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A Family Affair: Supporting the Communicative Capital and Writerly Identities of Young Children

Un asunto de familia: promoción del capital comunicativo y las identidades escriturales de los niños(as) pequeños(as)

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Abstract

This study investigates the ways in which multilingual parents/caregivers support their young children's emerging identities as writers and communicators at home, within the context of a virtual early literacy program for families of a historically marginalized community near the U.S. border with Mexico. The study's focus is on a set of multimodal compositions that four-year-old children authored during one of the virtual, videoconference sessions. The researchers employed a discourse analysis approach in examining the transcripts of the virtual sessions, which was guided by the theoretical concepts of community cultural wealth and the pedagogical concept of accompaniment. Their analysis offers a counter narrative to the deficit governmental descriptors (e.g., low-income; low-achieving) assigned to children and families of historically marginalized communities. The parents in their study were well-equipped to enact pedagogies of accompaniment that cultivate their children's communicative capital and foster their children's identities as capable communicators.

Keywords: family literacy, emergent writing, early childhood education, accompaniment, communicative capital

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Resumen

Este estudio investiga las formas en las que los padres/madres/cuidadores multilingües apoyan las identidades emergentes de sus hijos(as) pequeños(as) como escritores(as) y comunicadores(as) en el hogar, en el contexto de un programa virtual de alfabetización temprana para familias de una comunidad históricamente marginada cerca de la frontera de los Estados Unidos y México. El estudio se centra en un conjunto de composiciones multimodales que los niños(as) de cuatro años escribieron durante una de las sesiones virtuales de videoconferencia. Las investigadoras emplearon un enfoque de análisis de discurso examinando las transcripciones de las sesiones virtuales, guiado por el concepto teórico de riqueza cultural comunitaria y el concepto pedagógico de acompañamiento. El análisis ofrece una narrativa contraria a los descriptores gubernamentales deficitarios (por ejemplo, bajos ingresos, bajos logros) asignados a niños(as) y familias de comunidades históricamente marginadas. Los padres y madres en el estudio estaban bien equipados para llevar a cabo pedagogías de acompañamiento que cultivan el capital comunicativo de sus hijos(as) y fomentan sus identidades como comunicadores capaces.

Palabras clave: literacidad familiar, escritura emergente, educación infantil, acompañamiento, capital comunicativo

Field Notes

It's a warm evening during the Covid-19 pandemic. We meet at our computer screens to launch the third family session of our four-week virtual literacy program, Gulf Coast Storytime at Home (pseudonym), a community partnership project between a U.S. public university and the local U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) affiliate. Like the exterior of an apartment building, our Zoom™ screens populate with windows. Each window is a view into the household of a child, age 4, and their family. In one window we see a family's kitchen, and in another we see a child's bedroom. Others provide views into their living and dining rooms. All the windows display children, parent(s), and siblings.

This evening, we are excited to engage families in communicative events (Albers, 2020; Hymes, 1964). *The families will talk about this week's picture book in which a community gathers at the trucks and carts of local food vendors prior to attending a wrestling match. After, the children will use their writing supplies to draw and describe the kinds of food trucks that most interest them. It is the first time in the program that the children will create compositions with both illustrative and textual elements. We cannot wait to see what the children produce in the intimate space of their homes and with the accompaniment of their families.*

Introduction

When young children create multimodal compositions at home, in what ways, if any, do parents support children's emerging identities as writers and communicators? This is the research question we addressed within the context of a Gulf Coast Storytime at Home session (hereafter, GCStorytime), which featured the U.S. bilingual children's book about food trucks, *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat* (Gonzalez, 2020, Figure 1). Specifically, we investigated

the multimodal compositions the four-year-old children authored in which they wrote text, made marks, and drew images to communicate information about their own food truck concepts. We took a discourse analysis approach (Fairclough, 2001) to examining what the children and parents had to say about their multimodal compositions.

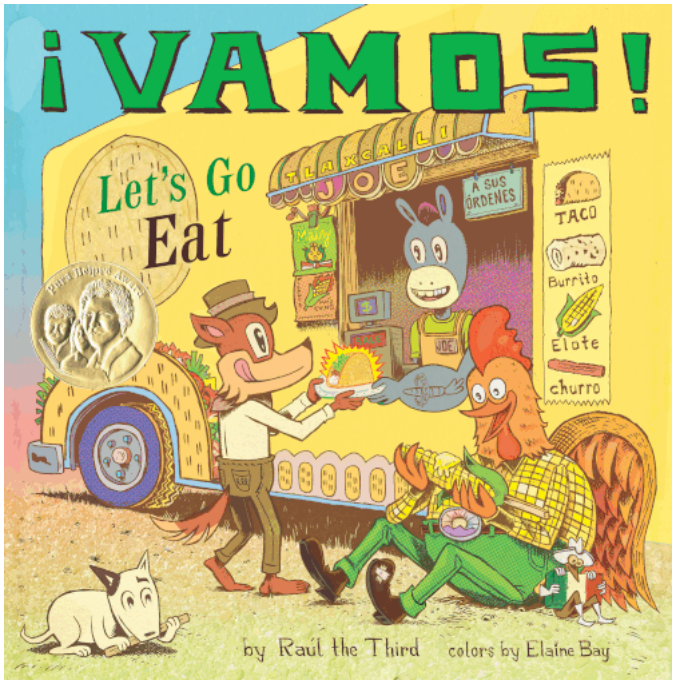

Figure 1. *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat (Gonzalez, 2020).*

Our analysis was informed by the literacy education scholarship which shows that young children's multimodal compositions typically revolve around children's drawings (Ray & Glover, 2008) and children's drawings often inform children's writing (e.g., Levin & Bus, 2003).

