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Multilingual Speaker. Writers' co-stories as part of a race-conscious translingual practice

Yasmine Romero

Translingual and translanguaging orientations to language move away from monolingualist paradigms in language and writing studies, such as English-only (Auerbach 1993) or dualistic (Elbow 2002) approaches and policies that prioritize appropriateness (Flores and Rosa 2015), mastery (Fish 2009), erasure, and/or multiculturalist tokenism of minority students' linguistic and rhetorical practices (Kubota 2004; Lee 2016). This prioritization in language and writing studies has naturalized language ideologies of "ownership, purity, and even nativeness" (Canagarajah 2013, 43). Translingualism destabilizes these ideologies and their translations into language and writing classrooms; language becomes an emergent, collaborative practice in which language differences are the norm and "communicating across [these] differences (Lorimer 2013, 163) involves interlocutors negotiating framings and footings in "situated interactions for new meaning construction" (Canagarajah 2013, 1). While translingual practices and literacy are not new, attention to and scholarship on performative competence, translocal spaces, trans-linguistic identities, and negotiation strategies in contact situations are currently the focus in translingual scholarship.

For instance, investigating what difference as norm means across contexts and identities is in current translingual work from Suhanthie Motha, Rashi Jain, and Tsegga Tecele's (2012) critically reflective narrative inquiry into translinguistic teacher identities to Nancy Bou Ayash's (2016) examination of monolingualist representations. However, with the catch-all use of difference in translingual scholarship, differences potentially become conflated. This conflation is problematic when it comes to race and racism in contact situations, as it re-inscribes the very

notions that translingual scholarship works to transform: differences become sameness, a consequence for People of Color—many of whom are multilingual writers—then, is that the dialectic among language, race, and its inflections in a situated space is possibly forgotten or overlooked.

In this chapter I argue, like Keith Gilyard (2016), Tom Do (chapter 4, this volume), Steven Alvarez (chapter 11, this volume), and other contributors to this edited collection, for bringing students' lived experiences into translingual scholarship more thoughtfully so that nuanced and complex understandings can be gained about what “communicating across a lifetime of difference” (Lorimer 2013, 163) actually means in contact situations in which “race continues to covertly and overtly structure the lived experiences of millions of People of Color around the world” (Alim 2016a, 25). Further, by theorizing and incorporating lived experiences more explicitly, translingual scholars can race translingualism because White cis-male epistemological perspectives can no longer be centered and co-stories (narrations of their knowledges, repertoires, and backgrounds) of multilingual writers can be centered.

Major Concepts

Before showing more comprehensively how I engaged “co-stories” that emerged in interview data, I first discuss the major conceptualizations that shape the methodology, findings, and interpretations of the present study: lived experiences, race and racism, multilingual writer. I move on to the larger study from which this chapter draws and discuss my choice of focusing on one student's—Emma's—lived experiences bundled within dispositions, acts, and contexts.

Lived Experiences

In feminist theory; critical pedagogy, and critical race theory (CRT), lived experiences are day-to-day experiences of marginalized or non-privileged people (hooks 1994; Giroux 1996; Yosso 2006). By critically reflecting and imagining other possibilities based on these experiences, we can create theory or “mak[e] sense out of what is happening” (hooks 1994, 61) and ultimately *do* something about what is happening. For intersectional feminists, lived experiences allow us to “name [our] practice” in an effort to challenge systemic and everyday inequities facing marginalized groups and individuals (hooks 1994, 75; Mills and Mullany 2011). For critical pedagogues, teacher-scholars can foster classrooms in which student knowledges and experiences (*counter-*

narratives from Giroux 1996) are central as opposed to marginal so as to transform their current social and political situations (Freire 2005; Kubota 2014). For critical race theorists, teacher-scholars can support counter-stories that work against majoritarian stories, which reproduce White privilege and interest through post-racial and colorblind discourses (Solorzano and Yosso 2001; Yosso 2006).

Translingual scholarship has referenced lived experiences in a variety of ways as well. Suresh Canagarajah's (2013, 183-84) proposal to use performative competence over grammatical or communicative competence illustrates the ways our practices inform and are informed by our experiences with language, such as fostering "cooperative dispositions" and the many strategies of translingual learners such as "scaffolds." Arguably, these scaffolds and how these dispositions are fostered involve lived experiences because that is how they emerge—from past experiences into current interactions. Other references to lived experiences, explicitly or implicitly, include Paul Kei Matsuda's (2013, 136) call for teacher-scholars to be aware of the "multilingual reality"; Jerry Won Lee and Christopher Jenks's (2016, 320) description of the relationship between ideology and dispositions, that is, "bound to and shaped by discrete social conditions, *experiences* [emphasis added], and encounters"; Rebecca Lorimer's (2013, 163) exploration of rhetorical attunement for four participants "across a *lifetime* [emphasis added] of communicating across difference"; and Nancy Bou Ayash's (2016, 563) exploration of how dispositions are "influenced by" various (monolingual, translingual, multilingual) representations of English.

