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To cite this article: Cristobal Salinas Jr. (2017) Transforming academia and theorizing spaces for Latinx in higher education: *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder*, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 30:8, 746-758, DOI: [10.1080/09518398.2017.1350295](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1350295)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1350295>



Published online: 11 Sep 2017.



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Transforming academia and theorizing spaces for Latinx in higher education: *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder*

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* are used as a symbolic representations and reflections of oppression and power in academia. Seventy-four percent of scholarship across the world is published in English. The author argues the importance of publishing in Spanish as form of liberatory practice to provide a voice for Spanish-speaking communities who currently do not have access (to the power of academia and of information), and whose lived experiences are not acknowledged or captured in this medium, and who have by-and-large been marginalized and forgotten in research. In attempt to help improve our understandings of Latinos/as in society – and provide access, give a voice, and reflect on their lived experiences – we must publish in Spanish and teach about the *voces perdidas* that have been erased from the educational curriculum, and the *voces de poder* who have dominated and silenced the *voces perdidas*.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 13 May 2016

Accepted 18 March 2017

KEYWORDS

Language; higher education; Spanish; research; Latinx

Previous literature shows the advancement of historically oppressed communities of people in higher education continue to be marginalized. Specifically, the educational achievement of Latinxs¹ in US higher education lags behind other racial groups despite efforts in designing programs to increase recruitment, retention, graduation rates, and to improve opportunities and climate of underrepresented student populations (Fry, 2002; Krogstad, 2015; Núñez, Hoover, Pickett, Stuart-Carruthers, & Vásquez, 2013; Salinas, 2015a). Although Latinx students' enrollment in postsecondary institutions has tripled since 1993 (a 203% increase from 1993 to 2003), they continue to meet challenges in obtaining four-year, master's, and doctoral degrees (Fry, 2002; Krogstad, 2015). In 2013, Latinx students, age 25–29, represented the lowest percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher; 15% were Latinx, 20% were Black, 40% were whites, and 60% were Asians (Fry & Taylor, 2013; Santiago, Galdeano, & Taylor, 2015). Latinx students express they do not feel welcome on campus, cite a lack of same race/ethnicity faculty and staff to connect with, do not see themselves represented in educational curriculum, and acknowledge an absence of a curriculum that teaches the historical events of oppression and accomplishments of communities of color (Darder, 2012; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Núñez et al., 2013; Rendón, 1992; Salinas, 2015a).

Although Latinx students are often classified as a single group, they come from different countries with unique traditions, customs, and cultures (Bordas, 2013). Latinx originates from 22 nations of origin and are culturally interconnected with individuals in South, Central, and North America. Latinx students may also enjoy the privileges and challenges of constructing identity by choosing and combining one or two races/ethnicities (i.e. Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Hispanic, Latinx, Latinx, Black, or

white), and one or two languages (i.e. Spanish, English, or *Spanglish*), they sometimes choose one over the other (Salinas, 2015a). Most Latinx students have the unique experience of navigating two cultures, two languages, and two worlds (Anzaldúa, 2007; Macedo, 2007).

In this paper, I coin the terms *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* as a symbolic representation of the academic experiences and reflections of the Latinx community whose primary language is Spanish. Drawing from literature reviews, legal cases, and political histories of Latinxs in education, I highlight these communities' accomplishments and argue that Spanish-speaking Latinx students often continue to be unnoticed, targeted, marginalized, and erased from higher education. In an attempt to help improve our understandings of the Latinx diaspora and provide access, give a voice, and reflect on their lived experiences I make recommendations for how we can uncover and recover *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder*.

Voces perdidas, voces de poder

The concept of *voces*, translated into English as 'voices,' represents one of the most important rights and democratic principles for individuals; it is a continuous process that involves reflection, pain, fear, and hope; a process through which one can create and share knowledge. *Voces perdidas* characterizes the unheard and *lost voices*, the narratives that have been forgotten and rejected by a system that often only recognizes *voces de poder*, or *powerful voices* that overshadow those with little to no political, social, economic, and academic capital. *Voces de poder* dominate academia and silence non-English speakers, communities of color, and those who do not have access to higher education and scholarship. *Voces perdidas* have been lost through history due to the political, economical, and social injustices for marginalized communities of people (Darder, 2012; Valenzuela, 1999; Villalpando, 2004).

