto and English.
These were just a few of some of the initial ways I attempted to bring translanguaging into the classroom at Thistle Meadow.

Due to March break and several other classroom activities the students participated in, I did not get to work with Karam and Karo again on their guided reading until April 1st. On that day, I noticed that Karam was excelling and working hard on his reading and improving daily. However, Karo seemed somewhat unfocussed and needed reminders to follow along with her reading. She became quite upset when Karam won some of the word spelling games. There were a list of words and students would have to spell them using magnetic letters.

Returning to my plan to incorporate translanguaging, the following day when I work with Karo and Karam again, I quietly found ways to bring in the students’ language. They had to do a writing task where they wrote words with the sound ee in it. I modified the task and told them to also write some of the words in Arabic and Pashto as well. Karo needed the support of Google
Translate to do this. Karam knew words like tree but liked to see them on Google translate for confirmation.

Figure 33 Karam, Translanguaging

In terms of the reading that day, Karam would sound out many of the words several times until he got it right. Karo would read quickly and only needing suggestions for a few words.

This happy period with Karam being engaged in the guided reading tasks did not last, however. By the end of the month, Karam was resisting his program again. He did this by expressing not liking the books. The books in his guided reading were about characters he had been introduced to in other books in the guided reading series. This meant that Karo read the first book by herself, as Karam did not want to read it, and I chose not to find ways to encourage him to participate if he did not want to. This was hard for me, as I am used to being a teacher and not a researcher in classrooms. Karam’s decision was his own. In the past, I had found that the books were very hard for him to read due to relevance and reading level. He and Fatima had humiliated each other when attempting to read. The books were boring and repetitive. Print literacy was
attached to mixed emotions of both desire and rejection. It is not really a surprise to me that Karam refused to read a book that was not culturally sustaining. We then did some phonics activities using white boards. The students also had to write sentences about characters from the book. I had Karo and Karam write a key word from the sentence in their own languages. They did not always know the word, but when they did, they would write it out.

For the final book, Karo and Karam then took turns reading, as Karam had decided to re-engage in the guided reading. There are several reasons that Karam may have made the decision to continue with the guided reading. Maybe he needed time to settle into the activities, maybe he really enjoyed writing with the markers and white board, but I do believe that the incorporation of translanguaging, the reality of his life, into his written tasks at school made the guided reading time we had together more relevant and meaningful.
Incorporating translanguaging into the students’ guided reading programs through the written activities that occurred after reading offered the students an opportunity to rely on each other’s expertise. This involved a process of letting go of some of my authority as a teacher, and also allowed the children to act cooperatively in a more democratic manner. When children do not have a great deal of knowledge of print literacy, it can be counter-intuitive to have them write in any language other than the language where the teacher is the expert: English. The teacher does not have any direct skills in showing the children how to write in other parts of their linguistic repertoire. However, one would hope that a teacher would expand the sources of authority that are consulted—translation tools, parents, other adults in the building/community who know the language, for example. We can see in these examples how incorporating the students’ entire linguistic repertoire can be done even when the teacher does not have the expertise necessary to support that writing process. Moreover, we can see why moving away from an English-only classroom is important. It views students’ existing literacy practices as an integral part of their learning by building on them in the learning about print literacy process. Learning to read and write does not have to mean a complete disvaluing of how the students use language orally. Their oral language practices become integrated with their writing. Even single words written in different aspects of the students’ linguistic repertoire place value on who they are and how they use language. Finally, the students learn to rely on each other and not just the authority of the teacher.
6.7 Expanding what is seen as literacy

If one were to regard students as “singular and evolving constellation of capacities, needs, and interests” (Simon & Campano, 2013, p. 23) and not in terms of their ability to read and write in English, how would this change how literacy is taught and approached in schools. One branch of literacies that has received much attention in recent years is digital and new literacies (Burnett et al., 2014; Leander & Boldt, 2013; Plester et al., 2011; Street, 2013). Under this new way of looking at literacy, what is true in one context cannot be easily transferable to another context. Moreover, literacies are more than discreet grammar rules and learning to read and write but instead are “multiple, multimodal and mediated through new technology” (Burnett et al., 2014, p. 2). Connecting to this wider definition of literacy(ies), the students talked extensively about engaging with texts in electronic formats and graphic print material. Interestingly, much of this discussion of technology and new literacies is in the children’s homes and involves friends and families. New literacies are already built in as part of the students’ literacy practices. Only occasionally are school-based digital literacies mentioned.

A topic that came up with many of the boys in this study was video games. The video games were spoken about in a variety of contexts. Tenzin Sonam lists video games as a personal interest:

(English) Hi. My name is Tenzin Sonam. I like games like does not does not cost Wifi. Some game I have like (inaudible) that costs Wifi. But you can download it. In Samsung it looks different. In I, like Apple, it looks different still. You can download it in anything and you can play and do anything. What the, and you can catch Pokémon. Whatever you can do. You can name yourself, bye (waves). Ah like, I just made a video right now and I’m gonna tell how I feel about it. (Sonam, Internet)

A key criterion for Sonam when choosing a video game is that it does not require Wifi. Sonam mentions Pokémon, as was also referenced by Tenzin Rabten in his Where I Am From poem. These two boys of Tibetan background are the only students to discuss Pokémon, and it appears to be important to them. Willett (2004) has found that being a Pokémon fan involves more than a sense of belonging with peers, but also requires complex use of literacies in understanding and, potentially, constructing written texts. Numerous researchers have examined how to bring
videogames such as Pokémon into students’ print literacy and story-making experiences in the classroom (Bromley, 2004; Brownell, 2021; Graham, 2001). In these ways, for Tenzin Rabten and Sonam, a school-based literacy program that incorporates Pokémon would be more relevant and meaningful instead of forcing them to negate their previous experiences in their desire to learn the written word.

Pokémon was an interest for Tenzin and Sonam, but shooting games also came up in the data. In general, Fortnite was spoken about most. However, Karam also tells us about his favorite game, Babji, about which there is very little written. Karam states

I like Babji because it is my favorite game. I play a lot and I like it so much. Play a lot and I like it so much. Even, I play with my friends and I feel happy when I play with them. I, we can like even, we can even talk to each other and message, voice, everything. It’s like. Even we talk Arabic and English and everything. It’s a very good game.

(Karam, Media)

This response to the Media prompt is one of two: obviously, a strong interest of Karam’s. It should be noted that Karam loved using the Flipgrid app and all its features including the comments and likes. He often commented on his peers’ videos in Arabic and, at times, incorporated some Arabic into his responses. It is not surprising to hear him talk about a game, Babji, that allows him to use both Arabic and English and to connect with friends, as these are things that I observed Karam doing throughout the class when using the comment features on Flipgrid. I could find very little out about this game Babji, except this YouTube video called Babji mobile game Play hard. It is a shooting game and the comments section of the YouTube video includes a variety of languages including Arabic.

I had also never heard of Fortnite before this study, but I was told about it repeatedly throughout my case studies. Fortnite is a first-person shooting game where 100 people compete to be the last person to survive. It is free with some in-app purchases available. Fortnite is very popular with younger people because it has a cartoon style, is free and does not have a great deal of blood and gore (Carter et al., 2020). Hunor is probably the participant who talked about videogames the most.
Hi my name is Hunor. We go home. I turn off my PS IV and I press the Youtube and I watch like the Boogie Servant. And I playing like my games like Fortnite and Fifa 19, Geo V, basketball games. I buy, I buy now, we go home. My mom said we go home, we go buy CDs and care games. Like I watch movies, Fortnite and that’s it.

(Hunor, Internet)

Hunor is known amongst his friends as an avid gamer. He is generally a relaxed student with a wry sense of humor. However, his classmates pointed out that he can get very angry and competitive when playing Fortnite. Fortnite and gaming in general are a big part of Hunor’s life and he often stays up late playing with his friends. Besides Fortnite, Hunor lists a whole range of media that he uses when he goes home, but in class, Fortnite was spoken about the most. Not surprisingly, Fortnite has received much backlash from educators ranging from complaints about students playing it during class time to students staying up all night and coming to school tired the next day to the overloading of Wi-fi (Schwartz, 2018). There has even been a study on the different ways that youth understand Fortnite to be addictive (Carter et al., 2020).

Balinte is one of Hunor’s friends, but when the friendship group became interested in playing Fortnite, he did not. During our time together, Balinte told me that he lost his friends to Fortnite. It is interesting to hear him lament about it here. Balinte does not share the same interest in videogames as the other boys.

(English) Hello. I’m gonna talk about Fortnite. One day I was downstairs riding my roller blades. I went to my friend’s house asking if he’s coming down and he said, “no.” I asked him why and he said he have to play Fortnite. Now Fortnite is an online game you can play on any platform, PS IV, even a PC and it’s a shooting game. I don’t like it that much but my friends do and they doesn’t want to come outside because they just want to play Fortnite. I don’t know why. (Balinte, Learning Outside of School)

Video games are fun and an important part of the boys’ lives. Balinte does point out some negative side-effects such as less play outside and in-person, social interactions. But this can happen any time that our friends develop a new interest that does not involve us, whether it be a hockey team or the newest video game. If we do not share our friends’ interests, we can feel left out. Balinte may not like Fortnight, a shooting game, but he does list playing Prodigy on his
phone twice as an interest in his *Where I Am From* poem. Playing video games does not have to involve a loss of social contact. For example, Bailey’s (2020) research found the opposite of Balinte’s observations; an after-school club focused on Minecraft allowed students to be social and creative in a way they were not in their quiet classrooms. Similarly, Marlatt’s (2020) research looks at how Fortnite gamers construct communities of practices. Marlatt even creates a literacy framework that examines how Fortnite players:

1) capitalize on Fortnite’s specialized vocabulary, which is essential for participating in the game and is socially situated driving game play strategy;

2) collaboratively build without shooting in playground mode;

3) create new identities such as clothing, dance and movement through textual interactions; and

4) process and respond to complex pieces of data.

In these ways, videogames are social and rich in literacies.

Besides video games, other media platforms are mentioned as well. José elaborates on the application *WhatsApp* in his Internet Flipgrid response:

(Spanish) Yo uso WhatsApp porque *WhatsApp* me puedo comunicar con mi abuelito y con otras personas. Cuando yo agarro la xxxx yo uso WhatsApp porque me comunico con mi abuelito y con mi abuelita Mi familia que está en México ahorita estoy en Canada pero tengo algo con que comunicarme o si no puedo ver con video llamada o con otras cosas *WhatsApp* sirve para hacer video mensajes y hacer llamadas y mirar fotos y para hacer invitaciones y también sirve para recordar a la familia

(English translation) I use *WhatsApp* and I can communicate with my grandpa and other people. When I get the xxx, I use *WhatsApp* because I communicate with my grandpa and grandma, my family who is in Mexico. Right now, I am in Canada but I have something to communicate with or I can also do video call or with other things. *WhatsApp* helps to make video messages and make calls, look at my photos and invite people. It also helps to remember the family. (*José, Internet*)
Here, the theme of love for family intertwines with the students use of digital literacies exposing the importance applications play in keeping families connected. These applications are more than a computer program, but instead are an essential part of these boys’ lives as they continue to communicate with family members across borders. Likewise, Hornberger (2007) found that many immigrants continue to live transnational lives where they remain in contact with family across national boundaries. His brother Luis also discusses WhatsApp but expands his Internet usage to include other applications and those used in schools:

(Spanish) Yo juego juegos de matemáticas […] Yo me comunico con mis abuelitos y mi abuelita por WhatsApp, yo juego […] también hablo con mis abuelitos, mis tíos, mis tíos y también hablo con mi mama y con mis tíos y también escucho música y me comunico con mis tíos y mis tipitos y utilizo para hacer las tareas en la clase use el translator para hacer mis tareas y a veces le pido ayuda al maestro.

(English translation) I play math games […] I communicate with my grandparents and my grandma via WhatsApp, I play […] and also talk to my grandparents, my aunts, my uncles and I also talk to my mom and my aunts and uncles and I also listen to music and I talk to my aunties and my types and I use to do homework in the class I use the translator to do my homework and sometimes I ask for help to my teacher. (Luis, Internet)

Luis delves into a whole range of experiences with digital literacies revealing a life that is rich in multimodalities. Meishar-Tal et al. (2019) find that WhatsApp is an easy-to-use application that is free with Wi-Fi, allows for peer support and student-to-student communication increasing a sense of belonging and self-expression; moreover, it allows students to share materials and always get academic support wherever they may be. As well as WhatsApp, Luis uses technology to play math games, listen to music, use online translators, and ask for help from his teachers. However, as Hornberger (2007) tells us many educators fail to make these transnational literacies an integral part of their programming.

Much of the discussion of video games is quite gendered, with the boys continually focusing on this work, but what of the girls? Karo is one of the only girls who mentions videogames in her responses to prompts on Flipgrid. In her Media response she writes
(English) Video games because it has cooking. I like to cook. My favorite, my favorite food is umm, ahh burger. I like to cook cakes, cupcakes and hamburgers. I like, I feel like happy cause, because I’m cooking, when I’m cooking I feel like excited. I cook with my friend. (Karo, Media)

Karo also writes about technology in her Where I Am From poem stating: “I am from phones that play scales”. She does not elaborate on what this means in any of her discussions on the video prompts, but her use of media whether it be videogames or phones seems to be connected to her hobbies and interests. She uses the technology to access her interests as opposed to playing video games its own sake, and she likes to connect with peers. This concurs with Cunningham’s (2018) research who finds that girls often like to access mobile devices and when playing video games, communicating and staying in touch were the girls’ priorities.

With Fatima, there is almost no mention of electronic devices in her data, but she does tell us about her experiences with reading in her response to the Flipgrid Reading prompt:

(Arabic)So, el qera’aa momele jedan o ahyanan fe ketob 7elwe o ahyanan fe ketob baykha. Ya’ni fe ketob helwe, bas bel madrase, el ketob kela baykha o mafe she helo, la’ano kel el e’esas bel zor la tlæ’i wahed helo. Emmm, so, fe qesa ajbetni, mn ben kel el qesas, bas ana ma aretna, tfarajet aleha al video, heye esa an Laila o elze’eb. O heye an qeset Laila o elze’eb, o qeset Sanderella, o [illegible] ‘grade one and grade two’, el majaneen, o shofo lejnan. Majaneen grade two. So, fe ketob helwe, bas mesh kelon. O fajro ‘like’ fajro, bedi yah yetla’a al sama. Eza ma fajarto likat ma lah yetla’a. Eh, fajro likat. [turn the camera] ta’o farjekom grade one o grade two. Sheftohom. O hay el [illegible]
(English translation) So, reading is so boring. Sometimes, there are good books, and sometimes there are boring books. I mean there are good books, but in the school, all books are boring; there is nothing nice, because from all stories, you hardly find a nice one. Emm, there is one amazing story, from all other stories, but I didn’t read it; I saw it on video. It’s the Red Riding Hood! It’s the Red Riding Hood and Cinderella, and [illegible] [noise in the background] the crazy grade one and grade two. Watch the craziness. Grade two are crazy. So, there are nice books, but not all of them. Lots of ‘likes’, lots of ‘likes’! I want them to reach the sky! If you don’t do lots of ‘likes’, it won’t work. Ya, lots of ‘likes’. [turn the camera] let me show you Grade 1 and Grade 2. Did you see them? And this is [illegible] (Fatima, Reading)

There is a lot going on in Fatima’s response. We can see the importance she places on receiving ‘lots of likes,’ suggesting that she is familiar with uploading and watching videos and places a great deal of importance on being liked by her peers in this format. She also tells us of her dislike in the boring, print literacy options available at her school, which she then contrasts with videos on Red Riding Hood and Cinderella before being interrupted by younger children walking by in the hallway. She then concedes that there are some nice books but not all of them. This love of using media to access film/movies is reiterated by Serena:

(English) I use media a lot. My favorite song is Sweeba Cycle and Fire. I listen to them so many times and my favorite movie is Breadwinner. In my top other movies names. I can’t really remember them, but I have a lot of favorite movies. (Serena, Media)

Serena also discusses her media consumption in terms of music, which is a theme that came up in a great deal of other places in the data as well with both boys and girls. For example, Yara’s discussion in her Where I Am From poem of a song with the words ‘let me love you’, and the large number of times Despacito is mentioned in the data, as seen earlier.