While all of the discussions above acknowledge that experience impacts writers' dispositions, rhetorical attunement, or performative competence, the only reference to racism or any form of discrimination is in the generalized reference to power relationships in language contact situations and the fact that these relationships are negotiable. None explicitly theorizes what lived experience is and how those lived experiences speak to race and racism specifically. As Gilyard (2016, 288) argues: "One of the strongest moves that translingualists can make is to document students' efforts. We need stories of struggle, as I have suggested, and those should include tales of triumph." In other words, translingual teacher-scholars need to more thoughtfully bring what students have *lived* into the classroom as pedagogical resources—lived experiences not only inform how we navigate our social worlds but also inform our very notions of identity, as feminists, critical race theorists, and critical pedagogues have discussed. As Eve Haque and Brian Morgan (2009, 282-83) assert, "The complex

relation between the process of identification and the production and disruption of a stable ontological identity...must continually be at the forefront of our analysis and pedagogy if we move beyond the continual replay of essentialist explanation to an ongoing project of delineating fixed identity categories.”

Identity and identification processes are multifaceted and shaped by experiences. By making experience central to teaching and research, we can begin to reconceptualize our practices, our scholarship movements like translingualism. Similarly, teacher-scholars in language studies (Nelson 2011), critical race studies (Solorzano and Yosso 2001) and critical pedagogy (Giroux 1996) have made calls for (lived) experience to be brought into teaching and research more centrally. In her proposal for critical narrative studies, Nelson (2011) reimagines scholarship as a creative and critical practice by considering narrative as a learning tool. She writes, “[Narrative] can encourage learners to value their own experiential knowledge as important knowledge, which can be empowering (467). Taking Nelson’s (2011) assertion, experience allows us to reimagine knowledge and how it is disseminated and used. Furthermore, both learners and teacher-scholars can create meaning out of what Nelson terms classroom-life narratives or an arts-based form of analysis. Moreover, as Daniel Solorzano and Tara Yosso (2009) and Henry A. Giroux (1996) have shown, experience can then be a teaching and learning tool as well as a form of resistance. Lived experience, then, can be a way to critique our assumptions in the writing classroom; it can also bring the focus back to the intersections in students’ social worlds, such as race and gender, that converge within and beyond our classrooms. This practice of using lived experiences as counter-stories or counter-narratives to the writing classroom has the potential to reimagine a translingualism that interrogates, critiques, and acts upon dimensions of difference—namely, race and its inflections for this present chapter. Alvarez (chapter 11, this volume) makes a similar argument: to “open students’ lived experiences with racialized English only ideologies.”

Because lived experience is not fully theorized in translingual scholarship, I extend Nelson’s (2011) call for storying in research on language learning to translingualism, which is similar to Canagarajah’s (2012) call for story research or autoethnographies. Nelson’s (2011) proposal incorporates important dimensions of CRT, critical pedagogy, and narrative studies. I build on work by Canagarajah (2012), Nelson (2011), and Matthew Prior (2016) to define narratives as collaborative and embedded. But in what context do these co-stories emerge, and how do we find or locate them as

teacher-scholars? To begin to answer this question, it is important to address race and racism in language and writing studies.

Race in Writing Classrooms

Race has been discussed at length in language and writing studies. In language studies, Ruvoko Kubota and Angel Lin (2009), Motha (2014), and H. Samy Alim and his coeditors (2016) have examined the relationship between language and race in classrooms, language policies, and speech styles. Victor Villanueva (1993), Vershawn Ashanti Young (2007), Morris Young (2015), and Mara Lee Grayson (2018) have examined how race and racism shape teaching and literacy practices in writing classrooms. In my writing classroom, students engaged conceptualizations of race throughout the term. One memorable example of that engagement happened at the end of the semester when students presented their projects to the class in group panels. These presentations involved firsthand research methods to gather narratives from their communities, family, and friends. At the end of each presentation, there was time for discussion. From that discussion, Long, a student who identifies as Vietnamese and as a heterosexual woman, vocally points to the differences between her interviewee and her peer's (Santiago) interviewee's perception and discussion of race: her interviewee says race exists, while Santiago's interviewee argues that race does not exist.

Long says, "Everyone has different opinions about [race] obviously, and it's—I mean, race is just a very abstract concept. It depends on a person use [*sic*] it, you know . . . So, like, maybe for [Santiago's interviewee] race doesn't exist. For us, we feel, like, you know, it does. It does in the sense that—I mean, no one would be talking about it." Long acknowledges that race has multiple definitions at the beginning of her response, and while it may seem as though race does not exist for some like the White cis-male speaker interviewed by Santiago, for those in our class (whichever Long considers as "us"), race exists—that is, "no one would be talking about it" if race did not exist. My students spent most of the term discussing definitions of race: from race as biological or race based on a set of physical characteristics genetically linked (phenotypical; see the Human Genome Project 2018) to race as a social imaginary (Kubota and Lin 2009).

Students also discussed race using Kubota and Lin's (2009) concept of *racialization*. Racialization describes how people are categorized according to arbitrary features or values and how that categorization "carries a legacy of colonialism and often contains value judgments of the categories, although a scientific discourse masks such judgments with a neutral, objective, and even liberal humanistic lense" (5). Racialization, then, frames race "as a process of socialization in and through language, as a continuous project of becoming as opposed to being" (Alim 2016a, 2). Language as becoming is similar to Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner's (2013, 27) discussion of how a translingual approach defines language: "not as something we have or have access to but as something we do. It centers attention on languaging: how we do language and why." However, their only explicit reference to race is in how it "emerge[s], inform[s], and [is] informed by individual acts of speaking-listening, reading-writing" (28). Lee (2016, 185) references "racial, ethnic, national, gender or sexual identification" when arguing for rethinking our assessment practices. Parallels exist in language and writing scholarship and translingual scholarship regarding race, but translingual scholarship needs to complicate its definition of difference and explicitly engage the ways identities, identification practices, and lived experiences—such as race, racism, and gender—texture contact situations.