After all, drawing to communicate is inherently human (Dyson, 1993). Most children draw to make sense of themselves and communicate the world around them (Levin & Bus, 2003; McKay & Kendrick, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). They also draw to represent and process their experiences, which commonly regard familial and cultural home activities (e.g., Dyson, 1983; Kendrick & McKay, 2004). For these reasons, children's drawings and multimodal compositions offer communicative windows into the complexity of the children's worlds (e.g., Alvarez, 2018; Hymes, 1964).

Research also shows that young children develop their writing skills simultaneously with their drawing skills and can differentiate the purposes and processes, as well as the commonalities and differences across each system (e.g., Pinto & Incognito, 2021). Moreover, studies indicate that engaging in the process of using both drawing and writing can spur new ideas and way of communicating them (e.g., Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Short et al., 2000). Correspondingly, children's drawings can serve as bridges between imagery, text, and spoken words (Olshansky, 2008; Sidelnick & Svoboda, 2000) and scaffold young learners' future writing (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978).

Relative to parents' involvement in young children's writing processes such as in the GCStorytime session, scholars like Ray & Glover (2008) propose that children's multimodal compositions are a "template for talk" (Ray & Glover, 2008, p. 14). They are not only templates for adults to talk with children, but also templates

for young writers to verbally convey and assign meaning to the varied elements of their compositions (McKay & Kendrick, 2001; Levin & Bus, 2003). Additionally, they are templates for children to extend their ideas both visually and verbally (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Short et al., 2000). The link between children's oral language and writing practices also supports children's vocabulary development and engagement with texts while reading (Ray & Glover, 2008; Dyson, 1983).

When it comes to cultivating children's skills and identities as writers, parents and caretakers can play a very important role as their children's first teachers. Their job is to treat youngsters like experienced communicators who already write and speak in ways that are commensurable with their age (e.g., Kissel et al, 2011; Ray & Glover, 2008). Additionally, parents can support children's identities as communicators by joining them in meaningful writing experiences at home (e.g., Aram & Biron, 2004).

Such experiences can be initiated and/or maintained within the context of community-based family literacy programs that build upon familial knowledge and resources (Fikrat-Wevers et., 2021). GCStorytime is one such literacy program that serves families with young, multilingual children within a historically marginalized Latinx community of the U.S. Gulf Coast region.

In this paper, we not only examine parents' roles in cultivating children's identities as writers, but also offer new perspectives on how communicative forms of community cultural wealth (CCW, Yosso, 2005) influence children's early writing development within multilingual households.

Conceptual Framework

Two related concepts frame our study, Yosso's (2005) theoretical concept of community cultural wealth (CCW) and Sepúlveda's (2011) pedagogy of acompañamiento [accompaniment].

Community Cultural Wealth

To extend Bourdieu's (1986) framework of societal capital, Yosso (2005) expands upon Solórzano and Villalpando's (1998) examinations of critical race theory (CRT). She asserts that cultural knowledge, abilities, and skills are not exclusive to middle class populations, but integral elements of historically marginalized communities. Yosso (2005) explains how CRT scholars like Crenshaw (2002) believed there were limitations when critical theories, particularly those related to capital, were separated from discussions regarding race and racism. Alongside other CRT scholars (e.g., Crenshaw, 2002; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998), Yosso argues that CRT interrogates intersections between power, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation within African Americans, Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Latinx communities. She observes that over time, CRT scholarship has grown to encompass complex aspects of these historically marginalized communities in the U.S., creating CRT disciplines that are neither "mutually exclusive" nor "in contention with one another" (Yosso, 2005, p. 72).

Yosso (2005) also articulates how historically marginalized students, families, and communities foster and accumulate six forms of capital that have long been dismissed and devalued in dominant educational settings. Briefly, her concept of community cultural wealth (CCW) includes the following forms of capital: aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, social, and resistant. Our analysis focuses on Yosso's (2005) concept of linguistic capital, which "includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" and stems from "years of research about the value of bilingual education" (p. 78).