Finally, written texts with lots of graphics appeared to be preferred by many of the students. Aashi tells us that graphic novels are her favorite books to read in her Reading video response and Yara states that her favorite book is Judy Moody, which is a novel with lots of graphics. This may be indicative of their varying abilities to read English. Regardless, both girls
like texts that include lots of visuals. Similarly, Luis tells us about liking the book Sonic in his Flipgrid response to the Reading prompt:

(Spanish) A mí me gusta ver el libro de Sonic, porque es bonito y a mí me gusta leer el libro de Sonic porque trae muchas cosas, trae dibujos y ahí lees y le aparece me like sonic is good

(English translation) I like to see the Sonic book because is pretty and I like to read the Sonic book because it has many things, like pictures and you read and it shows. I like Sonic, it is good (Luis, Reading)

Sonic is a graphic novel series about a hedgehog. For Luis, Aashi and Yara, finding ways to bring graphic novels into the students’ reading programs in schools is essential, as it is of high interest to the students. Norton & Vanderheyden (2004) write of the importance using graphic texts such as comic books with plurilingual students. To further this, researchers have found graphic novels to be an excellent textual resource to use with newcomers with emerging print literacy (Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Park, 2016).

Videogames, social media, graphics, songs, and movies are important aspects of these children’s lives. It would be interesting to examine how these examples of digital play (Brownell, 2021), such as Minecraft or even Fortnite can be brought into children’s classroom literacy experiences or even become the focus of literacies in the classroom. Researchers are beginning to examine how video games impact youth and their language development (Duran, 2017; Sirin et al., 2018). Sirin et al.’s (2018) study brought together games such as Cerego, Alien Game, Code.org and Minecraft in order to examine what Syrian youth living in Turkey learned from these tools. Results found that children were rarely absent and highly satisfied as well as finding improvement in the areas of executive functioning, coding, Turkish language skills and hopelessness. They suggest using a “game-based, playful learning approach” (p. 15) when working with refugee children. It would make sense that incorporating different media, including videogames, into learning would make school more meaningful and authentic to the students.

If we are genuinely going to understand newcomers with emerging print literacy from an asset lens, then we must have an understanding of literacy that moves beyond reading and writing. I do believe strongly that these children must be taught to learn to read and write in a
consistent and timely manner as soon as they arrive in Canada. However, this learning must be embedded within a literacy program that incorporates their existing literacy practices. These children are telling us that digital and graphic literacies are an important part of their lives. Online spaces become places for children to perform identities and through these multimodal forms they explore and connect with others (Beavis, 2014). Regardless of the amount of time in a new country, young immigrants’ sense of belonging and resilience increases with the use of technology including applications, social networks and translations (Zilka, 2020). In these ways, new literacies offer educators an approach to education that promotes mental health, playfulness, connection instead of a limited understanding of literacy.

6.8 Conclusion

Bringing translanguaging into the classroom and not having an English-only policy is a well-researched approach to second language teaching that has been around for many years (Cummins, 2000, 2014). I would even go as far as to say that it is the cornerstone to any strong second language program. Moreover, through our Flipgrid responses and focus group interviews, I had hoped to bring a broader understanding of literacies that included students’ translanguaging to my work in my case studies. However, this was not always possible due to the teachers’ translanguaging stance. My work was also limited by access to technology in the classroom, whether it be not being able to access Wi-Fi from personal devices, teachers being wary of applications that included video, or the pressure to not deviate from standardized guided reading programs. In some cases, like Alexandra’s, there was a lack of understanding of the importance of translanguaging in the classroom. Alexandra stated that her ideas of how to approach teaching her students came from her heart. However, combining these personal inspirations with some research-backed approaches that encourage teachers to bring all the students’ literacy practices into the classroom would have greatly improved her programming for the students. Thistle Meadow class actually had an iPad available for every student. In my other two case studies, there were only two iPads for the entire class and these were used extensively. As it is, some of the children I worked with at Thistle Meadow expressed feeling anger towards their writing and during guided reading sessions would attempt to humiliate each other. An English-only pedagogy is rooted in colonial and racist structures. Although the children may not overtly recognize these oppressive, institutionalized approaches to teaching as the cause, they had
constructed that in a country such as Canada, knowing how to read and write in English is their only route to success both in the education system and in larger society.

The children have shown us the importance of bringing other mediums than paper and pencil and books into the classroom. Videogames, movies, graphic novels, and social media are all important to them. The students in this research are avid and experienced users of these different types of literacy sources. When trying out writing, whether it be in English or using their entire linguistic repertoire, white boards and markers proved to be both novel and productive. They are also very capable of complex thought, which can be seen through the metaphors and poetry we wrote together. Although the newcomers with emerging print literacy need to learn to read through guided reading programs, the importance of diversifying their programs to incorporate new literacies is demonstrated herein.
Chapter 7: Social Positions

7.1 Introduction

Emotions that stick and become associated with the students’ identities are at the center of the analysis in this chapter. By looking at those emotions we can better understand the structures and histories that are bound up in the creation of social hierarchy. Emotions are more than personal. They are socially constructed and influenced by politics. In this chapter, I bring together Ahmed’s (2004) work on emotion with Hall’s (1996) and Moje et al.’s (2009) work on identity to understand the narratives associated with the students’ identities. In general, this was a difficult chapter to write, as the themes were emergent from the data and required me to research different bodies of literature. Some of the themes, especially those identified in the focus group interviews with the students (love, safety and shyness) are present across the different case studies. Other themes like trauma and hatred, which were identified by the teachers, tended to be more situational.

7.2 Love and family

Love, Love, Love, I’ve been in love
(Karam, Focus group interview, Thistle Meadow)

I start with love, as it was a major theme identified by students when watching each other’s videos. At the end of my time at each location as case study, students had a chance to look at each other’s work and participate as co-researchers by analyzing their peer’s work for themes on emotion. One of the first groups to participate at Thistle Meadow included Serena, Karam, Amira and Yara. As the students were working, Serena quite astutely pointed out that all of the students were identifying love as a major theme present in each other’s work. Most of the love identified by the students in that focus group interview related to familial love, so I begin with the students’ understanding of love, Habibi حبيبي. This theme can be seen quite clearly in the students’ visual and written responses to Patti Kim’s (2013) book Here I Am.

Closer to the beginning of my time researching in their classroom, I had shown the students an image from the book of the child touching an object from their home. This was done
as a way to get them thinking and talking about emotions. To give some context, the child in the story has just arrived at their new home in a new country. The gender of the child in the book is ambiguous, so I refer to the child with the singular they. The child finds comfort by touching an object in their pocket. The reader does not know what it is, but we do know that the object in their pocket calls to mind powerful memories of the past and evokes emotions. In another picture from the book, the child has taken the object from their pocket. The object evokes happy memories of the past of friendship, community, and a home. The child in the story has associated much emotion with this object. I discussed with the class the different feelings the child has in the picture. We looked at how they are sad in their new, empty apartment, and how they are happy when they remember their friends and home from their old country.

According to my field notes from the day of this lesson at Thistle Meadow, I had completed a follow-up writing task to the *Here I Am* reading we had done during a previous session. I began by reviewing the word *proud*, which we had already discussed. I had the students rewrite the word proud in their language on the white board. There was much discussion and back and forth with three Arabic speaking students on how to spell *proud* in Arabic. Serena had remembered how to write *proud* in Pashto from the last time we had googled it, and Karo, who also speaks Pashto, confirmed the spelling. By incorporating the students’ written language into this English medium space, I had hoped to not only affirm the students’ identities (Cummins & Early, 2015), but also to frame written Arabic and Pashto as something to be desired, not just written English. I asked the students to identify an object that they had brought with them to Canada and describe how they felt about that object. I was surprised to find that most of the children could not identify a toy or even a picture. They did not even have a small object they had brought with them that was meaningful. Instead, the children attached much emotion to their family and friends. The work then shifted away from objects that were stuck with emotion to family members brought with them from their home countries or new friends in Canada.

Fatima, who had arrived in Canada from Syria via Lebanon, seven months earlier decided to draw pictures of her friends in response to the wordless picture book *Here I Am*. The emotion she identified with these friends was happy *سعيدة*.
Students at the other two case study sites also reiterated this love of family and friends in their responses to the book *Here I Am*. In her notebook, Aashi wrote a response to the object lesson described above by writing about her love for her family:

*I love my Family because my Family make me Happy and they make very support.*
As well as in their responses to the *Here I Am* story, love of friends and family occurred in many different data sources. José wrote extensively about his favorite place. He was responding to a prompt from the teacher, who was trying to teach the students about the different types of nouns and had asked them to describe their favorite place. José wrote about football and Ronaldo, but his mom and dad were also mentioned as being special.

José talks and writes about loving his family a lot. In his *Flipgrid* response to the *What’s Important to Me* prompt he states:

*(Spanish)* Para mí lo más importante es mi abuelito, mi abuelita, yo los quiero mucho. Porque ellos a mí me cuidaban mucho y me daban su amor por eso cuando me vine a Canadá. los extraño mucho y son muy importantes para nosotros, para mí y mi hermano y también quiero a mi hermano porque mi hermano siempre esta ahí para mí, lo quiero mucho.

*(English translation)* For me, the most important is my grandpa, my grandma, I love them so much. Because they took care of me very much, they gave me their love and that is why when I came to Canada I miss them so much and they are very important to us, for me, for my brother and I also love my brother because my brother is always there for me, I love him so much. *(José, *What’s Important to Me*)

*Figure 36 José’s Writing*
Sometimes the children chose to write about their love of family by including more than one language, like José who knew how to write some Spanish and does his oral response in Spanish, and other times like Tenzin Aashi, who was writing in English only.

Love for family and friends also appeared in the students’ Flipgrid responses and could involve learning from family members, which can be seen in Karo from Thistle Meadow’s video transcriptions:

(English) I am learning from my dad and mom. … Such amazing. I love them so much.  
(Karo, Learning Outside of School)

(English) My sister is important to me because she is so cute and she is, she’s. I love her. Love her so much. And she love me too. She’s so cute because I love her, love her so much. (Karo, What’s Important to Me)

For her video, Senait from Smokey Glen chose to write out her response first before performing for Flipgrid. Her very first sentence is “I love my family”:

![Figure 37 Senait’s Writing](image-url)
As can clearly be seen in the data, the theme of love for family and friends, as identified by the student researchers, is pervasive and central to how the students understand themselves and each other regardless of the languages they are using.

Mothers, in particular, are highlighted by the students, as can be seen by Serina’s words from one of the Focus group interview at Thistle Meadow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serena</th>
<th>10:03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause like even to me the most important thing is my mom and like everyone loves their moms because like they care about you so like they made, like they grewed you they’re always with you and he loves his mom too and his mom is [inaudible] person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Thistle Meadow, Focus Group Interview)

The students at Thistle Meadow were correct when they told me that the main theme present in each other’s work in love. As Ahmed (2004) tells us “it is our relation to particular others that gives life meaning and direction and can give us the feeling of there being somebody and something to live for” (p. 140). For these children, it was others, not things, with which they associated strong emotions such as love.

Although this revelation may not be surprising or novel, the presence of love of family in the data is intense and pervasive. As we move away from thinking about students as being limited in their prior schooling to one of having an abundance of love and time spent with family, we can begin to think about how we can bring these experiences into the classroom. As a mother myself of a four-year-old who is missing much schooling during Covid, I think about the assets he is gaining by having much closer relationships with his grandparents and myself. Yes, he misses his friends and social play with children his own age, but these closer familial relationships are building a support network for him of trusted adults that he can turn to as he goes through all the difficulties life brings his way. He is also learning so much, like the other day when he dug up the garden with his grandmother. This year they found only one worm because the soil was dry. Last year they had found hundreds because the soil was wet. He explained this to his class through his online schooling the next morning. When we return to in-person schooling after long breaks, I am sometimes embarrassed by his behaviour. He has forgotten how to act with other children of his own age in formal educational settings where
intense outbursts of emotion or physical closeness are not the norm in ways they are in the home. I think these are important pieces to remember as newcomers with emerging print literacy enter our classrooms and research. We love our family without boundaries and with an intensity that is not found in schools finding space for this type of love in our classrooms is imperative with our work with newcomers with emerging print literacy.

7.3 Love of the Nation

Although the students talked about love in terms of love of family and friends, Ahmed (2004) is also concerned about love of the nation and what that love can make us do. The idea of loving something is often framed as positive, but love can also be used to condone hate and marginalization. Ahmed (2004) writes that our very understanding of “the nation is an effect of how our bodies move towards it” (p. 133). The nation is an abstract concept, and how that ideal of the nation affects us is determined by how we love it. Love of this effect, in Ahmed’s view, can lead to an othering of people who are not seen as belonging to the nation. In their words, “the pull of love towards another, who becomes an object of love, can be transferred towards a collective, expressed as an ideal or object” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 124). Canadians as a collective then other those who do not live up to this ideal. For example, this can take the form of an expectation of English or French usage which is intertwined with racist notions of whiteness (Haque & Patrick, 2015). However, this national love is also embedded in a love for multiculturalism, creating a dual message of loving a diverse Canada but expecting newcomers to abide by language policies that require them to keep that difference to themselves.

Building on Ahmed’s conception of love as an object that can be transferred to an ideal, this collective love of Canada can take the form of language hierarchy that privileges English. For this study, I encouraged students from the beginning of my work with them to use any language they wanted to respond to questions. As I discussed in the overviews of the research sites in Chapter 4 and again in greater detail in Chapter 5 on translanguaging, of the three classrooms where I researched, some teachers had adopted a translanguaging approach where students were encouraged to use all their languages to communicate and support their learning while others had a strict English-only policy. The teacher’s stance seemed to be indicative of their previous teaching experiences, and in the case of English-only classrooms, a lack of
professional development. At Thistle Meadow, the children were encouraged to only use English and obeyed their teacher quite readily when she reminded them to use English. Therefore, my suggestion that the students speak in Arabic or Pashto as well as English was not taken up by the students at first, who could be heard responding to the *Flipgrid* prompts in English only. Their collective understanding of belonging and acceptance, of being loved, in their classroom was seen through the importance the students placed on moving towards English. However, Ahmed (2004) also problematizes this notion of moving towards an object of love stating that “the direction of ‘towardness’ is sustained through the ‘failure’ of love to be returned” (p. 124). In this way, the students’ movement towards English is indicative of their own literacy practices not being loved in return.

Looking at Thistle Meadow, the English-only classroom, the students’ responses on *Flipgrid* are predominantly in English, and as can be seen by their discussion of *Places You Have Lived*, another theme of loving the nation, Canada, appears: seeing Canada as safe. Here is part of Amira’s response to a video prompt on *Places You Have Lived*:

*(English)* They didn’t want us to live in Jordan, so that’s why we moved to Canada, so we can be safe and everyone will like us and we can go to schools and we can learn, so that’s why. *(Amira, Places You Have Lived)*

Amira not only demonstrated her love of Canada by speaking in English only, but also reiterates a discourse of Canada as a saving nation where she is able to learn in schools. Karo also reproduces this love of Canada, as a safe place where you can access schooling and play:

*(English)* I am Karo. I was born in Afghanistan. I was baby three and I did, remember my family went to Pakistan. When I was four, I like there because I have so much friends. I was happy. Three years ago I came to Canada. I was so excited to see Canada. I love Canada so much because I like school and there are place for playing. *(Karo, Places You Have Lived)*

Karo adds to this love of Canada and schools by bringing in the notion of play. She loves Canada, as it is a place where she can learn and play. Karam, on the other hand, is not quite as
glowing in his love for Canada the safe nation with schools. However, remnants of this discourse can be seen in his transcript discussion about *Places I Have Lived*:

(English) I was born in Syria. And I don’t know how many years I live in Syria. And then I moved to Canada. No, and then I moved to Jordan and then Canada. Then I feel in Jordan, like I used to run from the school and then I don’t feel safer there. And then I moved to Canada and I feel a little bit safe. (Karam, *Places I Have Lived*)

Karam describes his experiences in Jordan, a country of regional migration, as being unsafe. Unlike Karo, he is not as confident in his reproduction of the love of Canada as a safe country, but instead uses words such as ‘a little bit safe’. On the day that Karam put together this video, I remember him being quite negative about Canada in his initial practice run through. After working with an adult non-participant in the classroom, he produced this video where he managed to give the teachers something he thought they wanted to hear: Canada is a little bit safe. I would have loved to have Karam’s honest first draft of his response to this video. However, I think this response gives a clear example of how the effect of loving Canada prompts newcomers to internalize both explicit and implicit messages around safety in Canada and learning in its schools.