In addition to race, the concepts of ethnicity and culture are difficult to separate (see Alim 2016a). Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) argue that race has been conflated with ethnicity, class, and nation. Kubota and Lin (2009, 4) offer a definition of ethnicity as a "relational concept" that separates groups. The criteria for maintaining this separation remain fuzzy and unclear. Similarly, culture overlaps with some conceptions of race, and even sometimes replacing "racial difference" with friendlier notions such as "cultural difference [is] a more benign and acceptable signifier than race" (Kubota and Lin 2009, 4). According to Jennifer Clary-Lemon's (2009) review of rhetoric and composition scholarship on race and racism, difference took the place of terms like *culture* and *diversity* when discussing race in the early 1990s. As a result, race in writing classrooms was either left unexamined or subsumed into difference. Therefore, using culture or even difference in place of the multiple dimensions and identities that are part of social interaction potentially elides what is unheard and unseen. Translingual scholarship also seemingly subsumes race and other dimensions under the catchall difference (Gilyard 2016).

When discussing race in writing classrooms, we must engage the “serious and material consequences of race” (Motha 2014, 36); in other words, “the damage of racism” must be attended to in translingual scholarship beyond notions or constructions of race (Gilyard 2016, 287). Young’s (2013, 140) response to Stanley Fish’s (2009) argument against Students’ Right to Their Own Language captures the materiality or material impacts of race: teachers demand that students “speak black, when it’s safe to do so, but not when your job, your grades, or your relationships with other non-black people (and sometimes other blacks who share the same prejudice) are on the line.” To put Young’s (2013, 145) statement in a different way, by only teaching what Fish and other educators like him refer to as the standard language, we reproduce a myth of a monolithic Standard English, a myth that everyone speaks and writes in the same way, and a myth that we and our students cannot work against “prevailing linguistic prejudice.” Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa (2015, 250) engage this issue further in their critical examination of “additive approaches that promote the development of standardized language skills while encouraging students to maintain the minoritized linguistic practices they bring to the classroom.” Students continue to be taught that their languages have no place in “academic settings” (150). These leaching moves and practices “conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices;” that is, these practices are microaggressions or everyday forms of racism masked by discourses of appropriateness (150).

Many people may still see racism on the individual level, such as overtly discriminatory acts based on the person’s racist beliefs, while others, like critical race theorists, see racism as systematic and fabricating our society (Delgado and Stefancic 2017). Kubota and Lin (2009, 6) suggest that seeing “racism [as] a discourse allows us to understand that most individuals are not racist; what is racist are the structured ideas that shape social reality.” To put their suggestion another way, the individual and society are in a far more complex relationship to one another such that the ideas that shape our social worlds affect our interactions within those worlds. If we see racism as a discourse, then, according to Kubota and Lin (2009), we can engage with institutional or structural racism and epistemological racism. Institutional and structural racism refers to racist ideas that impact “even- corner of society and shap[e] social relations, practices, and institutional structures” (6). This kind of racism is what CRT responded to as the grassroots movement argued against racist laws and legal practices that appear colorblind or post-racial. For translingual scholarship, discussing racism and its impacts on writing has been largely folded into language rights; while

some scholars like Young (2013) have clearly identified that race matters, attending to race and racism explicitly remains unseen and in need of theorization and further research.

Another form of racism is epistemological racism that refers to how White cis-male perspectives are privileged in philosophical, educational, and scientific approaches, such as Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977) and Michel Foucault (1990). Throughout translingual scholarship, there has been reference to privileged perspectives, such as Canagarajah (2013), Lu and Horner (2013), and Asao Inoue (2015) who draw on Bourdieu's habitus or Anthony Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration. Even in my own classroom, I drew on Foucault's (1990) conceptualization of power—asking my multilingual students to navigate and challenge his perspective. Hunter reflected on his reading experience of Foucault: “When I was reading—is it heteronormativity? . . . because the first time I read [Foucault] I had no idea what he was talking about. And I think a few more times later it just felt like ... this is different. This is something that... I could resonate with but the other part I just couldn't get.”

Hunter was one of two students to actually engage with Foucault's work. This practice allowed him to consider parts of Foucault's theory but other parts not so much. This “other part” could have been the privileged way (and seemingly non-ego liable writing because you cannot speak with this author) Foucault writes or being unable to associate with Foucault's examples as a multilingual writer. Cloe, a Thai-identifying student, revised Foucault's concept of power to parallel her own understanding of peer pressure in a Thai community. Other students were more inclined to draw on the work of scholars of color such as Kubota and Lin (2009), including Sattar who presented on the history of racism in Kazakhstan between “Asians” and “Russians.” He concluded: “Most of the world agreed that there is no place for racism and racist in the world, and I want to challenge that idea. Because even though most of the people agree that racism is bad and they don't think they are racists, I mostly agree with the idea of critical race theory.” Sattar highlights the problem of what people desire (a world without racism and racists) and what in reality, according to his own experiences and CRT, actually happens (racist acts and everyday racism). Based on his findings for his final paper, he “mostly” sides with CRT: that is, racism is pervasive and systematic.