Of relevance to our investigation, linguistic capital corresponds with the notion that children "arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills" (p. 79). Many young children also enter school steeped in familial and cultural storytelling traditions that revolve around recounting and listening to stories. Yosso (2005) suggests that children's cultural storytelling skills could include paying attention to "detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme" (p. 79), all of which inform the ways children communicate and attend to storytelling within their homes and schools. Yosso (2005) likewise indicates that the concept of linguistic capital refers to "the ability to communicate via visual art, music or poetry" (p. 79). We propose that this ability to employ visual, auditory, textual, and other styles of communication corresponds with children's ability to author multimodal compositions such as those young participants created in the GCStorytime program.

Here, we apply Yosso's (2005) concept of linguistic capital in recognizing and honoring young children's identities as communicators. As young communicators, children draw from their familial, community, and cultural repertoires of linguistic, artistic, written, and cultural skills to aid their expressions. Young communicators also have access to members of their households, families, and communities to help inform and support their communicative engagements with different audiences for different purposes. Thus, we expand and re-frame Yosso's concept of linguistic capital to be inclusive of children's and adults' multimodal forms of communication that stem from their families and communities. Hereafter, we use the term *communicative capital* as a form of community cultural wealth (CCW).

Pedagogy of Acompañamiento

Amplifying Yosso's (2005) CCW concepts, we use Sepúlveda's (2011) pedagogy of *acompañamiento* [accompaniment]. Sepúlveda's work attends to the experiences of Mexico/U.S. border-crossing youth. Grounded in Goizueta's (2001) theological ideas of community, Sepúlveda theorizes that liberation from oppression comes from seeing each other as dignified equals. His pedagogy of *acompañamiento* refers to the notion of walking alongside each other, elevating each other's humanity through empathetic love.

In U.S. border contexts such as ours, Sepúlveda's use the Spanish word *acompañamiento* is political. The concept of *acompañamiento* validates the experiences and communicative capital of migrant youth and calls on educators to resist narrow and limited perspectives of their students' knowledge. To translate the term into English is inappropriate. Thus, in this article we maintain the integrity of Sepúlveda's intentions in using the Spanish, *acompañamiento*. We recognize family members' role as participants and steadfast mentors, supporting their children's cultivation of CCW (e.g., Heath, 1983). We regard family as companions, fostering CCW via the accompanied modeling of familial and cultural communicative resources to encourage their children's communication development.

Methods

Here, our examination of the GCStorytime artifacts (i.e., children's multimodal food truck compositions and videoconference transcripts) was informed and guided by Yosso's (2005) concept of CCW in the form of communicative capital and Sepúlveda's (2011) pedagogical concept of acompañamiento associated with parents' roles in supporting and fostering children's identities as young writers and communicators. As part of a larger case study project, we employed a discourse analysis approach to interrogating the transcripts of the GCStorytime video recordings in which we recognize children's and adults' use of language as a cultural practice (Fairclough, 2001).

Context of Study

The COVID-19 pandemic yielded an unprecedented window into families' home practices via the use of videoconference technologies for both in-school and out-of-school objectives. In some situations, including those associated with GCStorytime, familial communicative practices were on full display via the virtual windows of videoconference tools like Zoom™.

Regional Venue

The GCStorytime program serves families with young children in historically marginalized communities of the U.S. Gulf Coast regions. This series of GCStorytime sessions was for families in a school community that is identified by governmental agencies as being "low-income" and "low-achieving." We believe these terms are deficit-oriented and dehumanizing, especially relative to our conceptual lenses of CCW and acompañamiento. The school community, located near the U.S. border with Mexico, has historically been a Mexican American diaspora. However, the participants in this GCStorytime program included families who recently immigrated to the U.S. from the Middle East.

Participants in Week #3 of GCStorytime

Researcher & Program Facilitators

We, the researchers and program facilitators, are Latina education scholars and former elementary school teachers. Denise was raised in a bilingual family and learned English as her primary childhood language. Paty learned Spanish as her dominant familial language. Like the families in the study, we participated from our homes, providing windows into our personal lives, too. To accommodate all the participants, we facilitated each weekly videoconference session in both Spanish and English, moving back-and-forth between the two languages.

Activity Assistants and Companions in the Process

Paty's bilingual children, Gabriela (Gabi, age 5) and Grecia (Greci, age 8), served as assistants and compañeres during the live videoconferences. Greci and Paty modeled their acompañamiento with Gabi. Like the other families who participated in the program, they sat together at their video screen. They engaged in the activities together and recognized the communicative capital of Gabi and the other young participants.

Program Participants

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's (2021) findings that only 39% of Spanish-speaking families felt prepared to support their children's learning at home during the pandemic, only six (30%) of 20 families recruited for the GCStorytime series consistently participated in the virtual program during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The children enrolled in the program (all age 4) attended public pre-school in person during the pandemic. One family from the Middle East and three Latinx families participated in the GCStorytime program in English. Two other Latinx families participated in Spanish. Each family attended at least three of the four virtual sessions. Although school district personnel confirmed that all families possessed Internet-enabled devices to participate in GCStorytime, pre-school teachers indicated that limited Internet access barred several families' participation.

Five children and their parents participated in the Week #3 session (all names are pseudonyms).