To provide another example of the coaching that went on in the classroom to produce this love of the nation, at one point near the beginning of the research period, Fatima, a student at Thistle Meadow is recorded by another student from a Syrian background. Fatima chooses to speak in English only and performs a scripted response to the prompt I have provided for the topic of *Countries I Have Lived*. To begin, she recounts her experiences in Lebanon and Syria, and then discusses her impressions of Canada:

(English) Then we went to Canada to, and then after we went to Canada. [student recording video whispers ‘I love Canada’]. I love Canada because in Canada everyone [the word ‘safe’ is whispered by the student recorder] safely and respectful. And when you do something kind the police come. And in Canada seven years. I, I [student recorder says “seven month”]. Month, month. And I wish if you enjoy the video. (Fatima, *Places I Have Lived*)
I find this example particularly relevant because we can see the classmate who has been in Canada longer coaching another student to perform a love for the nation. Fatima, a relatively new student to the country, chooses to speak and use English, and in this English-only presentation performs a script of loving Canada and finding it safe. Her friend prompts her performance from the sidelines. When she does not know the appropriate way to speak about her new country, her friend who is also of Syrian background, prompts her in English to use words like *love* and *safe* to describe Canada. Following Ahmed’s reasoning, however, in the process of moving towards this love of Canada as a safe place, the students’ previous experiences fail to be loved in return.

My experience of students wanting to only use English in the *Flipgrid* responses changed throughout my time in the classroom at Thistle Meadow. As the children became more accustomed to me and my request for plurilingual videos, Arabic and Pashto began to appear more and more. In these ways, my work with the students had them moving back towards their own literacy practices as something to be loved. Interestingly, later in the research process, Fatima tells us a different story of her feelings towards authority and schools when she decides to speak in Arabic when she responds to the *My Schools* prompt:

(Wahed, tnen, tlate, go! O fajro likat andi! O hetoli comment. Tayeb, eh, umm… tayeb, eh.. Elmdaires kela baykha, baykha, baykha, Ma betla’i aya madrase helwe. Hata el ansat baykhvat. Sho… Al bas shatrenli be sho, al sho shatreenli bas yo’olo lal telab dreso o dreso, o sho homme? Shaghleton sho ya’ni? Homme ma bederso bas ehna shatreen nedros? O al sho…bas tesa’ala elso’al bteza’al; al sho ‘ma tesa’ali hada’! Kel el mdares metel ba’ada baykha. O hata hay el madrase eli feha nehna, baykha. Hata el madrase, lekoha [turning the camera to show the school] leko leko el)
Here we see that Fatima is beginning to break away from the English-only constraints of her classroom and feeling freer to critique her schooling experiences and teachers. This movement back towards her literacy practices seems to be embedded in a challenge to authority in Canadian schools. This is not to say that many of the children did not feel happy in their classrooms and love living in Canada, but instead highlights how immigrant children can feel forced to perform a national love, even if they are not happy with their experiences.

A fuller range of the students’ literacy practices also appeared a lot in the comments feature of Flipgrid where students can leave video feedback for each other’s videos. This feature affording feedback served as a place where much Arabic was used by the students of Syrian background at Thistle Meadow. In one example, when responding to Yara’s videos, Amira and Fatima use Arabic:

Fatima and Amara: (English) Hi Yara.
Fatima: (Arabic) الفيديو تبعك بجنن القلب! إنشاء الله يفجروك ‘الايكات’! Like it up! O helo kteer

(Arabic transliteration) El video taba’ek bejanen el’aleb! Enshallah yfajrolek ‘likat’! Like it up! O helo kteer

(English) You video is amazing! By God’s will, you’ll get lots of ‘Likes’. Like it up! And very beautiful!

Amira: (Arabic) نحنا لح نحطلك كتير ‘لايك’ و لح نساويلك ‘شير’ بتجنن!

(Arabic transliteration) Nehna lah nhetelek ktreer ‘likes’ o lah nsawelek ‘shares’ betjanen

(English translation) We will put lots of ‘Likes’ for you, and amazing ‘Shares’

Fatima: (Arabic) ايه بي ما ترقصي!

(Arabic transliteration) Eeh bas ma tere’esi!

(English translation) Yah, but don’t dance! (Fatima and Amira, Places I Have Lived

Comment)

Here, the students’ words express a desire to have *likes*. Not surprisingly the students desire to have approval from their classmates and feel like they belong. The ability to comment and leave *likes* is a common feature in many different types of social media thereby making it familiar to students and an example of authentic literacy practices. Moreover, the comments feature then becomes a space where the students feel free to use their literacy practices and not perform a love for Canada through their use of English.

Most of the comments left by students in the *Flipgrid* application at Thistle Meadow were done so in Arabic. This was particularly true of Karam when he provides feedback to Amira’s *My Languages* response to one of the literacy profile questions:

(Arabic) بالله بالله بالله! Your name is Amira?

(Arabic transliteration) B’allah, b’allah, b’allah! Your name is Amira?

(English translation) Really, really, really! Your name is Amira? (Karam, My Languages

Comment)
Then again, when Karam uses Arabic when responding to Yara’s Language response as part of her literacy profile:

(Arabic) ما شاء الله عليكي

(Arabic transliteration) Masha’allah aleki!

(English translation) ‘God bless you’ = Wow! (Karam, Language Comment)

Karam even responds to his own English-only Flipgrid video on My Languages asking for approval from his peers in Arabic:

(Arabic) الفيديو تبعي بجنن، مو؟

(Arabic transliteration) El video taba’i bejanen, mo?

(English translation) My video is amazing, right? (Karam, My Languages Comment)

According to García and Wei (2014), there is a process of giving up authority when using translanguaging in the classroom. In these ways, the teacher’s identity changes to become that of a facilitator who uses collaborative groups. In these comments features section of the Flipgrid application, the students felt free to use more components of their linguistic repertoire as well as use humor, discuss religion and express a need to belong, away from the English-only authority of the teacher that they perceived to be present in their main Flipgrid responses where they generally spoke in English-only. In these collaborative moments, building friendship and being liked by peers are combined with humor and religion reflecting the students’ desires.

Returning to the concept of love, as identified by the students as a major theme in the research, when Sara Ahmed (2004) talks about love, she is concerned with what love makes us do, what love of the nation makes us do. What does it mean to love one’s nation in the Canadian context? According to Gulliver (2018), there is a pattern of denying racism; and in both the past and present in Canada, there is the discourse that it is newcomers who have not embraced multiculturalism to its fullest. Moreover, Pashby et al. (2014) state that immigrants are often constructed as a threat to national identity within the Canadian context. Immigrants are expected to proclaim their love of Canada as a test of their loyalty to the nation, to minimize that threat. Moreover, multiculturalism fails “to significantly attend to Canada’s colonial past or to alter the
power dynamics accounting for differences in the social status of minority cultures” (Pashby et al., 2014, p. 5). It works to erase colonialism and racism. In these ways, to love Canada situates immigrants as threats and forces racialized immigrants to deny any racism they may experience. This can be seen at the end of Fatima’s response to the prompt on Places You Have Lived when she states, “when you do something kind, the police come.” This data was collected in 2019 before the mass media attention of the death of George Floyd and within the Canadian context, the publicity around the deaths of racialized and Indigenous Peoples at the hands of police through wellness checks. I am not sure what Fatima’s exposure to police has been in either Syria or Canada at this point, but it is interesting to see her connecting safety in Canada with police.

If multiculturalism is a Canadian ideal and denying racism is a truth, then the children immigrating into this space who desire to become Canadian can be made to feel responsible to live up to this ideal and truth. Ahmed critiques the notion of love as forcing “a particular ideal onto others by requiring that they live up to an ideal to enter the community” (p. 139). One ideal espoused by Ontario Ministry of Education documents for English Literacy Development (ELD) programs, where in the Canadian tradition race is not even mentioned once, is Canada as the saving nation (Brubacher, 2019). This perpetuation of safety ignores Canada’s colonial past and institutionalized racism. In these ways, the Canadian discourse around multiculturalism forces the immigrant youth to idealize their new home as safe, as seen by Fatima’s response to Places I Have Lived, and exclusionary practices like an English-only classroom, that shape their identities. In her case, love of Canada was a coached performance of national love, whereas familial love was something many of the students with emerging print literacy noted as a key part of their identity. Love of nation seemed to be the result of direct coaching tied to broader discourses the students were experiencing.

7.4 Safety and trauma

Building on the idea of Canada as the safe nation, a theme identified by the Tibetan speaking students at Smokey Glen during their focus group interviews was safety. At the end of their focus group interview the students showed me some religious objects they had on their bodies. The Tibetan students associate happiness and safety with these objects. They are, as Ahmed (2010), would state sticky objects. This is significant because it highlights that the students find safety in their own cultural and religious practices. This contrasts with the narrative
mentioned earlier of Canada as the saving nation. Instead, the children found safety in their own
religion and heritage through the religious objects they kept with them every day. When I asked
the students about their Tibetan pouches at the end of the focus group interview, they used words
such as safe, peaceful, dreamt and God to describe the religious artefacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aashi</th>
<th>16:22</th>
<th>I feel happy because it keeps us safe and stuff like that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>16:30</td>
<td>It keeps you safe. How do the pouches keep you safe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aashi</td>
<td>16:32</td>
<td>Mmmmmm. …. Mmmmmm. Make us ummmm (sucks in breath). I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>16:49</td>
<td>You’re not sure. Do you have any, when you’re done chewing your pizza, ask Rabten, Aashi, what does he think?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aashi</td>
<td>16:55</td>
<td>[untranslated Tibetan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabten</td>
<td>16:56</td>
<td>[untranslated Tibetan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aashi</td>
<td>17:05</td>
<td>So he said ... mmmm … this is our god but if a ghost comes it keeps us safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>17:18</td>
<td>Oh. From the ghost. Did you want to add anything, Sonam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabten</td>
<td>17:20</td>
<td>[untranslated Tibetan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonam</td>
<td>17:22</td>
<td>I was gonna say the god necklace that keep us safe when …. I dreamt about God that’s why I feel at peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Peace. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Smokey Glen, Focus Group Interview)

The Tibetan students’ association of safety with their religious artefacts stands out, as the
predominant discourse of Canada as the saving nation. Without going into a long history of
Tibetan’s experience of religious persecution, it is not surprising to find the students’ find peace
and safety in their religious artefacts.

On the flip side of safety, we find trauma. Of all the teacher and student participants,
Alexandra, the teacher at Thistle Meadow, talked about trauma the most, and she did so
extensively. This correlates with previous research (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2014) that has found that
refugee children are often described as experiencing trauma-related psychological problems.
This contrasts with how any of the student participants in this study viewed themselves. Hayward (2019) critiques prevailing discourses of refugees as traumatized as being over-used and promoting deficit approaches. Instead, they ask that educators focus on strength-based programming. Part of the problem of viewing refugees as traumatized is that teachers lower their expectations and this labelling of trauma can lead to a form of compassion that is more like pity (Rodrigues, 2015). In these ways, teachers may want to take caution in overusing trauma to describe refugee students.

Students’ mental health and trauma-informed practices have started to become a focus within the Canadian context of education. This can be seen by the publication of various documents such as *Supporting Minds—An educator’s guide to promoting students’ mental health and wellbeing* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013), and it has also been my experience as a practicing teacher in the last number of years. In their review of the literature, Thomas et al. (2019) found that much of the empirical research on trauma-informed practices is siloed as an academic discipline and in urgent needs of being disseminated into teaching practice. However, Maynard et al. (2019) have found that the number of schools bringing trauma-informed practices into the classroom is growing rapidly. They suggest that schools and policymakers proceed with caution when implementing trauma-informed practices, as there has been no rigorous review of these programs. Finding ways to ensure that siloed research is available for teachers wanting to take a trauma-informed approach is imperative.

This leads us into a discussion of how teachers can approach working with students who have concerns about safety or have experienced violence or trauma from a culturally sustaining perspective. For the purposes of this study, I take Menakem’s (2017) understanding of trauma:

> [t]rauma always happens in the body. It is a spontaneous protective mechanism used by the body to stop or thwart further (or future) potential damage. Trauma is not a flaw or a weakness. It is a highly effective tool for safety and survival. (p. 7)

Menakem’s work is rooted in anti-racism and has been highlighted in at least two conference presentations I have attended on culturally responsive trauma informed practices.
In this study, trauma was not something the children, many of whom come from a refugee background, discussed in any way. Similarly, Guerrero and Tinkler (2010) found in their study that “[t]he youth never spoke of themselves as victims despite the dominant portrayal of refugees as victims in the media but, rather, they saw themselves as capable actors in their new worlds and there was plenty of evidence to back this up” (p. 64). As stated earlier, the main theme identified by many of the students when analyzing each other’s data was love, and not trauma. However, trauma is the reality of many people’s lives, and one can assume that due to reasons of poverty, migration and/or war, the children may have sustained trauma that continues to impact them today. It is important, however, that teachers and schools do not add to the “triple trauma” (Stewart et al., 2019, p. 55) effect where children may have experienced trauma in their home country, during transition and then, thirdly, while settling in Canada.

One of the ways this triple threat can manifest is through children internalizing messages of discrimination. North America is a continent with a long history of racism and colonization, both of which continue to be imbedded in our institutions and ways of knowing. These experiences of discrimination in Canada can further exacerbate trauma symptoms (Walker & Zuberi, 2019). If students are entering the country already having experienced trauma, they are particularly vulnerable to being triggered by the racism and colonial attitudes already circulating here. For those racialized children who have not experienced traumatic events in their past, we do not want to traumatize them with racism because racialized children are at an increased risk of experiencing trauma (Ko, 2005). Based on this, I analyze this data from the perspective that trauma-informed practices with racialized youth must come from an anti-racist stance that is culturally responsive.

What does it mean to approach trauma-informed practices from an anti-racist perspective? Menakem (2017) tells us that “[w]e humans want to belong. We experience belonging—or the lack of it—in our bodies” (p. 246). Returning to the concept of emotion as understood by Ahmed (2004), I wonder, what do our bodies do when they do not belong? In this study, we have already seen how Senait lowers her head in shame and Karo’s hand hurts when writing in English-only contexts where teachers do not recognize their literacy practices. Menakem (2017) finds that the norms we have around language use, amongst other things, is embedded in white supremacy. However, both actions by Senait and Karo could have been
dismissed by the teacher as being remnants of trauma from the past, and not students reacting to current exclusionary, English-only schooling. In other words, the teachers could see the students as emotional and withdrawn because they are refugees, not because there is something wrong with their own pedagogy.

To further this point, at one point in the study Fatima, a Syrian student from Thistle Meadow, approached me about a concern she had about her food being taken away from her in the lunchroom. This was corroborated by other students who had experienced the same thing. These students felt targeted because they were of Afghan and Syrian backgrounds. These are my fieldnotes from that day:

> During our guided reading session, Fatima opened up about problems in the lunchroom. She felt that the lunchroom supervisors, who were women from India, only liked kids from their own country and that they (the lunchroom supervisors) picked on them. There was a story (from Fatima) about the lunchroom supervisors taking the Syrian and Afghan kids’ cookies, which was corroborated by Serina. Fatima wanted me to talk to the principal. I suggested we tell Alexandra first. Later, Alexandra talked to me about how when Fatima gets upset about something, then she starts to bring up other incidents from the past when she was hurt. She describes Fatima as not being able to self-regulate. Also, Alexandra stated that the lunchroom supervisors were from the community suggesting that this was a community issue outside of her control. (Fieldnotes at Thistle Meadow, May 1st, 2019)

Alexandra associates the students’ concerns with a lack of self-regulation due to trauma. In other words, the teacher believed Fatima was upset about not receiving an award earlier that day and because of that, focuses on other past wrongs. Fatima’s identity becomes associated with the trauma of the other, who is not able to understand their own emotions and, therefore, cannot be trusted. This is in direct opposition to Wolpow et al. (2009) who finds that empowerment, positive regard, high expectations, checking assumptions, amongst others are essential components to a compassionate program that is trauma informed. Finding ways to create an environment where the children felt empowered to speak out against injustices would add to the work that Alexandra is doing in her classroom.
This was not the only time that the students’ identities were associated with trauma. Alexandra further discusses trauma when I asked her about why she thinks the students did not want to use Pashto and Arabic during class. She responded by stating:

I wonder if it is part of the trauma that they have, that you know what, this is what happened back in my country, so I don’t want to do this in that language. (Alexandra, Final Interview)

Here, the teacher equates students not wanting to use all their languages in class with previous trauma, insinuating that the students feel safe in Canada and in her classroom where they are only allowed to use English. This association of the children with trauma reflects larger discourses of Canada as the saving nation and the refugee child as the grateful new immigrant along with the reality of non-official language as part of one’s past while English and French are part of one’s future. However, the students in Alexandra’s class have access to languages instruction through the International Languages program, which takes place on Monday afternoons:

[m]ost of these kids are taking second language classes, not second language, sorry, international languages. It is their first language actually, we have that program after school every Monday. (Alexandra, Final Interview)

Moreover, some of the students at Thistle Meadow used Arabic while in the hallways and, presumably at home, as we had to communicate with their parents through translators. In these ways, it is very clear that students’ languages are a part of their current lives and not something they consistently connect with trauma. On the other hand, I wonder if not being allowed to use all languages in class is another type of trauma that is being added to the students’ already complex lives. When someone then asks the students to incorporate languages other than English into their learning in school when they have constantly been told not to do so, it can be startling and overwhelming. In this way, English-only classrooms can add to the triple-trauma effect.