While translingual scholarship has built on privileged perspectives, Canagarajah (2013), Young (2013), and Vivette Milson-Whyte (2013) have brought in non-privileged perspectives as well, such as postcolonial theory, Lachman M. Khubchandani's (1997) linguistic work, and W.E.B. Du Bois's double consciousness. Lee and Jenks (2016) draw on Braj B. Kachru's (1997) World Englishes (WE) model to explore multilingual writers' translingual dispositions. Similar to Canagarajah (2013), Lee and Jenks (2016), and Ayash (2016), I bring lived experiences to the translingual conversation; however, I not only explicitly theorize lived experiences (see above) in translingual scholarship but also examine how co-storying students' lived experiences, as well as our (teacher-scholars in translingual scholarship) own, allows us to imagine a race-conscious translingualism. Before shifting to my study and methodology of co-storying, the emotionally charged label of "multilingual language learner" or "multilingual writer" needs to be defined for the purposes of building this chapter's framework.

Multilingual Language Learners or Multilingual Writers

Throughout this chapter, I make references to my students as multilingual language learners (MLL), or students whose home language (s) are non-English and who are learning English as a second, third, or other language (Matsuda and Jablonski 2000). I use MLL or multilingual writers to differentiate between the rhetorical situations, interpersonal relationships, and translingual practices my students experience and those situations, relationships, and practices that other, non-MLL students experience. This difference is important because "the claim that all students can develop translingual competence and do translingual dispositions should not ... be taken to mean that monolingual students share, or can even fully understand, the sociolinguistic experiences of multilinguals" (Lee and Jenks 2016, 321—22). Lee's reference to "sociolinguistic experiences of multilinguals" echoes Matsuda's (2013, 136) use of the multilingual reality when describing his hope that "U.S. college composition scholars [will] try to develop advanced proficiency in multiple languages—both spoken and written—to understand firsthand what it is like to live the multilingual reality." MLL students, then, have specific realities and experiences that are inherently different than those of non-MLL learners: by theorizing lived experiences through multilingual writers' narrations of their realities and experiences, the ways race and racism texture contact situations can be more explicitly and clearly

brought into translingual scholarship. In other words, I attempt to illustrate in this chapter:

1. Lived experiences *language* race and racism in contact situations: if the translingual orientation views “culture, ethnicity, nationality, race, geography and environments [as] seen as emerging in performance, informing and informed by individual acts of speaking—listening, reading-writing” (Lu and Horner 2013, 28), then we must open ourselves to lived experiences languaging how race, its intersections (culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, and other intersections), and racism texture contact situations in constrained (Milson-Whyte 2013) but not determined (Young 2007, 2013; Young 2015) ecologies.
2. Lived experiences race translingualism: our students’ lived experience and our own as teacher-scholars, provide a way to speak with a trans-lingual orientation founded on privileged White cis-male perspectives, such as Giddens’s (1984) structuration theory (see Lu and Homer201, and Bourdieu’s habitus (see Canagarajah 2013); in other words, we can create a conversation or dialectic between disciplinary and scholarly research and public, outside-the-classroom translingual practices that “provide checks and balances” (my extension of Matsuda 2013,133) to foster a race-conscious translingualism.

Overview of the Study

This chapter shares a snapshot of what occurred throughout a ten-week term in an intermediate writing course for MLL. This course was the first of its kind, which resulted in numerous inquiries about whether it was for international students only, why a student learning Chinese as another language could not qualify, and how rigorous the course was because for most English monolingual speaker-writers who emailed me, MLL is collocated with remedial, deficient, and grammar. While the nuances and complexities of an MLL-only course were negotiated on a case-by-case basis, the actual classroom meetings and interactions were the focus of the larger study on intersectionality. Nineteen students enrolled who spoke and wrote in multiple language varieties across varying levels of proficiencies and competencies. According to a voluntary survey at the end of the term, these languages included Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Thai, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Kazakh. In the same survey, students disclosed their identities and/or identification

practices. Eight students identified as women, eleven identified as men, and most identified as heterosexual, with one student choosing not to disclose. Some identified as international students with previous study abroad experiences in the United States (e.g., Eun and Rider), while others identified as American (e.g., Brody and Maieo). With the exception of Brody, eighteen students were of color. All students have been given pseudonyms to remain anonymous.

The course met twice per week, once in a seminar classroom and once in a computer lab. These modalities provided students with the means to interact across multiple platforms and genres—online, video, small group work, and group-authored documents, further, their interactions in the traditional classroom and their conferences with me were recorded. Transcribing these recordings and then codifying them involved multiple steps: first, a big-picture memo-ing, with notes on times and the major topics and themes that emerged; second, line-by-line transcription and coding the transcriptions into the major topics and themes that emerged in my memos; and lastly, memo-ing once more to develop interview questions that attended to opening up the major topics and themes and how the students related to them through past and present experiences inside and outside the classroom. These questions led to six total interviews and one focus group.