- Amina and her mother Ana spoke Arabic as their dominant language at home and participated in English. Although they were present for the opening segment of the 45-minute videoconference session, they had to log-off due to a disruption in their home. Amina was the only girl in the program.
- Ruben and his mother Reina attended the session in English. They had an unstable home Internet connection during the Week #3 session. As a result, their comments were difficult to hear and decipher during the live videoconference and in the recording of the session.
- Felix and his mother Felicia participated in English, attending all sessions. Nonetheless, during this session, Felix and Felicia were less talkative than usual.
- Julio and his mother Josefina spoke Spanish at home and participated in the GCstorytime program in Spanish. Julio's older siblings often participated in the activities alongside Julio and Josefina, who held her baby during this week's session. Although Julio was always visibly engaged on camera, he was typically shy and quiet during the program, often deferring to his mom or siblings to speak on his behalf to the camera.
- Miguel and his parents Marco and Mariana actively participated in Spanish. Miguel was particularly excited about the evening's videoconference because his dad was participating with him.

Materials

Each family received a GCStorytime kit. The kit included a selection of food-related picturebooks written by, for, and about Latinx families, such as *Vamos! Let's go eat* (Gonzalez, 2020; Figure 1). Corresponding with each book, kits contained meal recipes, non-perishable ingredients, and parent instructions. They also included art-making and writing supplies for book-related multimodal compositions, crafts, and activities (e.g., crayons, scissors, glue sticks, paint, paper, etc.).

GCStorytime Program Procedures

At the beginning of each program series, parents attended a virtual program information session with us, the facilitators. We introduced the books and materials, described adult-child conversational strategies around family reading and storytelling, and discussed the relevance of home-based literacy practices around everyday activities. At the end of the information session, we discussed our study objectives and explained how we protect children's and families' privacy. Families who chose to enroll in the free virtual program sign release forms with the understanding that they do not have any obligation to complete the program.

Each weekly videoconference began with an opening song/rhyme and a home-based treasure hunt for items that correspond with the content of each week's picture book (e.g., "Find something that you would bring to a wrestling match."), which typically yielded an impromptu round of show-and-tell. The session continued with an interactive book-walk, in which the children and families engaged in a collective recounting of the story and discussion of the illustrations. Families then shared their own photos and videoclips of book-related activities they completed at home together (e.g., creating a meal together; recreating scenes from the book with homemade play dough).

Week #3 Procedures

During the Week #3 live videoconference with families, Paty guided children through the creation of a multimodal composition. For this composition, the children created, named, and developed menus for a food truck of their own design. She provided step-by-step instructions and real-time feedback to model for families the drawing of simple shapes and tracing of objects to cultivate children's fine motor skills for writing (e.g., Rowe, 2018). Paty, with the help of her children, Gabi and Greci, shared her computer screen with

everyone in the session. She used a document camera to model how to create the outline of a food truck by drawing rectangles and circles on paper. Then, she encouraged the children to develop their own food trucks, complete with a menu and business name.

What follows is an abridged excerpt from the transcript of the live videoconference. It provides a glimpse of the way Paty, with the assistance of Gabi and Greci, introduced and described the supplies children need for their multimodal food truck compositions.

- Paty (to group): ...Vamos a dibujar una lonchera o una camioneta de comida ... you can draw whatever food truck you want!
- [Exchange between Paty and Gabi]
- Paty (to group, exhibiting crayons and paper): ...Necesitan sus crayones y papel... So go! I'm going to give you like 30 seconds... Run and run and get your paper and your crayons! Vayan rapido les doy 30 segundos para [inaudible]
- Gabi (singing to group): rrrrrapido, rrrapido, rrrapido, rraapido
- Paty (to group): ...Mientras personas están agarrando sus cosas pueden pensar en sus loncheras, pueden pensar en el tipo de comida que quieren tener en su lonchera. You can think about the food you want in your food truck… Maybe think about the name your food truck. Piensen en el nombre de su lonchera, okay?
- Paty (to Gabi): Gabi what did you call your food truck?
- Gabi: Cakey Restaurant!
- Paty (to Greci): … What was yours Greci?
- Greci: Yummy Yum

After the guided drawing segment of the session, the children's multimodal food truck compositions then became templates for talk (Ray & Glover, 2008). Children took turns sharing their food trucks and talking about the specific qualities of their visual marks, drawing, and/or use of text. Finally, prior to singing a farewell song, the session concluded with a preview of the upcoming week's picture book, kit materials, and closely related home-based activities (e.g., relevant cooking, craft, and adult-child conversation ideas).

Data Sources

The data for this analysis were generated during Week #3 of the GCStorytime program. The data set included our field notes, images of the children's multimodal food truck compositions, and a recording and transcript of the Week #3 live videoconference.