Despite her views on English-only schooling, Alexandra did have many exemplary trauma-informed practices in her classroom. Taking Menakem’s (2017) perspective, as a black researcher and activist, they have written extensively about how we can approach taking social
action and start healing from racial trauma inflicted on black bodies. In *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* Menakem (2017) tells us that “we cannot individualize our way out of white-body supremacy. Nor can we merely strategize our way out. We need collective action. Action that heals” (p. 237). In taking collective action, Menakem asks that we begin by harmonizing our bodies through song, rubbing our bellies, eating together or even taking part in community walks. All of this is meant to center the body and central nervous system preparing them for the work of social action. Menakem (2017) calls for a reprieve space where people can go if they feel triggered. They suggest a tent or roped off area. Furthermore, they talk extensively about culture and how we can never belong to a strategy or movement but that we do belong to a culture, which they define as

> [how] our bodies retain and enact history, through the foods we eat (or refuse to eat); the stories we tell; the things that hold meaning to us; the images that move us; what we are able (and unable) to sense or feel or process; the way we see the world; and a thousand other aspects of life. (p. 245)

Understanding colonial perspectives like English-only classrooms as cultures that can be changed is the important work of the activist. In these ways, I imagine work as a teacher of newcomers with emerging print literacy who is informed by culturally responsive trauma-based practices as a way of taking collective action against white-body supremacy. It is a way of moving towards love of your own body and pushing back against love of the white body.

Throughout the study, Alexandra does incorporate many trauma-informed and restorative practices that are student centered, and she focuses on making her students feel ready to learn in her classroom. For example, she has the *Corner of Zen*, which is a section of the classroom that is separated from the rest of the classroom by a bookshelf. There is a tent with a range of sensory toys and a head set for the students to use. The students can go into the *Corner of Zen* when they are upset, but only by themselves and for twenty minutes time. This *Corner of Zen* is like Menakem’s (2017) suggestion of having a roped off area where people can go when feeling triggered during activist work around anti-racism.
Interestingly, during my entire time at Thistle Meadow, the only time the tent was used by a student who was upset was when a nonparticipant came from his homeroom classroom near the end of the day.

To further support her students with trauma, Alexandra had several other restorative practices in place. These include meditation, aroma, movement, calming activities, and touch at the beginning of class. For example, on April 24th, 2019, at the beginning of class, she had all the students stand and pull on their ears and do neck stretches. She stated that these had been recommended by doctors and helped to center the children in their bodies. Menakem (2017) suggests that before acting and working together as a group to create cultural change, we must center ourselves in our bodies by rubbing our tummies or connecting with our bodies in some way. Almost every day I was there, Alexandra had prepared a different activity to calm the students and get them ready to focus on their studies. She told me that these were all psychological activities having to do with releasing emotion and letting go. To provide yet another example, on February 25th, 2019, I recorded the following field notes.

Once all five girls were there, Alexandra had them watch a video to, in her words, ‘focus the students and get them paying attention to details.’ The Youtube video was called Spot the Difference for Kids–Ferdinand movie. This took about 20 minutes. The students had
to look at two pictures and figure out what was different. They would shout out “I found it” once they had found the difference. The activity was purely visual and had no written text. They were all pictures from the movie Ferdinand (Fieldnotes at Thistle Meadow, February, 25th, 2019)

![Spot the difference for Kids | Ferdinand Movie Can Spot the Difference](image)

**Figure 41 Focusing the Mind**

Alexandra can be commended for the work she is doing to bring mental health to the center of her pedagogy. She is surely focused on her students’ well-being. However, Alexandra tells me that she does not attend professional development sessions and that her program comes from her heart. She knows in her heart what to program for the students. Despite this Alexandra’s work on trauma-based practice could have been enhanced through professional development on how to do so from a plurilingual, anti-racist perspective.

Like Alexandra, Gina talked about trauma in reference to her newcomer students with emerging print literacies’ prior experiences. This came out particularly with respect to the Roma students during her initial interview:

> [s]o let’s say specifically the Hungarian-Roma culture . . . we’ve had settlement workers come and speak to the staff about where they’re coming from, and the culture, and how the trauma and the treatment they’ve received and how it impacts them coming here and how they feel about school and education because of where they were placed in, back in Hungary, like they were often placed in special needs programs and things like that. So
parents coming here don’t necessarily see education as vital or they don’t trust the school system, there’s a lot of things at play. So we’ve had them come to try and inform everyone. So earlier in the year, because half my class is Hungarian, and there is another larger number in the other ESL class, so ESL teachers, we got together and we put on a little presentation for the staff, at a staff meeting, to remind everybody where they’ve come from, what they’ve gone through, and ways to help support them and reach out, get them to get more involved in the school, whether it’s in the classroom, or whether it’s through trying to encourage them to join sports, or something else, whether it’s something beyond that, beyond just the classroom. (Gina, Initial Interview)

In these ways, Gina works with her other ESL colleagues, taking the time to educate staff in the hope of shifting the culture of the school to be more welcoming for the children from a Roma-Hungarian background. She also attends professional development sessions with settlement workers who have more knowledge about the children’s backgrounds. Drawing on Menakem’s (2017) work, I wonder how having the students involved in educating the staff, how taking teachers on community walks with parents as guides or even how having families and teachers eat together as the collaborate to make the school a more inclusive space could add to this work. In fact, Gina did some of this work by organizing a Roma national Independence Day that included Roma musicians and had the students on stage singing the national anthem for a school wide assembly. She told me later that she plans on building on this work by having the students do more of the performances and, hopefully, getting more parental involvement.

If, as Menakem (2017) tells us, “[c]ulture is how our bodies retain and reenact history” (p. 251), how can the teachers of students with emerging print literacy work towards a culture shift in Canadian schools that asks that teachers recognize and then take action against racist and colonial actions that cause trauma for racialized newcomer children? Before this can happen, a shift needs to happen across school cultures towards recognizing that to be a racialized person is to a be a person who is more likely to have experienced trauma due to racism in Canada. For example, Syrian refugees in Canadian media have been portrayed as vulnerable and needy with other people speaking for them (Walker & Zuberi, 2020). Having the students work towards speaking out against this discourse could be empowering for the students. A perspective like this challenges dominant/current practices that often see/position newcomer students as minority
students who need to be saved. Alexandra and Gina have begun to do some of this work, but school leaders should encourage professional development that address trauma-informed practice from an anti-racist perspective that is culturally responsive. We want students to love their bodies, not feel that they have to move towards whiteness in order to be loved and accepted in this new country called Canada.

7.4.1 Food

Food insecurity during childhood is deeply related to well-being (Kirkpatrick et al., 2010). Moreover, Menakem (2017) mentions the importance of eating together when taking a trauma-informed approach that is culturally responsive. Looking at the data in this way, the children talked about and ate food a lot at Thistle Meadow. There was even an assembly for the entire school led by students, including Karo and Amira, on the topic of food. That assembly was geared towards promoting healthy eating in the school. At Thistle Meadow, there was an urgency around food. For example, during my focus group interview with the students I provided them with popcorn and drinks. When I had the interview translated, much of the Arabic spoken by the students during the interview was about food.

Yara, Fatima and Karam in conversation [exact speaker is unknown]:

غير مفهوم [الفشار] (Arabic)

(English translation) [Illegible] Popcorn!!

ناكولها تلاتنتنا؟ (Arabic)

(Arabic transliteration) Fena nokela tlatetna?

(English translation) Are we going to eat it the three of us?

واعله ما [غير مفهوم] (Arabic)

(Arabic transliteration) Walla ma [Illegible]

(English translation) W’allah [swearing by the name of God for emphasis]

Karam: (Arabic) إلكن كلُو كلو، خلصو خلصو. يو قولبها بدي ايه؟
(Arabic transliteration) Lakan kelo kelo, 7’also 7’also. O’olela bedi ba’ed, eh!?

(English translation) OK then, eat eat, finish it, finish it. Tell her you/we want more, OK!?

This is just one excerpt of a number of times Yara, Fatima and Karam chose to speak about food in Arabic during our focus group interview. Later that same morning, even after the students had eaten this extra food provided by me, when the school snack arrived, they rushed to crowd around and grab their portion. The students loved food, and there was an urgency around food availability.

Interestingly, returning to our previous theme of love, some of the children’s thoughts on food are wrapped up in love. Karam connects food and love when watching his own video where he is talking about what’s important to him:

(English) I love my mom cause she cooked for me and she helped me. She did lots of those things with me (inaudible) and when she’s happy, I’m happy. (Karam, What’s Important to You)

His mother cooking for him and providing food for him is why he identifies loving her. Likewise, Karo also talks about food through cooking with friends:

(English) I like to cook. My favorite, my favorite food is umm, ahh burger. I like to cook cakes, cupcakes and hamburgers. I like, I feel like happy cause, because I’m cooking, when I’m cooking I feel like excited. I cook with my friend. Yeah. (Karo, Media)

For both Karam and Karo, food and cooking are a place for love and community. Food is something that is desired and builds strong personal connections.

At the other two school sites, there was a different relationship with food. At Smokey Glen, there was less data on food. The times when food is mentioned had to do with bringing teachers food, like when Peter tells me about the Tibetan children bringing him Momo’s. There was also a deference of letting adults eat food first before students had any, like when I bought the Tibetan students pizza for lunch. They offered it to me first, but when I said no, the students happily ate the food. I also noticed that the food from the snack program at Smokey Glen was
rarely touched by any of the students in the class. It is important to note that the newcomers with emerging print literacy at Smokey Glen were integrated into a mainstream classroom with many children from wealthier families. This is in stark contrast to Thistle Meadow where the children ran to grab their daily snacks. Like Thistle Meadow, at Valley Forest, the students ate the snacks readily, and most of the food was gone by the end of the morning. However, the approach at Valley Forest was different. The snack table by the door was set out first thing in the morning. The children could grab snacks at any point during their seat work when the teacher was not teaching. I also learned that if the snacks ran out, more could be picked up. The students never talked about food during my time there. Instead, there was a sense of calm that food would always be present and be provided.

To conclude, food is a sticky object for the students at Thistle Meadow. It is stuck with desire. They talk about it and want it a lot. One could speculate that this is part of the children’s past trauma of not having access to food in their home countries or during transition. However, if we are going to look at the triple trauma effect (Stewart et al., 2019), then we also must examine the children’s access to food here. Food Banks in North America have experienced an increase in usership during the last number of years suggesting that society in not addressing human rights and basic incomes (Smith-Carrier et al., 2017). In Canada alone, there are 1.2 million children living in homes with food insecurity (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020). Unequal access to food has grown even more predominant during Covid, as food banks are accessed by many more people. Finding ways to make food more accessible to families would alleviate the triple trauma effect of experiencing food shortage in Canada.

7.5 Love and marginalization

If love pulls us towards something, it also pulls us away from other things and can lead to marginalization. Many of the students in this study live at the intersection of different identities: plurilingual, immigrant, loving family member and racialized. In my previous research on teachers’ discourses about newcomers with emerging print literacy (Brubacher, 2011), a theme that arose across my eight teacher interviews in Ontario was that these children not only experience marginalization across the larger Canadian society but also within their own communities. For example, the teachers in my previous research talked about how other students in the classroom who knew the same language or were from similar racial and cultural
backgrounds as the newcomers with emerging print literacy refused to work with them. Connecting this to Ahmed, when we love our own history, language and identities, there can also be a process of rejecting others with similar backgrounds who do not fit our own ideas of this love. I wonder how communities that are already experiencing marginalization or even racism in larger Canadian society experience this moving away from others of similar backgrounds, but who may come from a lower class, for example. This marginalization happened across numerous contexts with different teachers in different school boards. This theme was not as prevalent in this data, perhaps because the students in this study are predominantly in specialized programs with other newcomers with emerging print literacy, whereas in my previous study the students were in mainstream classes, which are heterogenous. However, it did appear on a number of occasions with the teacher participants.

Valley Forest has a large population of children from a Roma background, two of whom, Hunor and Balinte, chose to participate in this study. Gina, the teacher at Valley Forest, speaks about her Hungarian students’ experiences with schooling in Hungary in general:

[m]y Hungarian students, from what they’ve all expressed to me, that they all basically started school when they were eight years old, so not too long ago. So they don’t have a lot of school experience and from my understanding, culturally, some of the things they faced back home, and the schools are, the formality of the school, or the structure of the school, I don’t think was so academically progressive for them. (Gina, Initial Interview)

Here, Gina’s experiences and observations lead her to critique the previous educational experiences of students of Roma background in European schools.

Like Gina, Elitsia, from Smokey Glen, talks about the experiences of Roma children at her school. She begins by discussing some of her previous work with Roma children in the Eastern Bloc both as a student and a teacher and then, her subsequent experiences here in Canada. Elitsia had taught in the Eastern Bloc where she explained it was the same as here with the Roma students. According to Elitsia, the students did not come to school and as a teacher, she was expected to go to the students’ homes to try and get them to come to school. She remembers how when she was a student, the Roma students did not do their homework or put effort into school. They would just throw their backpacks on the ground and not study.
Roma children have historically experienced much racism and oppression in schools throughout Europe (Cashman, 2016; Dunajeva, 2017; Messing, 2017; Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2016). For example, Cashman (2016) discusses the institutional racism inherent in the over-representation of Roma children in special education schools in the Czech Republic. Similarly, Dunajeva (2017) writes about how in one classroom in Hungary a teacher segregates between advanced, non-Roma students and beginner, Roma students. Interestingly, neither Hunor nor Balinte discussed their schooling experiences in Hungary this way. They were quite positive about school and seemed to have enjoyed it; however, they were both quite young and may have been unaware of discriminatory systemic issues. In discussion with Hall’s (1996) work on identity, the white European body is often seen as normal, positioning the racialized body as the other. Instead of seeing the students’ identity as always being in process, there is an essentialization of a static understanding of the students’ labelled with the identity of Roma: a narrative that has been created by society, not the students.

With Elitsia, this association of a lack of self-regulation or even laziness suggests a love for her own nation that marginalizes the students’ Roma identity. This is an emotion that is already circulating in her understanding of the students. This stereotype then gets applied to new students who enter this space. Interestingly, it should be noted that none of the student participants at her school identified as Roma. The other teacher participant at Smokey Glen, Peter, did believe that being Roma was part of Tomas’ identity. As a reminder, Tomas is a student participant from Slovakia. Peter also talked about how a large population of Roma students came to the school for a couple of years before moving on to another region of the city. According to Elitsia, there were two groups of Roma at Smokey Glen: one from Hungary and the other from Slovakia. Tomas arrived with this group. However, according to her, he did not look Roma due to his skin tone and did not move on with the Roma students. During this initial meeting with Elitsia, she explains that Tomas was not there today and he often misses school because he has health problems. The school had discussed a special education program or testing. Many labels are thrown at Tomas: sick, special education and Roma. This correlation of Roma children with special education is reflective of the inequities happening in Eastern Europe. So perhaps Elitsia is right on one account: there is not much difference between Roma students’ experience with education here compared to what is happening in the Eastern Bloc or other
European countries. In this way, the triple threat (Stewart et al., 2019) of children experiencing trauma while settling in Canada becomes a reality.

What does this mean for schools and educators when there is discrimination and racism already in the community where we teach. If we are from that community or connected to it in some ways, it is important for us to do the work on self-reflection, anti-racism and unpacking our own discriminatory views. I say this from my own perspective of coming from a predominantly white, Mennonite community. One of the discourses that I grew up with was bigoted, over-generalizations about low German speaking Mennonites who had settled in Mexico and had returned to Ontario to work as migrant workers on farms. Students from this community appeared in my previous research (Brubacher, 2013). Although I have never taught this group of children, even being a researcher and analyzing their experiences in school required me to do some self-reflective work and reading in order to unpack my biased, stereotypes and try to not let them influence my research.