How students related to major topics and themes is the focus of the present chapter, especially how this relationship is told through narrative or co-storying. I propose analyzing narratives as co-stories because the prefix *co-* before stories captures the collaborativeness of storying (Nair 2003; Prior 2016) and translingualism (Canagarajah 2013), as well as the negotiation involved in the storying process. I choose story over narrative to parallel critical race theory's use of counter-stories. While the original study innovated an intersectional framework for interrogating the relationships or inflections across multiple identities, identification practices, and more (Romero 2017), this chapter focuses specifically on the axis of race to see new, in-depth ways of reimagining translingual practice as anti-racist practice by “opening up” (Alvarez, chapter 11, this volume), upending, and re-seeing the ways my student and I co-story race and racism in the writing classroom and beyond.

Methodology: Locating Co-Stories

To locate lived experiences or co-stories in classroom talk and text, focus groups, and interviews, teacher-scholars have to be able to recognize when co-stories begin. In narrative analysis, narratives begin with an abstract or preface as well as other signals (orientation narrative moves that contextualize where and when the experience took place) that cue that stoning is about to start (Labov 1999). In Matthew Prior's (2016, 96) exploration of emotionality, interviewers may explicitly invite participants to story' through questions of "strong, emotional, and memorable experiences." Therefore, co-stories, as narratives, sometimes begin with a preface to a narrative and/or questions (among other conversational moves) that invite storying. Co-stories can then take shape, as narrative analysis informs us, through different means. Means here means strategies such as orientation or those moves that give us time and place or evaluation, which are comments that can range from self-reflection to characterizing elements of the story.

Complicating action and resolution are moves that answer the questions "and then" and "final key event." The coda brings the speaker and listener back to the real world. These different moves vary, and while, at a minimum, a narrative must have two sequential clauses (Labov 1999), the kinds of stories speakers tell in interviews and how they tell them arc of concern especially for translingual pedagogy centered around lived experiences: narratives not only *language* how race and racism can shape writing classrooms but also *race* pedagogical moves and strategies. These insights—as negotiated through co-stories or narratives from interviews, focus groups, and online and in-person classroom interaction can help us, as teacher-scholars invested in translingual pedagogies and anti-racist praxis, center the lived experiences of our students within and across our praxis.

Co-stories emerged in our classroom conversations, follow-up interviews, journals, online discussion forums, and focus groups; each was categorized according to the kind of co-story narrated, as seen in table 8.1, in relation to topics and themes of race and racism specifically. Pedagogical co-stories are those in which students recall race and racism inside the classroom and how the teacher, student, and/or course content impacted their learning experiences. This definition is based on work on pedagogical memory; that is, how—emotionally, psychically, and physically—we remember our learning affects what we, in fact, learn (Jarratt et al. 2009). One common framing for

these co-stories is the comparison of before and after: “*before [our course]* I really think that the race is biological . . . like, African people are good at sports [laughs], **but after taking this class . . .**” Sometimes the framing leads to a realization, while others find it leads to an awareness or added knowledge. Introspective co-stories, on the one hand, emerge in response to a raised topic or theme, such as race, and use self-reflexive critical reflection as a means for investigating the topic. This means is captured in evaluation narrative moves through the use of “**I feel**” or “I believe to segue into reexamination of beliefs, values, and experiences. The self, as seen in table 8.1, is almost always defined for the listener to understand where the speaker is coming from so the reflective element is emphasized.

On the other hand, experiential co-stories recall moments in particular, which is most aligned with Labovian (1999) approaches to narrative (see Mosher, chapter 9, this volume). Experiential co-stories focus on developing a moment, scene, or event rather than a generalized experience; as such, the minimal narrative structure is necessary to locate this co-story—that is, two or more linear narrative moves, such as orientation and complicating action or complicating action and resolution. Emma the focus of this chapter, shares an emotionally charged moment that is outside the pedagogical context—in the workplace—as seen in table 8.1.

Table 8.1. Co Stories coding scheme

<i>Co-stories</i>	<i>Definitions</i>	<i>Example</i>
Pedagogical	Students recall their experiences with race and racism inside the classroom and how the teacher and/ or course content impacted their experience.	"Like, <i>before [our course]</i> I really think that the race is biological . . . like, African people are good at sports [laughs], but after taking this class 1 realize . . . how people categorize people, they just attach values to them." (Jack, Interview)
Introspective	Students recall their attitudes on race and racism, referencing experiences that are either their own or someone else's.	"I've always identified myself as Thai, as I've spent my childhood and most of my life in Thai communities. However, my face and complexion looks more Chinese than Thai (as my ancestors are part of Chinese), so much that I've always been mistaken as Chinese, especially when I'm overseas. However, 1 don't feel that it has a significant

		effect on both my private and public life though, which may be because I'm used to it by now." (Cloe, Journal Week 3)
Experiential	Students recall a specific episode, event, or happening involving race and/or racism.	<i>"There's one thing that really stood out. Right now what the main job that I'm doing everyday is answering phone calls. So there was this guy who called in and they, well, I did my best explaining everything to him, and then he was, like, I can't understand you. Please put a native speaker on the phone."</i> (Emma, Interview)

All three kinds of co-stories point to the relationship among language, race and racism, and education (and education here means broadly both academic and non-academic). This interrelation is the locus of the remainder of this chapter, and I have attempted to re-weave the co-stories I have gathered from one student's—Emma's—interview with me. Emma navigates multiple dispositions toward language and race across academic and non-academic contexts; further, she interrogates and negotiates the interrelation of these axes as they shape and are shaped by her identity as an MLL. Thus, a focus on her negotiations over those of other students allows us, my readers and me, to more carefully locate the ways co-stories not only inform one student's lived experiences but also provide an in-depth look at the possibilities of a co-storying frame work for translingual scholars invested in anti-racist praxis.