Data Analysis

Our analysis of the video recording transcripts was grounded in the notion that video documentation offers "a means for witnessing," reveals "counter narratives," shows people "acting on the world," and thus provides tools for educators and researchers "to reflect on and analyze what is happening in their social spaces" (Green & Bloome, 2013, p. 5). For our analysis, the recording of the Week #3 videoconference offered a window to witness some of the ways the parents were companions in their children's multimodal writing processes and identity construction as communicators and writers. The recording also provided a counter narrative to dispel

any presumptions that families who live in "low-income" or "low-achieving" communities, as described by governmental measures, demonstrate low-investment in their children. The recording demonstrates that the families who participated in the GCStorytime were deeply invested in their children.

We employed a discourse analysis approach in our examination of the transcripts and our interpretation of the children's multimodal compositions as templates for talk (Ray & Glover, 2008) as a means to understanding families' use of language as a cultural practice of their homes (Fairclough, 2001). Our discourse analysis was guided by Yosso's (2005) theoretical concepts of community cultural wealth (CCW) and Sepúlveda's (2011) pedagogy of acompañamiento. These layered concepts afford an analytic tool to examine and describe the ways in which parents serve as mentors and companions in fostering young children's identities as writers. We appreciate that when children engage in purposeful authorship, their responses are powerful tools for communication (Dyson, 1993; Levin & Bus, 2003; McKay & Kendrick, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978).

Findings and Discussion

For continuity, we present our findings and discussion together. We dedicate sub-sections to each child who authored multimodal food truck compositions. Below, children appear in the same order in which they shared their compositions during the videoconference.

Felix's and Ruben's Food Trucks

We start with an excerpt from the brief conversations about Felix's and Ruben's food truck compositions. (See Figure 2). Felix's and Ruben's comments were limited during the Week #3 videoconference, as mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, they are still significant.

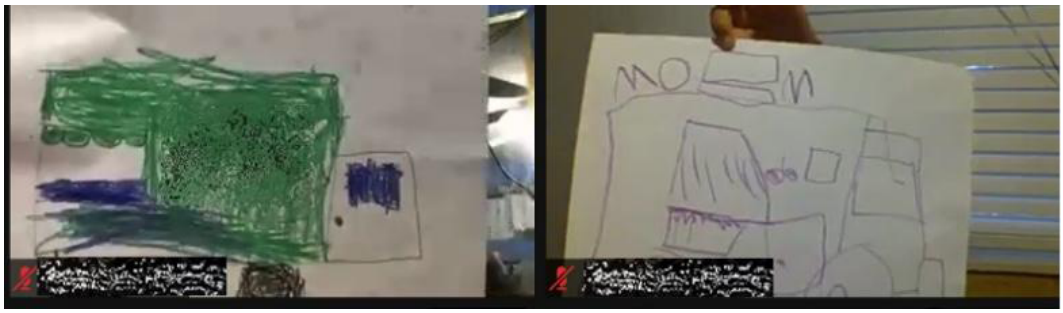

Figure 2. *Composition by Felix and Ruben.*

- Paty (to group): ¿Quieren compartir? Cada uno puede compartir el nombre de su camioneta o su lonchera.
- Felix (seated next to mother, Felicia): Mine is Felix's truck.
- Paty: Felix's truck! Can we see it? Can we see your truck again?...
- [Felix waves his composition in front of the camera.]
- Paty: What do we eat at Felix's truck?
- Felix: Food!

- Paty: Food?
- [Felix nods]
- [Paty pauses to allow Felix additional time to elaborate.]
- Paty: Yummy. We've got to go to Felix's food truck. Vamos a ir a la camioneta a la lonchera de Felix's truck.
- Paty: Okay quién sigue, Ruben?
- Ruben (holds composition to camera): Ruben's Truck and I tried to draw a …
- [Internet disruption]
- Paty: What is the name of your food truck? …
- [Internet disruption]
- Ruben: Ruben's…
- [Internet disruption]
- Paty: That looks delicious. I love your food truck. Thank you.

Here, both Felix and Ruben name their food trucks after themselves. To protect his privacy, Felix's actual name, located on the side of his food truck, is obscured in Figure 2.

Felix

As described above, Felix was the first to speak about his multimodal composition during sharing time. He was seated next to his mother Felicia, who was likewise visible in the virtual window of their home. Felix announced to the group, "Mine is Felix's truck!" Paty recognized Felix as an author who had the communicative capital and resources to assign additional meaning to his multimodal composition. Using his composition as a template for talk, she asked, "What do we eat at Felix's truck?" Felix quickly replied, "Food!" Paty confirmed, "Food?" Felix nodded. Paty paused. Her intention was to provide more time for Felix, with the accompaniment/companionship of his mother Felicia, to convey and assign additional meaning to his food truck composition by describing the type of food his truck sells (e.g., McKay & Kendrick, 2001; Levin & Bus, 2003). When Felix did not elaborate, Paty shifted to Ruben due to the time constraints of the videoconference session.