However, what of teachers who are not from the community where they teach? The teachers may or may not come with these same preconceived, discriminatory ideas, but it is still their responsibility to address issues of racism and discrimination as they arise. Returning to Alexandra and Fatima and the other students at Thistle Meadow, racism and discrimination arose when the children described being targeted by an Indian (South Asian) lunchroom supervisor who was taking away their food because they were Syrian and Afghan. The children told me about this after their focus-group interview on the last day of my research. When I approached Alexandra with their concerns, her response was that the lunchroom supervisor was from the community, so this was a community issue, not a school one. This raises questions as to whether teachers who are outsiders to a community are adequately able to address racism and discrimination within the school. Once again, the newcomers with emerging print literacy are treated with hatred and, in this case, are bullied by their own community without recourse from the school.

7.6 Shyness
To finish, another student identified theme from the focus group interviews came from the Tibetan students at Smokey Glen: shyness. I met with a group of three Tibetan students over lunch. During the focus group interview, the children switched back and forth between English and Tibetan. I was not able to find a Tibetan translator, so parts of the data are missing. However, a theme that the students identified and talked about at some length was shyness and videos. This extract is in relation to how the Sonam perceived Rabten in his *Flipgrid* videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brubacher</th>
<th>6:52</th>
<th>Okay. Why do you think Tenzin felt shy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sonam</td>
<td>6:55</td>
<td>Like his face was a little bit nervous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>6:58</td>
<td>But why do you think he was, he was feeling scared and nervous?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonam</td>
<td>7:02</td>
<td>… Because like, he was making a video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>7:09</td>
<td>And making a video makes you shy and nervous. (Sonam nods head). Yeah. Is there any other reasons he might have felt shy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonam</td>
<td>7:18</td>
<td>Come here. Maybe he was shy because like other people might see it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>7:26</td>
<td>Do you think it matters what language it is in? Do you think it’s a video with like Tibetan he would feel more or less shy? (Sonam shaking head.) No, okay. And ummm So what is making him feel shy about the video? That other people might see it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonam</td>
<td>7:47</td>
<td>Like. The video, everyone will see the video and like maybe like we will see it and the whole school see it. Then they’ll be shy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Smokey Glen, Focus Group Interview)

Sonam perceives that Rabten felt shy and is concerned that other people or even the whole school may see the video. Like Sonam, I described Rabten as being shy in my field notes when I suggested that he speak in Tibetan or Hindi during one of his *Flipgrid* videos. He covered his face and was shy. Also, at the beginning of the research process when Rabten was just starting to get to know me I actually stopped an activity because he expressed not wanting to move forward.

On our first day together, I introduced Rabten to *Flipgrid* and showed him the video prompt for what is important to you. I showed him pictures of my son. I then asked him what he loved and he said his mother. In English, he said “I love my mother Tenzen ….” I asked him if he would let me video record him talking about how he loves his mother.
He was too shy, so I told him that I would record him later. (Fieldnotes at Smokey Glenn, February 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2019)

This concern about others seeing videos was reiterated by Aashi throughout the research process. She would orally assent to do her \textit{Flipgrid} video with me on the condition that I did not show the video to other students. I was not able to discover why these Grade 4 students were so concerned about other people seeing their videos. I do not know if it had to do with the English or if there was a religious or cultural reason component of which I was unaware. To provide some context, one of the video prompts was done with Sonam and Aashi’s entire class. The classroom teacher then showed the whole class some other students’ videos.

And what of this concept of shyness. How does it connect to the literature? Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) point to a range of literature that has found shame and shyness towards learning a second language are often encountered in Asian countries. For example, Doyon’s (2000) research found that many of his Japanese students learning English describe themselves as shy and that this shyness is deeply entwined with shame. In these cases, it is the shame of not performing a white European style of English that brings on this shyness. Outside of the area of second language education, Adams et al. (2007), in their paper on informed consent with Tibetan participants in medical research were told that some women chose not to participate in research out of ‘shyness’. With those Tibetan women who had chosen to consent to research, having an all-male research team led to greater rates of shyness. In her editorial, Yankey (2017), who identifies as a Tibetan woman, states that being shy and quiet are of high importance in her experience of Tibetan culture, especially for women. She goes on to describe how this affected her in school stating that she was too shy to speak to her teacher and raise her hand. In general, the level of shyness discussed here was not found in my data. All the students felt comfortable speaking to their teachers. In fact, Peter, Aashi’s homeroom teacher, even complained to me that she was constantly asking questions and that he could not support her learning to the level that she wanted. However, Aashi rarely participated in whole class discussions. In general, these two perspectives on shyness, one being situated in the shame of speaking English and the other being culturally situated and gendered, offer us two possible explanations of why the students may have identified shyness as a theme in their videos.
However, this shyness about watching videos was not completely situated with the Tibetan students. At another research site, Valley Meadow, during his focus group interview Balinte, a Hungarian speaking student, describes his friend as being both shy and happy in his videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brubacher</th>
<th>1:08</th>
<th>Okay. And why do you think, what emotion does he have for videos then?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>He was kind of shy and happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Okay. And. What made you think he was happy? (nonparticipant speaking in the hallway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>1:21</td>
<td>Because he was laughing when he said something. He was keep laughing when he said something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>1:29</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>And. I saw it on his face when he was shy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>1:40</td>
<td>Where do you feel, when you feel happy, where do you feel it in your body?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>Usually it’s on my face and it’s almost all around my body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>1:52</td>
<td>Okay. Why do you think Hunor felt shy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>1:56</td>
<td>Because I think that was his second or third video and he’s not used to it yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brubacher</td>
<td>2:03</td>
<td>So you think he was shy, not because of the words he was saying but just because he was creating a video?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinte</td>
<td>2:07</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Valley Forest, Focus Group Interview)

Balinte offers us a different explanation for shyness than proposed by Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) who equate shame and shyness with second language learning. He was not used to filming the videos yet. One of his classmates, José, also chose to only have voice recorded and not his face. As students learning a new language may have additional shame, as observed by Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019), there is an additional imperative to address any issues or concerns the students raise and be responsive to the students’ needs.
7.5 Conclusion

The emotions listed here are just some of those the children and teachers identified as being associated with their identities. The most pervasive identity the children associated with themselves was love of family and friends. Some of the children also pointed out shyness as a key component of their experiences making videos as well as finding safety in religious artefacts. These emotions identified by the students can inform how teachers program for newcomers with emerging print literacy. Instead of focusing on having children perform a love for their new country, teachers could work with the children in recognizing inequities in their school and in larger Canadian society: access to food, racism, and English-only spaces. Finally, teachers shaped the students’ identities with trauma and, at times, allowed their love for their own nations to marginalize students through stereotypes. Searching for ways to integrate new practices into their classrooms and unpacking their own biases could work towards enhancing the experiences of their students. Whether we are focusing on a racialized, familial, socio-economic or mental health identity, incorporating the students’ perspectives into how they are understood is imperative.
Chapter 8 Conclusions

8.1 Outline of the chapter

In this chapter, I begin by reviewing my central argument, then look at the limitations of the study. I then delve into the methodological, theoretical, pedagogical and policy implications of this work. Finally, I look at areas for future research.

8.2 Review of purpose of the study

One of the central arguments of this research is that emotion and social hierarchy are interconnected. Following Ahmed’s (2004) ideas of emotions shaping our very understanding of what something is, this research has shown how certain emotions get associated with newcomers with emerging print literacy and how the students in turn associate emotions with their literacy practices and identities. Print literacy became a “happy object” (Ahmed, 2014) to which the children attached much desire. Emotions also get attached to the bodies that newcomers with emerging print literacies inhabit, especially their racialized bodies. These emotions reveal how systemic problems, such as programs focusing solely on print literacy in English, can work to further marginalize the students. By not bringing students’ existing literacies, such as digital literacies, and their plurilingualism into their learning, the children begin to desire literacy practices that are at odds with their previous experiences. Moreover, the students learn to perform a love for a safe Canada which ignores the racism and colonialism present in this country. In this research, the children and teachers revealed how schools and society place value on certain literacy practices and identities, which was shown through how their bodies moved towards those objects of desire.

Another purpose of this study was to work directly with the students as co-researchers to understand how society and schools position them socially through these emotions. The students were able to communicate how they understood the relationship between emotions, their identities and literacy practices through focus group discussions where they analyzed each other’s work for emotion. The primary focus for this study was on the students; however, the teacher’s provided great insights into professional development, systemic problems, and varying translanguaging stances. The teachers also provided a contrast between how the students saw themselves and how educators saw them, which revealed discrepancies in thinking about who the
students were positioned as, and, hence, how to educate them. As an experienced teacher, I felt that I was uniquely positioned to work with the children as a co-researcher and collaborate with the teachers. Also, refugee children, in general, are an often researched group. By including the students in the research process, I was able to research with them. These focus group interviews often revealed themes that surprised me and at other times confirmed what I had seen. By allowing the research to begin with and often having the student-identified themes frame a chapter or section of a chapter, the writing and analysis often delved deeper into themes that I may not have noticed, or even focused on, had the students not participated as co-researchers. This adds validity to the research in that the children are telling researchers and educators what they want and how they see themselves.

The understanding of the data through emotion was then combined with translanguaging theory (García & Wei, 2014). In this way, languages were thought of as the students’ entire linguistic repertoire in that they were interconnected and part of their literacy practices. This moved us away from understanding languages as attached to nation-states that hide language variations, or as part of colonial practices, for example. With translanguaging, the teacher leverages the classroom’s language *corrientes*, as produced by the students. By incorporating translanguaging, I brought a more holistic way of teaching plurilingual students where teachers’ translanguaging stances were examined and how this reflected both in their pedagogy and what emotions the students in their classroom then attached to their literacy practices and identities.

This study has also proposed a more holistic way of understanding newcomers with emerging print literacy by moving away from notions of limited of interrupted schooling and instead focusing on assets such as family and language. Drawing on Hall’s (1996) theories on identity, this research understands identity as multi-dimensional and socially positioned. A range of studies have already found that newcomers with emerging print literacy are not always having positive experiences in Canadian schools and in some cases have experienced racism (Kanu, 2008; Montero et al., 2012; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stewart, 2011). Children come into being newcomers with emerging print literacy for a plethora of reasons. Some of them have experienced war, others racism and systemic barriers to education and others poverty. Through social positioning theory, this research looked at the commonalities in how the children identified across the three different case studies.
8.3 Limitations of the study

An important limitation in this study was my inability to understand parts of the children’s linguistic repertoire. This was particularly apparent during the focus group interviews. In retrospect, it would have been useful for me to bring along a Spanish translator to José and Luis’s focus group interview. I was very limited in my ability to communicate with them effectively. During the class-based research, I think it was important for me to research in a situation authentically where I as the researcher or teacher could not speak large parts of the children’s linguistic repertoire, in order to combat the notion that if the teacher cannot speak the children’s languages, then the children’s language should not be used in the classroom. However, for the focus group interviews this was not true and could have added to the depth of our ability to converse. Moreover, this study was limited by my inability to find an affordable Tibetan translator. I was also concerned about the anonymity of my Tibetan student participants, as the Tibetan community in Ontario is a small one, and there was a high chance that my translator may have known the student participants. Therefore, some of the data is missing and untranslated. In these ways, not being able to speak Tibetan or Spanish effectively limited this study.

Although completing three case studies in different contexts added to the diversity of student participants and allowed me to compare different approaches and models for teaching newcomers with emerging print literacy, having one ethnographic case study where I worked with a class for at least half the school year would have allowed me to go deeper into the students’ emotions, literacy practices and identities. There were times when analyzing the data from this research that I was left with further questions. I did not always know the student participants well enough to answer them. For example, in Hunor’s focus group interview, he talks about liking his writing and feeling encouraged by his teacher. I want to know more about how the teacher encouraged him. Having more time to complete more focus group interviews would have fleshed out some of the data into greater depth. However, this is a lot to ask of one class, teacher, and group of students. Finding a teacher who would accept this type of long-term research project could be challenging.

At the initiation of this project I had hoped to catch a glimpse of the variation of who newcomers with emerging print literacy are. This included children from both English-speaking countries and countries where English was not predominant, children of refugee backgrounds
and children from families of migrant workers and, finally, children excluded from school due to ableism. Some of these different categories of children are part of this study; however, all the students come from countries where English is not predominant. I draw attention to this, as it continues to be an under-researched area. For example, Nero & Steven’s (2018) research examines the experiences of Jamaican Creole (JC) speaking students in Jamaican schools. They find that JC speakers are ostracized in school, experience “sharp social stratification,” (p. 14), come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and are often streamed into school programs where they are given lower-level academic tasks. There is little research on this group of students and their experiences in Canadian or American elementary schools. I would have liked to have had students of Caribbean background included in this study; however, based on my own experiences as a teacher and the levels of anti-black racism in this country (James, 2019), I fear that many of these English-speaking students are being placed into lower-level special education classes without culturally sustaining resources. Moreover, as Motha (2014) points out speaking a language variety such as JC places English speaking Caribbean students in a hierarchy of languages that is colonial and racist. In this way, this research is limited by its lack of inclusion of English speaking youth with Caribbean backgrounds.

As both a teacher and researcher, I am concerned that this group of students, many who could be racialized as Black, are not present in this research to share their experiences and views. Previously, I have found that the Ontario Ministry of Education documents refer to English language learners as including speakers of a *variety of English* (Brubacher, 2019). While analyzing these documents, I found that profiles of newcomers with emerging print literacy from Grenada, for example, were discussed without reference to the racism the children may experience in schools or even acknowledging that the children are racialized. I am concerned that there is a lack of leadership and professional development to guide teachers in working with this group of students; not having the English-speaking newcomer perspective here just adds to that hole. Researchers such as James (2019) have begun to look at the experiences of Black males in middle schools in the Greater Toronto Area. They find that teachers often position Black boys as underperformers, athletes, and troublemakers. However, the youth in their study were not newcomers with emerging print literacy. Nero (2017), who has researched extensively with adult newcomers in the United States, writes extensively about how English vernaculars are positioned
in the classroom. She finds that to engage in vernacular English in the classroom is to disrupt the narrative that it is essentially a problem in school. Finding research at the intersection of race, newcomer, and literacy is a challenge. Although there is a burgeoning field in applied linguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Motha, 2014), the experiences of racialized English-speaking newcomers are not necessarily considered. In these ways, I had hoped to add to this research by including the students’ perspectives on their own literacy practices and identities.

8.4 Implications

In the following section, I delve into the implications of this study. I begin by examining how my methodology connects to engaging the children as co-researchers and draw upon Paris’ (2011) humanizing methodological design as well as an analysis of some of my data collection tools. I then discuss how this research connects to and adds to the theories of translanguaging, emotion and identity. I then look at a range of pedagogical implications and connect this back to policy.

8.4.1 Methodology

Working with the children as a co-researcher was probably the most important part of my methodology. When the children introduced the theme of love of family and friends, it felt a little obvious and I was unsure of the scholarly significance. I had to sit with this theme for a long time. It was easy to find evidence in the data. Familial love was everywhere, but I did not know if I would have noticed it, as it was almost like the air we breathe, invisible but obvious. I had to think whether this was unusual. Would not any child of that age talk about loving their family a lot? But it was on a such a deep and pervasive level. The children brought up a theme I may have missed. Moreover, this was a theme that was important to them. Engaging the children as co-researchers added much to this research and my analysis. In this way, we need to rethink how we approach researching on children especially those from vulnerable populations. Through this research, we can see the importance of including children as intellectual equals when working with those who are defined as illiterate and not intelligent (Wiley, 1996). When given the right supports, the children, even if they did not know how to read and write, were able to provide important insights on themes they identified in the research.
Other researchers are beginning to find the benefits of engaging children as co-researchers. Luchtenberg et al.’s (2020) research, a large-scale medical study, found that engaging children as co-researchers led to a more critical examination of the adult researchers’ own work. Moreover, Hakomäki (2013), whose research involved storytelling around music therapy with a single child, found that engaging a child who has experienced trauma in co-research can improve their sense of belonging, allows them to make emotional connections, and is suitable for investigating other children’s experiences. It is difficult for me to know if engaging the children as co-researchers improved their sense of belonging. I completed these focus-group discussions at the end of my time with the children. However, at Thistle Meadow where I had to return several times after one focus group interview, this is when the children started opening up to me about their personal concerns of marginalization and racism in the school. Although I would not leap to the conclusion that the research improved their sense of belonging, it did provide a space where the children were comfortable being open with me. It also clearly allowed them to make emotional connections and drove me to think differently about the data. In these ways, there is some alignment between this research and previous research on engaging children as co-researchers. However, my research, which was generally completed in English, was done with plurilingual children, some of whom did not know very much English and were learning to read and write for the first time as well. Therefore, co-researching with children can be done not only with privileged monolingual children, but also with plurilingual, racialized children, and even extended to include those who do not know English and have had little exposure to print literacy.