In what follows, I co-story my experience interviewing Emma—that is, I locate her co-stories and retell our interview using narrative: I call this co-storying. I focus on major moments related to race and racism that emerged in our conversation. These moments illustrate how one multi-lingual writer negotiates dispositions, practices, and discourses through her lived experiences with me. I also critically reflect on my own moves and experiences “to explain how dispositions [and practices] develop in relation to social environment” textured by majoritarian dis- courses of race and racism (Canagarajah 2013, 180; Yosso 2016).

Emma

Emma speaks, writes, and reads in five languages, with varying proficiencies. Her home languages are Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese, and Taiwanese Chinese. She evaluates her most proficient fourth language as English in our interview. This proficiency is followed by Korean, which she can “speak a little.” Her least proficient language is French, which she studied for only a year. Emma preferred being called *multilingual language learner* as opposed to *English as a Second Language learner* or *English language learner*. She elaborated on this preference in our interview:

Emma: Among the three of them, I don’t like English language learner?

Yas: Uh huh. Why don’t you like that one?

Emma: English . . .

Yas: Just sounds weird to you or . . .

Emma: It feels like . . . ’cause with the other two just the name of it. They put multilingual into it . . .

Yas: Mmhmm.

Emma: So it. . . sort of in a sense it’s recognizing you speak othei language and then you’re just learning another language.

Yas: It’s not like you’re leaming just English.

Emma: Yeah.

Emma describes her frustration with being known for her English proficiency and not her other language proficiencies. For Emma, MLL provides an opportunity to be identified as a speaker and writer who has multiple resources—linguistic, rhetorical, cultural, and experiential, to name a few—that are not “just English,” as stated above. This label differs from translingual practices and orientations in that any speaker can practice translingualism; however, not all translingual practitioners share the same experiences and realities as multilingual writers. In this chapter, I focus on my

interview with Emma and the co-stories that emerge from our conversation. By drawing on work in language and writing scholarship on race and racism, I narrate my experience navigating Emma's interview—especially moments in which she recalls lived experiences that impact her dispositions toward language. These experiences are inflected by race and racism.

Co-Storying with Emma

October afternoon. I lean forward to start the audio recorder in front of me. It is an Olympus VN-702PC that fits easily in my hand. For now, it sits between my student, Emma, and me for our follow-up interview. I begin with the list of background questions that target students' home countries and residency, language histories and proficiencies, and educational and professional backgrounds:

Emma: When people ask me where I'm from, I would say I'm from Taiwan.

Yas: Mmhmm.

Emma: But I would consider because I've lived in Shenzhen.

Yas: Uh huh.

Emma: That's China. For like . . . four years?

Yas: Uh huh.

Emma: So I consider that place as my second home.

Yas: Ooh.

Emma: So when I meet people that [are] from Shenzhen, I can really easily connect to them.

Emma responds to my background questions with a “when . . . then” conditional clause. While Emma uses this clause to generalize her experiences when explaining where she is from, it also introduces particular geographic locations as part of her identity (or where she's from). This reference seems to connect race with place; that

is, identity categories and languages “are almost always attached to locations” (Motha 2014, 41). These locations become more relevant throughout the conversation. Emma continues to add on to her explanation, while I give noncommittal responses like “mmhmm” and “uh huh” to indicate that I am listening. However, Emma’s question with “four years” (along with her rising intonation) indicates that she may have wanted me to ask for more clarification. She responds more when I exclaim “ooh.”

I ask for further clarification on her background as the interview continues, both constrained by the research interview genre and my formulaic questions. I do not know where Shenzhen is, and Emma explains that it is close to Hong Kong where “my mom’s from.” I say, “That’s really cool, with the mixture of Chinese cultures.” Emma confirms by saying, “So, I know a little bit of all of them. Like Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan.” If we take what Emma said earlier, “when people ask me where I’m from,” we see that she refers to co-stories of prior experiences (although she does not share these) in which she has had to explain and possibly point out *where* these locations are, such as Shenzhen (as she had to once again with me). Her openness to the various knowledges and experiences her interlocutors may bring, and negotiating that knowledge and experience to strengthen one’s relationship with another, speaks to Canagarajah’s (2013) disposition of openness to diversity.

In response to Emma’s mixed cultures statement, I say “mmhmm.” Emma then elaborates, “although they are maybe like the same country or not. I don’t know.” She laughs. “But we share all different, really different cultures.” Again, her openness to diversity is seen here in “we all share different, really different cultures.” Culture and place are also inextricably linked for Emma, suggesting that these different cultures and places shape her identities. Like place, culture has connections to race: it can be a nice way to say race (Clary-Lemon 2009); or, seemingly for Emma, culture implicates a racial identity that is made up of multiple Chinese locations, ideologies, and practices (Kubota and Lin 2009; Paris 2015; Alim 2016b).

For the next set of questions, I ask how Emma ended up in the United States and why she chose to study at this university. Emma says she moved to the US four years ago for her freshman year. She explains why:

Emma: Originally, ’cause this is the closest place to fly back to Asia.

[Laughs]

Yas: Ooh! [Laughs] So is your family still there?