In retrospect, we see that we could have further accompanied Felix in verbally extending his food truck concept by asking specific questions such as "What kind of food do you sell at your food truck?" or "What is on the menu of your food truck? (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Short et al., 2000). We also see that we could have been more explicit in our initial invitation to the group. We asked families, "Do you want to share?" Then, we suggested, "Everyone can share the name of their truck or their luncheonette." As the first child to share, Felix demonstrated his consideration of the language and syntax of our invitation by responding, "Mine is Felix's truck!" As an element of his community's cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), Felix revealed his communicative capital in exercising his attentive listening skills.

Given Felix's attention to our initial prompt, we wonder how he might have responded had we directed children and parents to first talk with each other and then to share with the group the name of their truck and the food on their trucks' menus. We likewise acknowledge that as facilitators we need to better demonstrate our pedagogical alignment as companions to the GCStorytime families (Sepúlveda, 2011). In the future, we must attend to the explicit ways we encourage families to use children's multimodal compositions as templates for talk that helps children to extend and develop their ideas and identities as authors and communicators (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Dyson, 1983; Ray & Glover, 2008).

Ruben

After Felix, Ruben shared his food truck. (See Figure 2). Unfortunately, despite Ruben's enthusiasm to discuss his composition with the group, Internet disruptions made it difficult to decipher Ruben's words during the live videoconference. (Only later, in reviewing the videorecording repeatedly, were we able to understand and transcribe his actual comments.) Had the connection been stable, it would have been possible to use Ruben's multimodal food truck composition as a template for talk. Specifically, it would have been possible to ask questions about the letter-like marks atop Ruben's food truck and probe the second phrase of Ruben's opening statement, "I tried to draw a…" Nevertheless, Ruben's comment is noteworthy. It indicates that he recognized himself as a communicator and author of a multimodal composition. It suggests that Ruben wanted to assign meaning to an element of his food truck composition to serve as a bridge between his drawing and his spoken words (Olshansky, 2008; Sidelnick & Svoboda, 2000). Additionally, Ruben demonstrated the depth of his communicative capital in recognizing that he could use his sharing time during the live videoconference to verbally extend the ideas of his multimodal composition (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Short et al., 2000).

Julio's and Miguel's Food Trucks

We now shift to the conversations around Julio's and Miguel's food trucks, which featured Julio's mother Josephina and Miguel's parents Marco and Mariana.

Julio

The following excerpt is an abridged transcript associated with Julio's multimodal food truck composition, appearing in two parts. The first exchange occurred immediately after Paty finished the guided drawing activity, described earlier as part of the Week #3 procedures. The second followed Felix and Ruben's discussions, above.

Part 1. Julio exhibited his food truck composition and Josefina described it. (See Figure 3.) In Part 1 of the following excerpt, Julio was the first child to display his work to the camera. Denise acknowledged Julio's composition. She assumed that Julio had used phonetic spelling in writing "panadera" and then announced to the group, "Oh! Julio has a panadería." In response to this announcement, Julio's mother Josefina, explained, "unas donas [some doughnuts]" and pointed to a set of concentric circles on the right side of the composition (outside of the food truck). Then, moving her finger to two vertical rectangular shapes with interior horizontal marks, she added, "y pan [and bread]." (See Figure 3.). Here, Josefina modeled her support of Julio's communicative capital and identity as a writer. She also modeled her companionship with Juilo in verbalizing the meanings Julio assigned to the shapes he created in his food truck composition. Josefina's actions aligned with a pedagogical approach of acompañamiento (Sepúlveda, 2011) in which she attentively listened to Julio talk about his composition off-camera such that she could serve as his spokesperson on-camera (Ray & Glover, 2008).

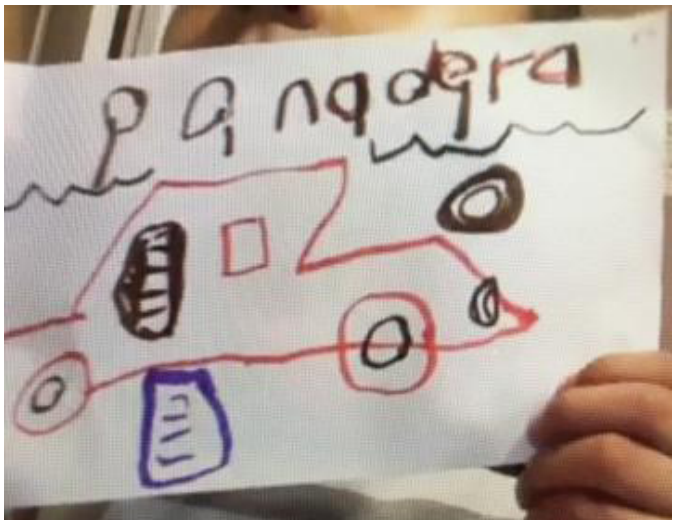

Figure 3. *Composition by Julio.*

- Denise (attempting to read the textual element of Julio's composition): Oh! Julio has a panadería.
- Josefina (holding Julio's composition closer the camera, pointing to circular shape): Unas donas
- Josefina (pointing to rectangular shapes): y pan.
- Denise: Muy bien.
- Denise (to group): Okay continue [working]… We're going to talk about next week.