The co-researching process also allowed the children to push back and to cross examine me. When the children at Thistle Meadow introduced the theme of love during our first focus group interview, we ended up having a deeper discussion about our own families. The children started pushing me to tell them more about my own family. They wanted to know why my son did not have a father and were very concerned about us. It was a slightly uncomfortable moment for me, as they were pushing for information that I did not feel comfortable explaining. I reassured them that my son and I were fine and very happy. However, in that moment, they were the researchers searching for answers about my family and well-being. Giving the children authority over the data prompted them to start analyzing other aspects of their lives and even
adults and researchers. Despite this, we as researchers need to feel comfortable setting our own boundaries. Even if the children push for information, as in this case, we do not have to reveal everything.

My role at the school sites was one of both an insider and an outsider. I gained access to these school sites through the many contacts I had built up during my twenty years of teaching. I entered the school sites as a researcher, but also as someone who was known to be a teacher. I worked with the teachers supporting them with their programs and teaching the children along with them. At times I had to push, like when I wanted to do more translanguaging in classrooms, for example. My role as a researcher and not as another teacher in the classroom became apparent to the teacher participants at times. With the children, there was a connection with me as another volunteer or teacher in their classrooms. It was not until the end of my case study when the children worked with me as co-researchers that this relationship changed. I was very purposeful to try and not take on a teacher’s voice during the focus group interviews and try not to control the students’ behaviour. At Thistle Meadow I felt a deeper connection with the students immediately. There was a novelty in the students being asked their opinion, but they also felt safe to bring their concerns to me like having their cookies and food taken away in the school lunchroom. In these ways, my role as a researcher moving from insider to outsider (Paris, 2011) was constantly changing and developing. Reflecting on this, in the future, it would be valuable to engage the students as co-researchers earlier in the research and at different points not to overwhelm them, but to further deepen those connections early on. To conclude, having the students work as co-researchers with me deepened by insider status with them in a way that my teacher identity did not. Moving forward when working with children as co-researchers, it would be important to start that process at the beginning of the research process.

Part of a humanizing methodological design (Paris, 2011) is to get to know the students before asking them to be part of the study. In this way, I spent at least one or two half days with the students letting them know about me and supporting them with their existing schoolwork before asking them to be part of this research. More would have been better. However, my ask was not a cold one. The students knew who I was. In my third case study, at Valley Forest, Balinte joined the research about halfway through. He was interested. He just kept forgetting his permission form. He knew me much better and saw me interacting with Hunor, one of his
friends, before becoming part of the study. In this way, I agree with Paris (2011) that getting to know your participants before asking them to be part of your research makes sense. As a researcher, you can prove to your students that you do care about them and their dignity before they are invited to join the larger research project. However, I wonder if this could be done too much. For example, it feels a little manipulative to spend a month at the school developing relationships with the staff and students only for the purpose of having them consent to my research. People may become attached to you on an interpersonal level when your role as a researcher is not clear from the beginning.

Some of the tools I chose for this study included well-researched modes for working with plurilingual students and those with refugee backgrounds. The *Where I Am From* poems are a snapshot of the students’ lives and priorities. Emert’s (2013) use of George Ella Lyon’s poem *Where I Am From* with refugee youth in a summer program that promotes academic confidence; however, their poems were generally in English only. Similarly, Ada et al. (2004) work with students to have them become writers along with teachers in the classroom. Some of their poetry follows the *Where I Am From* structure but incorporates a plurilingual approach that combines different languages. Following Ada et al.’s (2004) approach to writing the poems, I used this poem structure to access who these students were from their own perspectives. In general, the poems were not written in detail but still tell us a lot about these students and their lived experiences. In many ways, the children’s interests and life experiences are quite divergent. Hunor’s poem included different flowers, whereas Karam focused more on biking and movement. This was probably partly reflective of where they lived—Hunor lived close to a large park and valley and Karam lived in a dense urban area—but also of their personal interests. In this case, however, my research was not only about incorporating poetry into the children’s writing, but also how to use the *Where I Am From* poetry structure to explore who the students were. I provided a window into their identities from their own perspective. These poems are a great tool for this, as they allow you to delve more deeply into the constantly changing social positions the children inhabit, as opposed to a static understanding of where the children have come from and their culture.

The children worked with me in collecting data through the *Literacy profiles*. Instead of having the children do an extended piece of writing, the *Literacy Portrait* prompts allowed me
gain insight into their literacy practices generally through oral communication. I had hoped to get more information about their previous education, both formal and informal, through some of the prompts. However, only a few of the children wanted to respond to these questions. Instead, there was a preference for talking about video games and media. Moving forward, I would suggest incorporating more prompts on these topics. However, the few students who did respond to the previous schooling prompts provided interesting data. Finding ways to get the children to talk more about these topics would have added a lot to the data. One implication could be that the children just do not want to talk about their previous schooling experiences.

The use of Flipgrid as a research tool for collecting data with younger children proved to be both difficult at times, due to lack of technological access, but also engaging for the students. I had hoped that using this application would give the children more freedom to work with each other collaboratively. In two of my research sites, this was not feasible, as there were not any devices with Flipgrid on them. I had to record all the videos with the children on my phone. At the third site, the adult volunteers and teachers in the room allowed students to use their personal devices and data to access the application. In this situation, the comments features and independence the application allowed proved to be fruitful. As the students gained more confidence using Flipgrid on their own, I started to hear much more Arabic and get responses to prompts that were not always positive of their experiences in Canada and schools especially. In this way, there was more freedom to be honest away from the authority of adults. This was especially true in the comments feature. This research shows how sometimes it is not the main function of an application but peripheral features that allow us to gather some of the most interesting data. The comment section of Flipgrid was where the most Arabic was heard, as seen in Section 7.3 on the topic of trauma and safety. These peripheral spaces were where the students felt safe using Arabic.

Flipgrid proved to be very useful during the focus group interviews where the students engaged each other as co-researchers. Although recording videos on Flipgrid was challenging, accessing it to watch videos was easier because the app did not have to be downloaded onto tablets. We could easily watch each other’s videos, but to record you had to be on the app not on the web when using a tablet. This meant that during the focus group interviews, the children could watch each other’s videos. I had originally thought the children would both watch each
other’s Flipgrid videos and examine each other’s written work, but they were just interested in the videos. Likewise, Luchtenberg et al. (2020) have found videos make it easier for children to understand the data when engaging them as co-researchers. In this way, Flipgrid is a great application for engaging children as co-researchers, as it is video based. However, as our Tibetan students communicated during their focus group interview, there is some shyness associated with producing videos. Whether it be reasons of culture, religion, personality, or language ability, it is important to provide options and show respect to student requests when it comes to producing videos. Moving forward, we need to think about how to bring these specific concerns into capturing video data with children.

Another aspect of my work with the children as co-researchers that made the process easier was providing them with the Body Mapping (Appendix N) handout. Lys et al. (2018) have found body mapping to be useful in supporting self-reflection and processing difficult emotions as well as reducing verbal communication barriers. Although these body maps did not become part of my analysis, they were an important scaffolding exercise that allowed the students to reflect on the themes they had identified before engaging in the discussion. For clarification, another type of body map was used for the Linguistic Portrait, which is different from the body maps I describe here. These body maps were put in place to scaffold student participation in the focus group interviews. Providing a piece such as this is important in preparing the students to engage as co-researchers. It allowed them to ground their thoughts through a predominantly visual means that involved color and the writing of one word for their emotional theme. Also, having the students think about the emotion in both English and other aspects of the linguistic repertoire, meant that they were accessing different aspects of their schema when completing this activity. Maybe as an experienced teacher this is obvious. Children need some type of organizer to gather their thoughts before engaging in writing or discussions. But for researchers engaging children as co-researchers, I think it’s important to point out how preparing the students for the research process through art, drawing or even a space to brainstorm ideas can lead to richer discussions. Here is an example of Serena’s body map:
It was Serena who told me that all the answers for the focus group interview were going to be the same: love. Serena took the time to write the word love in English and Pashto after watching Karam’s video on *What’s Important to You*. She then drew what love felt like to her on the body map choosing colors that represented love as well. For future research with plurilingual children who are in the process of learning about print literacy, it is important to think about how to prepare them for the co-researching process and provide them with visual supports to gather their ideas.

**8.4.2 Theoretical**

Having a translanguaging stance (García et al., 2017) is a central component to being able to implement a translanguaging pedagogy in any classroom. Although all my teacher participants had not fully implemented translanguaging into their classrooms, the ones with more translanguaging had student participants who associated more positive feelings towards their
print literacy even when it was in English. Hunor, who was Gina’s student, told us that he liked writing; whereas Karo, who was Alexandra’s student, felt a great deal of anger about writing. Building on this notion, I am eager to know how students would view their literacy practices in a classroom that had fully embraced translanguaging. Regardless, this research adds to the importance of including a translanguaging pedagogy into teaching newcomers with emerging print literacy. I think this is important because I have often heard the rationale that the students do not know how to write in any language, so the written forms of their existing linguistic repertoire would only add frustration to their programming. However, this idea not only presumes that written English is the goal and that print literacy is not valuable in any other language, but also that the students’ languages are not a valuable resource to their education. There is an erasure of who they were before entering English language schooling. Furthermore, although emotions are political, I think most teachers, even if they are not politically minded, or not primarily concerned with equity or language rights, care about how their students’ feel. I cannot imagine how one could argue that an English-only approach that causes print literacy humiliation and anger could be preferential to a classroom with translanguaging. In this way, bringing emotion into our understanding of translanguaging adds further incentive for teachers in developing a translanguaging stance.

Another reason that educators give for not taking up translanguaging in their classroom is that they do not know the children’s languages. However, Gina shows us how we can at least begin to bring translanguaging into the classroom in a plurilingual space. Gina freely translanguaged, overtly going back and forth between Greek and English with other colleagues and students of Greek background. The students sat in same language groups so that they could translanguage with each other to complete their classwork. The teacher gives up some authority as the students learn to collaborate with each other in resolving conflict, building friendship, and supporting each other academically. Likewise, Van Viegen (2020) has found that translanguaging can be an excellent resource for learning with youth with refugee backgrounds. In Gina’s classroom, the students relied on each other asking questions and motivating each other to complete their work. This giving up of authority was not readily apparent in the children’s writing, however. In general, except for a few word walls and bilingual picture books, most of the children’s print literacy was done in English only. Although the children were
plurilingual, they tended to be only writers of English. This is significant as it highlights how schools continue to be places that only embrace English for academic purposes relegating the rest of the children’s linguistic repertoire to non-academic purposes. Through this relegation, schools continue to communicate to students that the rest of their literacy practices are not academic and, therefore, not what is important in schools. Translanguaging is important both in the English medium classroom with plurilingual children as well as in bilingual education. Schools establish and enforce that academic knowledge is written in English only. Even if we use students’ plurilingualism to get there, the way this knowledge must be presented in through English only. There is something about print that makes the stakes for which language is written even higher. While we might tolerate plurilingualism orally, academic written knowledge only matters in one language: English.

Despite this erasure of students’ linguistic repertoires when it came to academics, researching with the children using a translanguaging approach proved to be fruitful. Translanguaging led to moments where the students’ knowledge became the authority in the classroom. The children relied on each other, collaborating and working in groups to figure out how to write words using different aspects of their linguistic repertoire. Working with and through texts using only one named language proved to be counter-productive and even destructive at times with children turning on each other in reaction to the shame they felt towards their own print literacy. In the classroom, with an English-only policy, as the children became more and more comfortable with me and my request that they use more than English in the classroom throughout the case study, the strict rehearsed approach to teacher-corrected English usage began to erode. I began to hear and see Arabic more often and the laughter that accompanied its usage. In these ways, translanguaging highlights students’ knowledge and experiences making them the experts in the classroom as they delve more deeply into abstract concepts. Researchers such as Seltzer (2019) are talking back to this erasure of students’ plurilingualism when it comes to academic work. My research adds to this growing body of literature by showing how students can rely on each other and incorporate languages other than English into their emerging print literacy.

The children in this research often did not differentiate between home and school languages. We should stop doing this as well. Schools and teachers need to stop these archaic
practices of only allowing English in their classrooms. Numerous research studies have continually shown the importance of incorporating plurilingualism into children’s learning (Cummins, 2000; García, 2009). However, despite this, colonial practices of enforcing English only in classrooms and not incorporating students’ plurilingualism continue to prevail. Through this research, we can see the traumatizing impact this type of teaching can have on children. If we really want to move towards trauma-informed teaching practices, students’ entire linguistic repertoire needs to be at the center. When I walked the halls of Thistle Meadow and looked at its bulletin boards, I saw a school that was working towards being culturally responsive and including Indigenous voices. However, only English could be found anywhere in the hallways except a small paper sized sheet of school rules written in Urdu and Arabic. Schools need to become places that focus on authentic literacy practices and for plurilingual children this includes more than just English.

There has been much debate over different approaches to understanding language and what new understandings of translanguaging add to the literature (Cummins, 2020; García & Otheguy, 2020; Jørgensen, 2008; King & Bigelow, 2020). This research shows how freeing newcomers with emerging print literacy from the confines of named languages and enabling them to freely draw from different aspects of their linguistic repertoires to communicate and express their ideas, led to more collaboration between students where they engaged each other as experts and a playfulness with language where their writing was reflective of their existing literacy practices. As the children learn more and more about print literacy, there may come a point where learning about distinct languages is important. I am still uncertain of this piece, as it was not part of my research. This does not mean that children should only be taught in English, but that they continue to attend school using their entire linguistic repertoire while learning the distinction between languages and how to use them following grammatical structures. This research adds to the translanguaging debate, as it shows validity to the idea of moving away from named languages with newcomers with emerging print literacy.

As well as translanguaging, this study embraced theories on emotions (Ahmed, 2004). Like Anwaruddin (2016), I found that children’s learning is impacted by their emotions and that an understanding of how those emotions are politically situated can help reveal inequities in the education system. Regardless of the classroom, learning about print literacy was filled with much
desire. The children wanted to learn to read and write and could be seen continually asking teachers how to spell words and erasing and rewriting their work at nauseum. Ahmed (2004) tells us that moving towards an object of love, in this case print literacy in English, can only be sustained by our inability to love our existing print literacy practices. Building on the notion of linguistic shame (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2019), this study has shown how with newcomers with emerging print literacy, this shame becomes attached to reading and writing. In highly prescriptive classrooms with English-only policies where children are expected to reproduce written language in a way that reflects that teacher’s authority, the children ultimately turn this shame on each other attempting to humiliate their peers about their ability to read and write. Through this research, I have developed the concept of print literacy humiliation. In this case, it is the children’s print literacy, even more than linguistics, that causes deep shame and leads them to actively humiliate each other.

Many emotions were associated with the children with emerging print literacy. Whether that be love or shyness, as was the case with the children or trauma as was the case with two teachers, the children elicited many strong emotions and feelings. Emotions were something the children were familiar with, so having them engage in discussions about emotion during their co-researching made a complex process very accessible. Sometimes the children reproduced discourses on the importance of learning English and finding Canada to be a safe country. The research also revealed complex types of discrimination and racism. In response, to the ever-changing immigration patterns in Britain, Vertovec (2007) finds that “policy-makers and public service practitioners continuously face the task of refashioning their tools in order to be most effective in the light of changing circumstances” (p. 1047). The children in this study live at the intersection of many different identities whether that be family member, plurilingual, lower socio-economic status, regional immigrant, English-only writers, or avid video-game players, the complexity of their lives does not lend itself to easy answers when it comes to schooling. There is a richness and depth to their identities which must be addressed. It is important that an asset lens is used when examining these identities and emotions. Even in a polite country such as Canada, there were moments of slippage into hatred when it came to the newcomers with emerging print literacy suggesting that this group of children are vulnerable to hatred and racism.
Furthermore, the children have many varied identities and experiences. There appears to be consistently high levels of regional migration within this group of students. Through this regional migration, the children have been exposed to a range of cultural and linguistic experiences making them truly plurilingual and sophisticated consumers of various cultural products. They have much knowledge and experience to bring to the classroom. This contrasts with deficit thinking that sees the children as limited in their schooling. During their respective regional migration, they may have experienced schooling such as Karam, who recounts having negative experiences of school in Jordan or some of the Tibetan students who attended school in India. There is an increased sense of vulnerability during this time of migration, but through this regional migration, they children are also bring assets and new knowledge to their learning. This disrupts the idea that regional migration is a completely negative experience.