Emma: Actually, my parents, they're in Michigan right now.

Yas: Oh wow!

Emma: For his job, yeah.

Within two minutes, I learn more about Emma in our follow-up interview than I had ever learned in class. She was one of three students to participate in both the post-course focus group and the one-on-one interview for the study this chapter is based on. As I reflect on the moves I made during our interview, I see areas where I could have asked for more information. I needed to be more aware of her conversational cues. While these recognitions seem like minutiae, Emma's disclosures of her history, her racial, gendered, and sexual identities, her linguistic background, and her reactions to the course are part and parcel of this chapter's focus. After graduating with a degree in psychology, she was one of two students to find employment at a major corporation in the Pacific Northwest. Perhaps as a result of these conditions, she made clear connections between our course topics and her experiences post-university. Most especially, she interrogated the relationship between language and race in ways other students did not, as well as how certain *Multilingual Speaker-Writers' Co-stories* 19

spaces were impacted by social values that did not match her own. This disconnect impacted her positionality, dispositions, and racial identities according to two co-stories: "don't want to stand out" and "please put a native speaker on the phone." While these co-stories are by no means exhaustive, they are illustrative of the ways lived experiences reveal the relationships between language and race and how those relationships impact translingual dispositions and practices.

"Don't Want to Stand Out"

Emma and I are mid-interview. Like many other researchers, I invite co-stories related to our course topics through extreme case formulations (in bold for identification): "Have you, Emma, had **any significant or memorable experiences** that have

helped you relate to our course topics?” Emma glances at the recorder and asks, “my personal experience?” I nod, waiting for her to share:

Emma: Now that I’m working and I think I have [laughs] I’m the only Asian in the building.

Yas: Mmhm [laughs],

Emma: Sometimes I would try to avoid certain behavior that I think other people would categorize me as Asian. Not saying that Asian’s not good. This is who I am but. . .

Yas: Uh huh.

Emma: Sometimes I just don’t want to stand out.

Yas: You want to just kind of be like—

Emma: —Yeah, a low profile.

This preface to Emma’s co-story is introspective. Emma examines her behavior and how that behavior is shaped by the racial category *Asian*. Because of my own background as half-White, half-Islander and being called oriental or Asian when growing up in Boise, Idaho, I laugh to communicate affiliation or a shared experience of avoiding certain behaviors. For me, I chose not to disclose that I ate rice and *titiyas* and had family from an island (Saipan) in the Pacific Ocean. I also identified exclusively as White until my post-baccalaureate studies. For Emma, she avoided eating rice when her coworkers were present (she co-storied this with her peers in a focus group before this interview; see Romero 2017 for more) and chose to keep conversation to non-Asian topics. For instance, Emma orients to language and rhetorical choices as constrained by racial identities, which include hers, her coworkers’, and her friends’: “I think a lot of people think that Asians are richer? ... so just before I talk about things that are—share my life with my coworkers [who are White] I would be, like, extra careful with what I should say and shouldn’t say . . . when I was in school, especially with the group of people that I hang out with, we

come from similar backgrounds, so there would be less restriction on what you should say and shouldn't say (Emma, Interview).

Emma presents her assumption that her White coworkers “think that Asians are richer.” While she does not elaborate on this assumption (intersected by race and class), she does delve into her discomfort when speaking about her background. For instance, she has more freedom with friends “from similar backgrounds”; however, with people who are not part of that group, she must be “extra careful with what I should say and shouldn't say.” For Emma, when interacting outside of her group that shares a racial identity, her linguistic and rhetorical choices may be constrained; she cannot be “Asian” or “who I am” in certain contact situations, as seen earlier. This introspective co-story speaks to the negotiation of language norms in contact situations. Language norms can also include what topics or themes are engaged in workplace conversations. Because Emma did not want her socioeconomic status to be assumed, she chose to take a more “careful” approach. What we see is that Emma has what Canagarajah (2013) calls a *cooperative disposition* toward language *and* conversation topics. She knows “what I should say and shouldn't say” in different situations and spaces. She is open to not choosing certain topics or themes. What becomes difficult to read is what Emma's cooperative disposition means in regard to her agency in these contact situations, that is, how her “sociolinguistic realities” (Ayash 2016, 557) shape her agency: is Emma adapting to situations “just so other people will feel comfortable” (Young 2013, 140), or is she adopting what Alim (2016b, 47) calls “strategic racialization” or “know[ing] when (and when not to) uphold, reject, and exploit racial categorization”? While I cannot answer these questions for Emma, I can draw on another important co-story in our interview that engages this problematic.

“Please Put a Native Speaker on the Phone”

After describing her “group of people” more fully, Emma recalls an experience that impacted her when she first started working at a multinational corporation in the Pacific Northwest. Emma begins the co-story with the preface, “there's one thing that really stood out.” Before elaborating, she orients me, as her listener, to the context for the story: “right now what the main job that I'm doing everyday is answering phone calls ” Emma then recalls her experience. “So, there was this guy who called in and they, well, I did my best explaining everything to him, and then he was, like, I can't

understand you. Please put a native speaker on the phone.” I respond with a disgusted “ugh.”