[Facilitators describe the books and activities for the next session. – Approximately 3 minutes.]

Part 2. After Felix and Ruben, Julio shared his completed composition with the help of his mother Josefina. As described in the excerpt below, Josefina, served as a companion and advocate of her son's agency and identity as a writer. She asserted that Julio's written text was not a representation of the word panadería, as assumed by facilitators Denise and Paty, who could be perceived as having the most authority in the group. Rather, in response to Paty's invitation to revisit Julio's composition, "Oh! Vimos ya la panadería…", Josefina resisted the facilitators' label for Julio's food truck. She clarified, "La Panadera." Via this act of acompañamiento, we propose that Josefina defended the intentionality of Julio's written text "panadera," thereby legitimizing Julio's efficacy as a writer.

- [Julio waves his hand to be the next person to share after Ruben.]
- Paty (to Julio): Do you want to tell us about your food truck? Nos quieres decir de tu camioneta?
- [Julio exhibits his finished food truck composition.]
- Paty: Oh! Vimos ya la panadería…
- Josefina: Si. La Panadera.

In this exchange, we also propose that Josefina validated her son's communicative capital. She affirmed the name Julio gave to his business, "La Panadera," by verbally preceding the written text of Julio's composition with the article, "la." Had it not been for Josefina's stance as a companion and her personal pedagogy of acompañamiento, the facilitators' inaccurate assumption that Julio's written text was a product of phonetic spelling would not have been challenged. In sum, Josefina was an essential resource in recognizing Julio as an intentional writer and validating his authorial agency as communicative capital.

Miguel

In this next and final excerpt, Miguel engages in a conversation about his food truck composition with his parents Marco and Mariana. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. *Composition by Miguel.*

- Paty: Miguel?
- Denise: (holding hand to her ear, indicating that Miguel's mic is mute): Miguel.
- Miguel (showing composition to camera): Se llama, Truckey.
- Marco (to son Miguel): ¿Se llama qué?
- Miguel: Truckey se llama
- Marco: (risa / laughs)
- Paty: What do we eat at your truck?
- Marco: ¿Que comida hay, de qué comida? ¿Y lo que dibujaste atrás?
- Miguel (to father): Zanahorias
- Marco (to Miguel): Zanahorias
- Denise (to group): Muy saludable.
- Miguel (to father): ¿Cómo se dice en español zanahorias, papá?
- Mariana (in background): Zanahorias.
- Miguel (to father): Zanahorias.
- Marco (to Miguel): Uh hum.
- Miguel (to group, strongly): Zanahorias!

In this exchange, Miguel's parents served as mentors and companions to their son. Marco, Miguel's father, demonstrated his companionship via actions such as sitting alongside his son in front of the camera, engaging in the videoconference, and showing curiosity by asking questions of his son (e.g., ¿Se llama qué?). Mariana, Miguel's mother, revealed her companionship by following the videoconference from the family's kitchen, listening to her child's comments and conversation, and supplying information to Miguel.

Marco and Mariana likewise modeled a pedagogy of acompañamiento to foster Miguel's communicative capital. Marco was a resource to Miguel in translating Paty's question from English to Spanish and adding another relevant query (¿Que comida hay, de qué comida? ¿Y lo que dibujaste atrás [de tu papel]?). Marco's latter question, "And, what did you draw on the back [of your paper]?" acknowledged Miguel as the author of the composition, referencing the additional marks, texts, and/or illustrations that Miguel composed but were unseen by the camera. In turn, Marco recognized and valued the full scope of Miguel's communicative endeavors with the group.

Additionally, Marco's amused response to Miguel's naming the food truck, "Truckey" further reinforced Miguel's identity as a clever communicator. As a Spanish-dominant bilingual child, Miguel's decision to give his food truck a diminutive English name, "Truckey" as opposed to a Spanish diminutive name like "Camioncito" illustrates a depth to Miguel's communicative capital. Miguel seemed deliberate in his use of both English and Spanish, which elicited an affirming reaction from his father.

The range of Miguel's communicative capital was likewise evident in his use of color as an additional mode of communication (e.g., Olshansky, 2008; Sidelnick & Svoboda, 2000). As suggested by Miguel's reading of his multimodal composition, Truckey is an orange food truck that serves carrots. We acknowledge, given the context of our videoconference program, that we did not observe Miguel's decision-making process during the authoring phase of his work. However, we accept that Miguel was deliberate in his use of orange crayon because it visually reinforces the color of zanahorias and the use of multiple modes helps children to interpret meanings (Olshansky, 2008).