Another intersection of identity at which these children sit is race. Many of the children in this study are racialized in the Canadian context. With the one student there was ambiguity in his skin tone, which led to discussion about his racialization as Roma. In this way, skin tone and racialization became synonymous with being a newcomer with emerging print literacy; when race was ambiguous, a teacher made it a topic of discussion. Hall (2006) tells us that all these forms of identity are historically and socially defined and not biological. Here, we see how teachers attempt to connect this socially constructed idea of being a newcomer with emerging print literacy with some biological notion of race. Being a newcomer and having emerging print literacy are only two aspects of the many different social positions that these children inhabit; however, these positions do bring many interesting and variable contributions to schools and the classroom. In general, however, despite the children’s racialization, the teachers never discussed racism with the children. There seems to be a lack of attention being paid to the discrimination children may face while living in Canada. Instead, the children reproduce this idea that Canada is safe despite the plethora of evidence (Dei, 2006; James, 2019) that systemic racism has existed and continues to happen in Canada. Moving forward, we need to address the racialization of newcomers with emerging print literacy.

The theoretical implications presented in this section are represented below through the addition of themes to the theoretical framework presented at the end of Chapter 2. The inner and outer circles for emotions have been removed and replaced by the actual emotions that the
students and teachers associated with the student-participants’ identities and literacy practices.

For the translanguaging and social positions circles, I have listed the themes below the titles that arose from the analysis of who newcomers with emerging print literacy are.

Figure 43 Additions to Theoretical Framework

8.4.3 Pedagogical implications

The children made it clear: what is important to them is family. There has been much written about finding community connections between schools and home (Georgis et al., 2014; Karsli-Calamak, 2018; Rah et al., 2009). Researchers such as Rah et al. (2009) have looked at solutions for making schools more accessible and welcoming to families. I would propose moving beyond the idea of having settlement workers present in school as interpreters and for
community outreach. Schools may want to think about having parents continually present in their buildings, especially with newcomers with emerging print literacy. Instead of placing parents in separate schools taking LINC classes, the parents could become an integral part of the classroom learning along with their children. Georgis et al. (2014) have found that parental engagement has to be meaningful for parents and not just the school; being able to socialize and learn along with their children can increase the incentive for parents to engage with schools. Moreover, siblings could continue to work together supporting each other’s literacy practices and learning, as we saw with José and Luis. The families have migrated through different regions together with the children often staying home. Findings suggest that building multigenerational families into the children’s learning would be the way to go. It is important to note that although the participants in this study labelled familial love as a common theme in their identities not all children have experienced family as being a place of love. Care and consideration should be taken into account in making their experiences integral to the class as well and being sensitive to different types of experiences with family.

Even when parents or younger siblings cannot be physically present such as during Covid, families could be incorporated as a topic into any subject area. However, even during Covid while children are learning online, parents could be utilized as an integral part of learning. Teachers can use the theme of families in their unit planning, for example, or could try to continually connect learning to what is happening in the children’s homes. Tatel–Suatengco and Florida (2020) found that bringing in household chores and family activities as well as faith and personal values were ways of incorporating family into literacy programming. This could also entail interviewing family members about their immigration experiences as part of a social studies project or creating information leaflets on how to care for younger children and support them with their schooling. Teachers and students could take the time to write letters or short messages like you would on WhatsApp to grandparents and other family members living in countries back home. The possibilities are endless and clearly important to the children.

It should come of no surprise to educators to learn that the children loved video games. Most children do. However, children who have been at home for long periods of time missing schooling have probably played a lot more video games. This is something that can be observed even now during Covid lockdowns: kids are playing a great deal of video games. Vuorre et al.
(2021) have found that there has been an enormous increase in the amount of video game playing during Covid and that multi-player games where socialization had increased the most. Likewise, both Karam and Hunor discussed playing multi-player shooting games throughout the case studies. Karam was able to use Arabic to chat with other players. Finding ways to bring these games into the classroom not only increases engagement with literacy programming but also relevance. Although shooting games, may not be allowed in schools, building games such as Minecraft often are. Moreover, games like Fortnite can be written and talked about as part of the children’s literacy programming even if they cannot be played during class.

Teaching the children how to read and write is very important and is not to be neglected. Consistent daily reading programs are essential. In Peter’s mainstream Grade 4 classroom, the children participated along with the rest of the class reading the class novel. In Alexandra’s specialized class for newcomers with emerging print literacy, the children read guided reading books. In both cases, the books were in English and often not appropriate to the students’ experiences. Finding age-appropriate, relevant books that are readable can be a challenge. However, the children also gave us some solutions to these problems. They love reading graphic novels and books with lots of pictures. Researchers such as Montero et al. (2014) have also found that non-fiction books can often be more culturally relevant and age appropriate. In Ontario, ERGO has published a series of student-created visual texts that can be printed off and used in classrooms. These books come with lots of pictures and have PM benchmarks attached.

Finally, incorporating the wordless picture book *Here I Am* into learning about and discussing emotion proved to be a useful tool. The book easily leant itself to making connections and understanding point of view. Grolig et al. (2020) have found picture books to be an excellent resource in getting children to practice inferring. The children in this research were able to analyze the emotions they saw present in the book, as the main character transitioned to a new country where they did not know the language missing old friends and community. Not only this, but the children also discussed enjoying reading graphic novels or texts with lots of pictures. The use of wordless picture books was used not only as a scaffold to prepare the students to analyze emotions during the focus group interview but also were an essential part of an activity that involved writing about emotions. In this way, the wordless picture book served as an excellent resource in developing different reading strategies and to get them talking about emotion.
Teachers are beginning to understand the importance of bringing trauma-informed practices into the classroom (Maynard et al., 2019). Understanding our students as having experienced past traumas is important and equally so are the present traumas the children might be experiencing like a lack of access to food and housing, racism, and erasure of their languages. Alexandra showed us some great examples of how-to bring trauma-informed practices into the classroom. This included centering the children in their bodies and creating quiet spaces of retreat when feeling overwhelmed by emotions. Doing so from an anti-racist perspective could have greatly enhanced her pedagogical practices. This could include having the newcomers with print literacy take on leadership positions in the school that work towards dismantling English-only policies and addressing and challenging racist stereotypes about them. Having food constantly available, such as was the case in Gina’s classroom, could also be beneficial.

Through the children’s narratives we could see the many rich experiences they have had through their regional migration. Although this migration might have been hard at times, it has created a group of cosmopolitan youth who can pull from a range of languages and cultural experiences. Finding ways to move away from not just English-only but also this static notion that there is a singular home language and a separate school language is important. The children may or may not have attended schools in the past, but they have many complex and interesting experiences to draw upon. Their identities are multi-dimensional changing across different spaces and time. For example, the Tibetan students are not just Tibetan, but have also lived in India and learned how to speak Hindi another aspect of their plurilingual identities that can be drawn upon as an asset in the classroom. These experiences can provide excellent pedagogical resources in geography, for example. There are also the varied exposures to different cultures that the children can bring to the arts through dance, music, and visual arts. In language class, the children’s migration can become part of auto-biographical narratives about their journeys to Canada.

Finally, a key component of this research was translanguaging. Researchers are beginning to examine how a translanguaging pedagogy can be brought into the classroom (Seltzer, 2019; Van Viegen, 2020). Likewise, this research has looked at how to bring different aspects of the children’s linguistic repertoire into the classroom. This is not always easy when the children have not been taught to read and write is any aspect of their repertoire. However,
providing opportunities for the children to collaborate and discuss together how to write words in languages other than English during class time created classroom experiences where the children’s knowledge and previous experiences were incorporated in a culturally sustaining way. Moreover, written language did not have to be something foreign, written in a new language outside of themselves. Instead print literacy incorporated their prior knowledge relying on themselves and each other as experts in their own writing. As well as the children’s written language, the comments section of Flipgrid allowed the students to break free from the teacher’s authority and use languages other than English, bringing laughter into their oral expression.

8.4.4 Policy

_Students with limited and/or interrupted prior schooling_ is a common term found in many policy documents (Hos, 2020; OME, 2007). This research has moved away from that terminology by describing the students in terms of areas of growth within the education system: emerging print literacy. As can be seen through the children’s analysis of the data and written metaphors and poetry, they are not limited in their thinking and writing. Instead, they understand themselves as being framed by love and connectedness with friends and family. Moreover, the children do not see themselves as people who need to be saved, but instead find peace and safety in their religious artefacts, for example. The children have many rich and complex experiences to bring to the classroom. If policy continues to frame them as limited, then teachers and schools are set up to do so as well. Moreover, the children need complex and rich tasks alongside accelerated programming for their reading and writing. They are very much capable of learning about metaphor and becoming critical researchers alongside learning to read and write.

One may wonder why creating this category of students in even necessary. Much of my professional experience of fifteen years working with newcomers in elementary schools has led me to believe it is. Newcomer children with emerging print literacy often have unique learning needs that are not always reflective of their immigration status. Without this understanding of the students, I fear that many of the children will be placed in special education classes. Moreover, their learning needs are often unique and not reflective of what classroom teachers have been taught to do in mainstream classrooms. While researching in my three school sites, there was a constant back and forth of who qualified to be part of my study. At Smokey Glen, where many of the children were integrated into Grade 4 classrooms, there appeared to be an abundance of
debate and discussion into whether a child would qualify for my research or was a special education student. One potential non-participant was pulled from her class and placed into a specialized program for children with learning disabilities before I could include her in my study. Elitsia, the ESL/ELD teacher at the school, was unsure as to why this had happened and was not included in the school-based discussion. At the other two school sites where the student participants were placed in specialized classes for ESL and ELD students, there was very little discussion about referring the students to special education classes. The apparent need to push large numbers of newcomers out of mainstream classrooms and into special education classes with children who have learning disabilities leads to an obvious and pressing question: Why?

As more and more school districts throughout North America move towards greater integration of all plurilingual students through different models (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010), it is important that the specific learning needs of newcomers with emerging print literacy are considered without sacrificing a perspective on the child as a whole human being. Newcomers with emerging print literacy have different prior experiences to draw on than newcomer plurilingual students who attended formal schooling consistently. This may be obvious, but the education system appears to need to label this group of students. Let’s remember that the children have learned much outside of school, be very close with their families and experienced regional migration. These are just some of their many experiences that need be drawn upon as assets in the classroom, as well as their digital literacies and plurilingualism. However, it must also not be forgotten that the children are still in the process of learning about print literacy, something it may be assumed that many newcomers already have extensive experiences with. Seeing the respective members of this group of youth as whole human being with rich experiences can help teachers add formal reading and literacy practices to their daily lives without stigmatizing why those practices are not there in the first place. The reason they do not yet read and write is not automatically or necessarily found is some kind of cognitive impairment, which the special education label implies.

There is much continued need in teacher education and specialized qualification courses for working with plurilingual students creating an opportunity for teachers to learn research-based approaches to educating newcomers with emerging print literacy. Not surprisingly, translanguaging was not the norm in many of the classrooms where I completed my research.
What was surprising to me was that one of the teachers, Alexandra, had an English-only policy in her classroom. In order to teach in a specialized classroom such as Alexandra’s, a teacher must have some additional qualifications in second-language acquisition. Regardless of the theoretical approach taken by the instructor for receiving these qualifications, understanding that an English-only policy is at best counter-productive and at worst discriminatory, should have been at the very least been something Alexandra would have learned. It is very concerning to me as both an educator and researcher that Alexandra did not understand this rudimentary aspect of language learning. She is someone who embraced bringing trauma-informed practices into her classroom, so she appears to be a teacher who is eager to bring new practices into her classrooms. This calls into question the content of her additional qualifications course that she needed to take in order to be qualified to teach this class of students. I wonder where Alexandra has learned to use English-only policies.

8.5 Future directions

One of the pieces that struck me was how much the students talked about video games and the importance the games played in their lives. Finding ways to bring video games into the children’s school literacy experiences could work towards making literacy programming more meaningful and engaging. This coincides with Sirin et al.’s (2018) research on Syrian youth living in Turkey. However, most of the children in this research focused on shooting games. Getting a shooting game approved by local school districts for use in classrooms may be near to impossible especially with the prevailing discourses around game like Fortnite (Schwartz, 2018). Marlatt (2020) has put together some ideas on how to incorporate Fortnite into a literacy program. I am going to try some of these myself as a language arts teacher in the coming year. Although the game may not be an approved application allowed in schools, having students build characters through the clothing, dance and movement choices found in Fortnite is a start and could build on the enormous amount of video game knowledge the students have developed during lock downs and on-line “learning”. Sirin et al.’s (2018) study brought together games such as Cerego, Alien Game, Code.org and Minecraft in order to examine what Syrian students could learn from these tools. Results found that children were rarely absent and highly satisfied as well as finding improvement in the areas of executive functioning, coding, Turkish language skills and hopelessness. They suggest using a “game-based, playful learning approach” (p. 15)
when working with refugee children. In these ways, a study on how to use shooting games such as Fortnite to promote literacies with newcomers with emerging print literacy could be interesting.

During my study, I found it interesting how laughter often accompanied the use of different aspects of students' language repertoire outside of English. When it comes of newcomers with emerging print literacy and children with refugee backgrounds in particular, there is much concern about trauma. Garrick (2008) writes about the extensive evidence that humor can diffuse stressful situations and how it can work as a healing tool in the therapeutic process. Bringing laughter into the children’s learning is surely a great way for teachers to help the children heal. In this way, it would be interesting to closely examine through observation the connection between laughter and translanguaging. This could be done quantitatively through a checklist that records every time laughter is heard and what language it being used. It could also be done through recorded observations that then analyzed qualitatively. Even thinking about my own data, it would be interesting to look at the moments when laughter could be heard and what language the children are using. During my focus group interview at Thistle Meadow, there was much laughter for example, as the children ate and translanguaged. The use of translanguaging in the classroom could then be used as a part of a culturally responsive trauma informed practice.

An ethnographic study incorporating translanguaging that took place over a full school year in one classroom with newcomers with emerging print literacy could be fruitful for developing different translanguaging strategies and providing a comprehensive guide for teachers on how to develop and implement a translanguaging stance for newcomers with emerging print literacy. I have found that many teacher resources presume that immigrant students already have print literacy knowledge in different aspects of their linguistic repertoire. In my experiences as an elementary school teacher, this is often not the case and with newcomers with emerging print literacy this is rarely the case. Going deeper into how to bring translanguaging into academic contexts when the children do not know how to read and write in anything but English is of high importance. This study has begun to scratch the surface of this process but a year-long ethnography with a teacher with a translanguaging stance could provide many richer ideas.
Talking about emotions with the newcomers with emerging print literacy while engaging them as co-researchers, proved to be an excellent strategy for getting at the students’ perspectives and highlighting their knowledge. Moving forward, I would recommend that children in vulnerable, marginalized groups always be included as co-researchers. I think we have had lots of research on these groups of children. Let’s start including the children consistently in identifying themes and inequities, so that we can go deeper ourselves as researchers. As emotions were a major component of this research, analyzing the data in this way was accessible to these young children. They showed that when given tasks that require critical and deep thought, they are very capable.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Letter and Consent for Teachers

(University of Toronto Letterhead)

Date: ________________________________

Dear _____________________,

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. I am writing to you in the capacity of my being a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). I am conducting a research project on the topic of literacy for newcomer students who are learning to read and write for the first time. My goal is to better understand who your students are and how they view their literacy and language practices. They will participate in the research process with me by looking at the emotions present in each other’s work.

What your participation would involve:
I will be working closely with you and your students when I am at the school throughout the research period to co-create literacy and identity projects. I will collect samples of the work from these projects. These texts will be multi-modal in nature and could include videos, audio-recordings, photographs, and written work. The students will be videotape each other responding to questions about his or her language and literacy practices and how they view their progress. They will also participate in the research process through focus-group discussions. I will keep written field notes which are my account of what happened at the end of each day I am present. Although I will try to accommodate your existing program, some of the activities are unique to the research process. I will connect these assignments to the curriculum and find ways for them to be formally assessed as part of the students’ school programming. Regardless of whether students choose to be part of the research process, the entire class is welcome to participate in the activities I have prepared. I would also ask you to participate in two 45-minute interviews either during your lunch break or when it is convenient to you. The first would be at the beginning of the research process and the other at the end. These interviews will be audio-recorded. I may also audio-record debriefs of lessons, with your permission, throughout the research process.