Emma being asked to “put a native speaker on” is similar to Canagarajah’s (2013, 164) informant who reflects on their interactions with Americans: “But I don’t know, I feel like the Americans if you don’t say exactly the way they say they can’t hear. So it forces you to actually sound like them you know.” This coercion to sound American or like a “native speaker” has been extensively investigated in language scholarship. Many teacher-scholars (Davies 2003; Shuck 2006; Romero 2010) have investigated the impacts of the native-non-native speaker dichotomy in contact situations and how the “existing racial hierarchy” textures these impacts for students and teachers (Liggett 2009, 31; Villanueva 1993; Curtis and Romney 2006; Kubota and Lin 2009). Emma’s lived experience is initially similar to others who share her positionality and/ or background, as seen in past scholarship, but her response diverges when she embeds another co-story and critical reflection:

At the time, ‘cause I think I just began work for—within a month of time so at that time I felt really bad. And then I talked to my coworker about it, and then he told me that, well, you don’t have to care about that. Your English is native-like even though it’s second language, but everyone comes from a different place . . . Everyone carries a different accent. So your English is your English that I can understand you. So don’t worry about it.

Emma’s evaluation can be interpreted in a variety of ways, such as her initial response of “I felt really bad.” This response may be similar to Hoi-Yui in Lee and Jenks (2016, 334), who “consider[s] [her]self an inferior English speaker sometimes” because of her Hong Kong accent. Emma’s response could also imply possible worry about her job security because she “just began work for—within a month of time.” In addition to her initial reaction, Emma embeds a co-story of her conversation with

a coworker. Emma’s coworker appears to have a translingual disposition toward language, as they say “your English is native-like even though it’s second language, but everyone comes from a different place. Everyone carries a different accent.” This explicit reference to accent suggests that Emma felt bad because of her accent. Emma’s coworker, however, “overlook[s] correctness and even unintelligible items in [a] spirit of collaboration”—that is, language norms are negotiable “as befits the

interlocutors and their purposes" (Canagarajah 2013, 41). According to her coworker, when there is a failure to uptake, it was the customer's fault, *not* Emma's, because the customer did not attempt to negotiate.

as scholarship in translingualism and language and writing studies that attends to lived experiences. From her strategic avoidance to bring up topics and themes that would make her White coworkers uncomfortable to her emotionally charged experiences with accent discrimination, Emma reveals the "lived" aspects of negotiating with monolingual, White speaker-writers in the workplace. These lived aspects remind us that language and literacy are always intersected by multiple dimensions. What has remained with me throughout this process is the comment from her coworker: "your English is your English." This comment has both intrigued and bothered me. While it reaffirms that Emma, at least to her coworker, is equal, the comment also carries implications of race and racism: it is easy for a coworker who is White and most likely cis and whose home language is English to make this kind of statement. It is just as easy for translingual scholars to say that multilingual students' linguistic repertoires, their ability to adapt to English contact situations through syntax, pronunciation, and their diversity of experiences, are meaningful; however, it is just as misleading if racism and other forms of discrimination are not considered to be part and parcel of each contact situation. It is also misleading to assume that translingual scholarship, as it is practiced now, is, in fact, anti-racist.

Translingualism is a "rejection of the monolingual paradigm" (Gilyard 2016, 28g). And while all speakers and writers are translingual, speaker-writers whose home language is not English experience this paradigm differently (Matsuda 2013; Lee 2016). As seen across Emma's co-stories, she experiences this paradigm differently because of her racial and cultural identities. Therefore, translingual teacher-scholars can no longer, as this collection argues, ignore the relationships between language and race that our students orient to in contact situations, such as the workplace or the writing classroom; my interview with Emma and the conversations from my students have illustrated that if teacher-scholars continue to do so, then we participate in the ideology of colorblindness or "Your English Is Your English" (see Rowan, chapter 1, this volume). This collection has pointed to strategies, theories, and dispositions that can reimagine a race-conscious translingualism. This chapter adds to this conversation by capturing the concept of co-stories as a living, collaborative process, composed of

many different experiences, perspectives, and notions of race and racism. Race and other dimensions (gender and sexuality) and injustices (heterosexism) inflect the lived experiences of myself and my multilingual students who are of color. However, the scope of this chapter (race and racism) limits my engagement with these inflections (see Crenshaw 1993 for more on intersectionality; see Romero 2017 for more on intersectional approaches in language studies).

If translingual teacher-scholars co-story (write with the co-stories they learn) multilingual writers' lived experiences, then teacher-scholars may potentially see the gaps, dissonances, and misunderstandings that take place across *multilingual realities* (Matsuda 2013) or the *sociolinguistic experience* or *realities* of multilinguals (Lee 2016; Ayash 2016). If they interrogate co-stories about race and racism in particular, teacher-scholars invested may better understand how multilingual students' dispositions, competencies, and practices toward language develop in situ systemic and everyday racism. In other words, dimensions of language, racialization, culture, geography, nationalism, sexuality, gender, and more shape and are shaped by multilingual speaker-writers' translingual practices and competencies. If we wish to understand the complexity of their lived experiences and what those experiences mean in relation to translingual orientations to language, then translingual teacher-scholars should actively listen to how multilingual speaker-writers theorize race and racism to make sense of language dispositions and competencies—both their own and others. In this way, we can begin to build a race-conscious translingualism that is founded on students' co-stories that speak *with* dominant perspectives in translingual scholarship and that comprehensively explore how and why “we don't all differ from said standard in the same way” (Gilyard 2016, 286).

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