On this note, we return to Marco and Mariana's roles as mentors and companions to their son. Miguel recognized his parents as resources and turned to them to clarify that was using "zanahorias" accurately in Spanish. Only after both offered their reassurance did Miguel speak to the camera himself. Marco and Mariana did not interrogate Miguel's query, "Cómo se dice en español zanahorias…?" Otherwise, they might have offered a curious response such as, "Estás en lo correcto. ¿Por qué preguntas? [*You are correct. Why do you ask?*]". Since Miguel gave his food truck the English name, "Truckey," absent follow-up questions there is no way of knowing if Miguel might have intended to ask, "Como se dice en inglés zanahorias…?" In summary, Marco and Mariana were attentive companions to their child. They recognized Miguel's communicative capital. They validated their son's identity as an author, illustrator, and linguist, honoring his use of both Spanish and English. Moreover, they supported Miguel's self-expression within the GCStorytime community.

Conclusion & Implication

Applying the lenses of Yosso's theoretical concept of community cultural wealth and Sepúlveda's pedagogy of acompañamiento, we examined the ways in which four young children, all age 4, discussed their multimodal compositions within the context of a virtual GCStorytime communicative event (Albers, 2020; Hymes, 1964) during the Covid-19. Our analysis reveals that unlike the deficit labels applied to their school community (i.e., low-income; low-achieving) the families in this series of GCStorytime were ready and well-equipped to support their children's writing at home as mentors and companions.

Our analysis illustrates how the parents of two children provided varying forms of acompañamiento, sitting alongside and facilitating their children's identities and experiences as capable communicators. The videoconference excerpts and transcripts we examined here offer a snapshot of the ways in which parents can enact pedagogies of acompañamiento that cultivate their children's communicative capital and foster their children's identities as capable communicators. Parents Josefina, Marco, and Mariana demonstrated that mentor-companions of young writers:

- treat children as intentional authors and illustrators (Josefina, Marco, and Mariana);
- avoid making assumptions about the meanings of children's drawings, marks, and texts (Josefina);
- show curiosity by listening and inviting children to talk about their writing and compositions (Marco);
- (re)assure children that they are capable communicators (Marco and Mariana);
- serve as resources in describing and/or reporting the meanings children assign to their drawings, marks, texts, and/or other modes of expression (Josefina); and
- contextualize and/or (re)frame information to support children's understanding (Marco).

As illustrated by Josefina, Marco, and Marian, supporting young children' writerly identities at home takes much more than merely practicing grapheme-phoneme connections. It requires parents/caregivers, older siblings, and/or other family/community members to not only treat young children like experienced communicators who already write and speak in ways that are commensurable with their age (e.g., Kissel et al, 2011; Ray & Glover, 2008, but also to act solidarity with them as their mentor-companions.

We acknowledge that the scope of our investigation was narrow and limited to the families who participated in Week #3 of the GCStorytime series. Thus, the findings of our analysis are not generalizable to other families nor other situations. Nevertheless, the implications are important. First, our analysis reinforces that parents/caregivers can influence children's literacy development, communicative capital, and identity construction as communicators and writers (Heath, 1983; Yosso, 2005). It implies that early childhood educators and researchers should recognize the role parents/caregivers can play in enacting pedagogies of acompañamiento at home. Alongside their children, parents/caregivers can facilitate meaningful multimodal drawing and writing experiences with their children (e.g., Aram & Biron, 2004). They can assist their children's verbal communication (Ray & Glover, 2008) and support their children's vocabulary and reading development (Dyson, 1983; Kendrick & McKay, 2004; Short et al., 2000).

Second, our analysis lays bare the unintended consequences of making presumptions about the intentions and/or meanings children have assigned to the drawings, marks, and/or written elements of their multimodal compositions, which are often purposefully entwined (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Levin & Bus, 2003; Olshansky, 2008; Pinto & Incognito, 2021; Sidelnick & Svoboda, 2000). It implies that early childhood educators and parents/caregivers should resist the temptation to interpret children's compositions without consulting the young authors. Instead, they should demonstrate curiosity and invite the young authors to personally convey and assign meanings to the varied elements of their own compositions. It also reinforces that early childhood educators should value all forms of communication, recognizing drawing as an integral aspect of composition (Trujillo & Emerson, 2020).

Third, our analysis reveals missed opportunities for supporting children's and families' engagement in writing and meaning-making experiences when instructions are not clear. It points to the responsibility of educators and researchers, like us. We need to be concise about our objectives and explicit in our directions in leading activities intended to facilitate intergenerational conversations around children's multimodal compositions and to foster children's communicative capital and identities as writers.

Finally, our analysis points to need for additional research to examine ways in which children's home-based communicative activities can foster meaningful multimodal writing experiences (Aram & Biron, 2004) that help to scaffold young children's future writing (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). Although the scholarship substantiates the role of community-based family literacy programs in supporting children's reading in school (Fikrat-Wevers, et. al, 2021), further explorations are necessary. With the potential for more regional and/or global situations in which it is not possible for families of young children to gather in community spaces, it is valuable to examine ways in which virtual program impact children's writing development. Moreover, it is essential to understand how family literacy programs, virtual or otherwise, can enact pedagogies of acompañamiento (Sepúlveda, 2011) to support the writerly identities, communicative capital, and community cultural wealth of young children and families of historically marginalized communities.

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