What happens after the study?
I will be writing a PhD Thesis that will include findings from this study. Pseudonyms will be used for names and any identifying information to protect your confidentiality and privacy. My research will be presented at conferences and potentially published in journals.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Research Project:
There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this research project. Possible benefits include further development of your student’s literacy practices and a chance to advocate for positive change for all newcomer students.

I
Your participation is completely anonymous, voluntary and you can withdraw anytime. Your choice to participate is completely voluntary and consent can be withdrawn at any time. Should you choose to participate, please read the following information letter, and send the completed and signed consent form below to me before __________of this year. I will collect the form from you directly.

You can contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto (ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273), if you have questions about your rights as a participant in our research study. The Research Ethics Office may access my research files to help ensure that we are following all the procedures describe as I carry out my research.

If you have any questions please contact me through email. This research is under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Bale. Please contact him if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Katherine Brubacher

________________________________________________________________________

Teacher Consent

I _________________________(please print your first and last name) have read and understood all the information regarding to my participation in Katherine Brubacher’s research project. I provide my consent to participate in the research entitled: Exploring the Boundaries of Emotion and Language: Elementary School Newcomers with Emerging Print Literacy as Co-researchers

First Name:___________________________

Last Name:___________________________

Teacher Signature:_________________________ Date:___________________________
Appendix B: Information Letter and Consent for Students and Parents

(University of Toronto letterhead)

Date: ________________________________

Dear ______________________,

I would like to invite your child to participate in my research project. I am writing to you in the capacity of my being a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). My research is with students who are learning to read and write for the first time. My goal is to better understand who your child is and how they view their reading and writing. They will participate in the research process with me by examining each others’ work and discussing the emotions they see present. From this research, we will work towards making your school more inclusive.

Your child’s participation is completely anonymous, voluntary and you can withdraw anytime. Your choice to participate will not have any negative impact on your child’s standing in the classroom. Should you choose to participate, please read the following information letter, and send the completed and signed consent form below to me before _______________of this year. These forms can be returned to your child’s school where I will collect them.

What your participation would involve:
I will be working closely with the classroom teacher and students when I am at the school throughout part of the school year to create videos, complete group interviews and write using all of our languages. I will download the videos, take pictures of your child’s projects, audio-record discussions and may keep written notes about what happened at the end of each day. Your child will be videotaped responding to questions about his or her language and literacy practices. With your permission, your child will be using an application called *Flipgrid* to video-tape their responses. Your child will also participate in focus group discussions that are audio-taped where he/she will contribute to the analysis of the work.

What happens after the research?
I will be writing a PhD thesis that will include findings from my research with your child. Pseudonyms will be used for names and any identifying information to protect your confidentiality and privacy. My research will be presented at conferences and potentially published in journals.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Research Project:
There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this research project. Possible benefits include further development of your child’s literacy practices and a chance to self-advocate for positive change in the school and for all newcomer students.

I can answer any questions you have before you join our study and during your child’s time in our study. You can contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto
(ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273), if you have questions about your child’s rights as a participant in our research study. The Research Ethics Office may access my research files to help ensure that I am following all the procedures described as I carry out my research.

If you have any questions please contact me through email. This research is under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Bale. Please contact him if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Katherine Brubacher

Parental Consent

I _________________________(please print your first and last name) have read and understood all the information regarding to my participation in Katherine Brubacher’s research project. I provide my consent to participate in the research entitled: Exploring the Boundaries of Emotion and Language: Elementary School Newcomers with Emerging Print Literacy as Co-researchers

First Name:___________________________

Last Name:__________________________

Parent Signature:________________________ Date:________________________

Student Assent (for 12 years of age and older)

I _________________________(please print your first and last name) have read and understood all the information regarding to my participation in Katherine Brubacher’s research project: Exploring the Boundaries of Emotion and Language: Elementary School Newcomers with Emerging Print Literacy as Co-researchers

First Name:___________________________

Last Name:__________________________

Student Signature:________________________ Date:________________________
Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers

Initial Semi-Structured Interview

Relevant Research Question:

Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools? What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?

Warm-up/Introduction

What made you decide to become a teacher? What has brought you to working with newcomer students in elementary schools?

What languages have you been exposed to and expected to learn? What are your interests in literacy? How has print literacy impacted your life?

The Students

This study is with newcomer students who are learning how to read and write in any language. Do you have any students in your class that you would describe as not knowing how to read and write or as having beginner literacy skills? What languages do they speak and what experiences have they had with formal education?

In what ways are newcomers with emerging print literacy included in the school? How are they perceived by other teachers and students?

Language and Emotion

How do students use language in your classroom and throughout the school?

If you had to describe your class with one emotion, what would it be? How do the students demonstrate that emotion to you?

Think of one of your students with emerging print literacy practices. If you could think of one emotion to describe them, what would it be? How does that emotion affect them and how they act in class? Why do you think this emotion is associated with them? Repeat this with a number of other students who are potential participants.

How do you feel when students speak using language that you don’t understand? How do you react to this?

Conclusion

What key things does any teacher need to know about working with newcomers with emerging print literacy practices?

Do you have any thoughts or insights that have not been covered by these questions?
Final Semi-Structured Interview

Relevant Research Questions:

Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools? What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?

Warm-up/Introduction

Thinking back on our time together, how would you describe some of the activities we completed with the students? What did you find out about your students that you didn’t know before?

Literacy and Emotion

What did this study reveal to you about your students’ literacy practices?
What activities and/or assignments struck you as having the most impact on your students’ emotional responses and engagement?

What did the use of all the students’ languages in the classroom reveal to you about how your students feel about their literacy practices?

How do you plan on using the plan of action developed by your students? Do you think this plan will change how the students are perceived and treated within the school?

Conclusion

Were there any moments that stood out for you during this research process? How so?

Do you have any thoughts or insights that have not been covered by these questions?
Appendix D: Literacy profiles

Relevant Research Questions:
Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools? What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?

Flipgrid Prompt Guide

Introduce Yourself (Students/Participants to complete the following three prompts)

1. **Important Moment:** What’s something important about you that you want me to know? What makes you happy?
2. **Places I have lived:** Where have you lived? Describe the places you have lived.
3. **My languages:** Create Your Own *Linguistic Portrait*

   1) Draw an outline of a person on a piece of paper.
   2) List your languages and the matching color.
   3) Color the outline to show how you feel and what you do with these languages.
   4) Explain your portrait and hold it up to the camera for everyone to see.

Literacy and School (Students/Participants to complete a minimum of three of the following prompts)

1. **Learning outside of school:** Think about a place you have learned outside of school. What did you learn? How did you feel when you learned something new?
2. **My Teachers:** Who has been your teacher both in school and out of school? What did they teach you?
3. **My Schools:** What schools have you been to? Describe your happiest moments in those schools. What is your most powerful memory from school?
4. **Reading:** What books have you read? How did you feel about that book? What languages were the books written in?
5. **Language:** What languages have you used at your different schools? Did you ever use more than one language at a school? What languages do you use when you speak to your friends?
6. **Writing:** Describe how you feel when you are writing. What color would you use to describe your writing and why?
7. **Media:** Tell me about your favorite song? What is that song about? Do you like to watch movies? What movies have you watched more than two times and why did you watch them again?
8. **Internet:** When you use the internet for apps and games, what language do you use? Do you type or speak? What topics do you write and talk about?
9. **Stories and Poems:** Think of a story or poem you heard when you were younger. Describe that story or poem. Who told you the story? How was it told?
Appendix E: Identity Poetry

**Relevant Research Questions:** Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools? What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices?

**“Where I Am From” Poem Template**

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a place or thing you pass everyday on your way to school)

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a description of your home) and (a detail about your home – a smell, taste or feel)

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a specific every day item)

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a plant or tree near your home).

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(the language I speak at home) and (words we say in that language every day).

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a song your family will often sing or listen to).

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a description of your favorite device).

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(place of birth) and (parents/grandparents place of birth).

I am ________________________________________________________________

(a family name) and (another family name).

______________________________________________________________

(food you eat everyday and food you eat for a special holiday)

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(a family tradition: something your family does together every year)

I am from ________________________________________________________________

(the most important thing your brought with you to Canada).
Appendix F: Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Protocol

Relevant Research Questions

What emotions are associated with and shape the students’ identities and literacy practices? How do the students’ understand the relationship between these emotions and their identities and literacy practices?

Instructions

The following semi-structured focus group (or individual, if needed) interview is to be completed after students have had a chance to choose a video/poem/text to read or watch, identified (an) emotion(s) that is/are present in the poem and completed a body map (see Appendix K). They are also encouraged to use gestures, movement and drama to demonstrate what the emotion they have chosen does to the body. Note: the interviewer can narrate these actions for the audio-recording while they are happening or include them in field notes later that day.

Students will be encouraged to use their entire language repertoire during this focus group discussion. In some cases, it may be a good idea to have a translator present. If this is not possible, the interviewer may need to use Google translator at times to provide some feedback to the students in order to prompt their thinking and communication. The discussion will need to be translated at a later time as well.

Introduction

What video/poem/text did you choose?

What did you like about the video/poem/text? What did you learn about your classmate?

Emotions

What emotions did you see or hear in the video/poem?

Please show us your body map. Where in your body do you feel (emotion identified)? What colors did you choose and why? What do you do when you feel (emotion identified)?

Position and Power

Why do you think (student author) felt this way?
Who or what is making \textit{(student author)} feel that way?

\textit{Conclusion}

Do you want this emotion to change? If so, what needs to happen for this emotion to change? If not, how can we have more of this emotion?
Appendix G: Field notes protocol

*Field notes of ________________________________*

__________________________________________  __________________________
Date & Time                                      School Site:

Descriptions:

Reflections:
Appendix H: Teacher Assessment Tool for Literacy profiles

This assessment tool is based on the Grade 6 Language Arts (OME, 2006) and Social Studies (OME, 2018) curriculum as well as STEP (OME, 2016) for the ELD program. It will be modified to meet the grade and STEP levels of individual contexts.

The checklist below can be used by the teacher during activities as the teacher listens to and gives feedback to students. This is an assessment tool that can be used at any point during the data collection. However, the classroom teacher will not have access to finished product so it is an observational assessment only.

The assessment tool is based on the following Ontario curriculum expectations:

**Language Arts: Oral Language and ELD STEP**

Use familiar English and L1 words, phrases and simple sentences to communicate, linking and sequencing ideas and information through inclusive and non-discriminatory language

**Social Studies: Heritage and Identity in Canada – Past and Present and ELD STEP**

Use familiar English and L1 words, phrases and simple sentences to explain how language can contribute to identity and describe different interactions between communities in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Profiles Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Criteria</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Somewhat Met</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
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<tr>
<td>How you organize your ideas makes sense even if we can’t understand all the words that you use</td>
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<tr>
<td>You’ve responded to a range of prompts giving different incites and thoughts each time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your responses show that you understand how language is part of your identity and cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>You use inclusive language to speak about friends, classmates, family and community members language practices</td>
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Teacher Comments:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix I: Identity Poetry Lesson Plan

Introduction: Watch a series of Where I am From poems on Youtube. Ask the students how the videos made them feel? Discuss what those emotions make them want to do.

Working On It: Explain that for this activity students are to use all of their language resources. If they can express an idea in English, they can use English. However, they can also use other languages they know and even combine words in a sentence. Provide an example for the students of a simple sentence written in English but with a French words meshed with it. Then construct a sentence together that connects to language practices in the local context.

Introduce key vocabulary for these identity poems such as repetition, alliteration and metaphor. Explain what each word means.

The following activity follows the gradual release model:

For metaphor, draw a picture on the classroom board and compare it to another object. Then write a sentence like “Fareeha is a lion.” Ask the students for the word for lion in their language repertoires. Have them write the word on the board or you can write it yourself phonetically. Ask them: “Is Fareeha a lion? What does this sentence tell us about Fareeha?”

Next, draw a picture on the board. For example, draw a picture of the sun and ask what is similar to the sun. Again, write the word sun in the students’ language or have them do it.

Finally, students will come up with a metaphor for the ocean, for example, in pairs and present their ideas to the class/group.

Consolidation: Students are now to write their own Where I Am From poems using the template below. Before they start, ask them to think of their favorite tree in the world and compare it to something else to create a metaphor. This will become line 3 of their poem. Explain that this poem uses repetition. They have one metaphor already but can add more. Encourage them to consider using alliteration as well.

Note: Line 4 can be the student’s tree metaphor.

Depending on the students, each line of the template may need to be explained before the students can begin to come up with ideas. Encourage students to use their entire language repertoire and to not be afraid to mesh languages together.

Once students have completed the template, they can create different visual representations of the poem, if time allows. If not, the completed templates will be used for the research.
Teacher participants are welcome to use the following assessment tool I created as a teacher:

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“They Am From” Poem Success Criteria

| Name: ___________________________ | Date: _______ | Homeroom: ______ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Some Met</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses a range of poetic devices (simile, metaphor, repetition, alliteration)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Completes the entire poem outline with thoughtful and original ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive vocabulary that is rich and detailed in any language</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix J: Sticky Objects

Research Question: Who are newcomers with emerging print literacy in elementary schools??

Lesson Plan

Introduction: Show students pictures from Patti Kim’s (2013) book *Here I Am* where the child is holding the special, unknown object that he or she has brought from his/her home country. The object evokes positive memories that are presented in color which contrasts with the black and white of the child’s new home. Later in the story, the child mistakenly drops the object from the apartment window where it is picked up by a little girl. The child proceeds to chase the little girl through the streets of the new city. The two eventually become friends. This is all done through pictures with no words. The identity of the object is left ambiguous but it is clear that the child has stuck many emotions to that object. The participants and I will look through the rest of this picture book discussing the object in question and why it’s so important to the child.

Working on it: I will then ask them to bring an object in to the next research session and be prepared to talk about why the object is important to them and what feelings they have towards that object. I will suggest that they bring a special object from a place they lived previously to coming to Canada, if this is available. They will be welcome to draw or take a picture of the object if bringing it to school is too difficult or if there is something special that they weren’t able to bring with them to Canada.

Consolidation: The grid in the application *Flipgrid* on feelings and colors would work well as a consolidation piece here.
Appendix K: Body Mapping

Emotion: _____________________________  Text/Author: _____________________________

Your Name: ______________________________

Color the part of the body below where you feel this emotion. Choose a color that represents that emotion.
Appendix L: Recruitment Email for Teachers/Principals

Dear Teacher,

I have been an ESL/ELD teacher in Ontario for over ten years and, as a PhD student, am now excited to turn my attention to research in this area. The focus of this study is working with students in ELD programs to analyze who they are and how they feel about literacy. Ideally, I would like to visit your classroom twice a week for half a day for about three months.

I have a number of contributions I can bring to your entire class, which include both activities I have tried as a teacher and new ideas I have learned as a researcher and student. However, I am also interested in your existing program and working with you through collaboration. I foresee a number of ways we can collaborate. This could mean giving you a list of my activities and you letting me know when they would be appropriate to implement. Or, I could look at your lessons and unit plans and think of ways to modify them to meet the goals of my research. Thirdly, we could meet and collaborate to create activities that address both my research needs and your curricular demands.

These teaching contributions would be designed for and benefit all the students in your class. For my research, I would collaborate with you to identify a smaller number of ELD students in your class. I would seek consent from their parents to collect some of the work they produce from these activities as part of my data. I have also designed some additional activities to do just with them.

To give an example of how this would work, one of the activities I have designed asks students to reflect on their languages and literacy using an online application called Flipgrid. With parents’ permission, I would like all of the students in your class to create a series of videos where they respond to prompts on how they use language in places like the school and home. This would be a beneficial activity for your school in building inclusion for English learners. Although I would like the entire class to work on this activity, for my research I would only collect the videos from the students in ELD programs whose parents have agreed for them to participate. A final research need is focus group discussions. I would conduct these discussions only with the ELD students participating in my research. The goal of these focus groups is to include the ELD students in the research process, to have them be part of analyzing the work that they created during the activities we did as an entire class. In this way, ELD students themselves have an important say in how the research and analysis are conducted. I will complete these focus groups during lunch or recess so that they do not interfere with the students’ learning.

Additionally, I would ask that you participate in two short interviews: one at the beginning and one at the end of the research. The interviews will be thirty to forty-five minutes to fit into your lunch or planning time.

Please let me know if you are interested in being part of this research and I will send you further information like the consent forms.

Sincerely,

Katherine Brubacher

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