Voces perdidas are often unheard and oppressed and characterize reflectivity and thoughtfulness in making meaning and understanding the world. *Voces perdidas* are seeking to heal and be liberated from slavery and oppression. In contrast, *Voces de poder* are those powerful and privileged voices that dictate, dominate, and indoctrinate ideologies with a specific partisan or biased belief. *Voces de poder* increase their authority as they suppress the powerless. *Voces de poder* intent on maintaining the system as is, in that they are convinced of the rectitude of hierarchical society, based on an appearance of meritocratic rule' (Darder, 2012, p. 4). Both, *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* speak from their perspective. Yet, *voces de poder* have the power to control the political, social, economics, and academic movements; and *voces perdidas*, when heard, have the power to create social transformation.

Voces perdidas and *voces de poder* are highly relevant to US higher education. For example, the white president of a historically white institution might speak to the many accomplishments and successes of the institution, including opportunities for research, teaching, complexity of budgets, workforce demands, degree completion, maintaining facilities, and technology. However, Latinx faculty, staff and students might provide a different perspective of institutional accomplishments. Latinx individuals may celebrate Latinx students' graduations and awards, community events, and family-centered programs. *Voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* mirror different, if not opposite experiences and values in higher education.

Furthermore, the experiences of Latinx faculty, staff and students can be analyzed from both *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* perspectives as scholars have created new theories to help analyze the social identities and lived experiences of Latinx students that many other theories cannot or do not attend to. For example, Latinx scholars who have earned a terminal degree through formal education can be considered *voces de poder*, as they have gained access to academic and political capital, and the ability to deconstruct, create, and publish. Latinx scholars have created new theories as a form of liberatory practice to help analyze issues and realities that other theories cannot or do not, like issues around language, ethnicity, culture, immigration, and identity (Villalpando, 2004). For example, *Testimonio* (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001), *autohistoria* (Anzaldúa, 2007), counterstory (Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002), and Latino critical theory (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valdes, 1997), are some of the theories that have evolved as a form of liberatory practice. Various scholars have used these

theories to analyze the needs of the Latinx community, to bridge research and practice, and often used to fix the disconnect between their professional and personal selves.

Yet, it is important to recognize that many of these scholars have created and published new theories as a form of liberatory practice, as they have also seen or experienced rejection, oppression, and marginalization due their language, ethnicity, culture, immigration, and identity (Anzaldúa, 2007; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; The Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Valdes, 1997; Villalpando, 2004). At all levels of education, politics, economics, socially, historical and cultural, *voces de poder* have the power to silence and suppress *voces perdidas*. Moreover, another act of resistant from Latinx scholars includes publishing in Spanish, making their scholarship and activism accessible to a larger segment of the Latinx diaspora. Publishing in Spanish provides a voice for Spanish-speaking communities of people who currently do not have access to scholarship in Spanish, and whose lived experiences are not acknowledged or captured in this medium, and who have, by-and-large, been marginalized and forgotten in academia.

Cristobal's positionality as a *voz perdida*

My family and I migrated from Zacatecas, Mexico to Nebraska, US when I was in eighth grade, after my father was kidnapped for ransom by police officers. This traumatic event had a decisive impact in my identity development as a student and scholar. I vividly recollect when we arrived at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, making a flight connection to Omaha Eppley Airfield. My brother and I were too silent and shy to ask for directions in order to navigate from one gate to another. This was the first time I personally experienced entering a new world (United States) different from my own world (Mexico), and engaging in a different language (English) from my home language (Spanish). Immediately, I knew living in the US was going to be a difficult learning process; a process which involved learning a new language, culture, customs, and traditions.

Through my experiences in the US public education system, I have faced multiple forms of micro-aggressions and oppression due to my ability to speak Spanish, and for having a Mexican, Chicano, and Latino accent. For example, when I first enrolled in eighth grade, my history teacher did not invite me to the eighth grade class trip because I was in the English as a Second Language classroom. Later on during my undergraduate college experience, I ran for student body president and I received an anonymous threat that said, 'Chris, take your name off the ballot before you get hurt. We do not want a Mexican or Fag as student body president.'

In graduate school, I continued to face similar themes of subjugation from my peers, faculty, and institution. The first week of classes as a master's student, a Latina classmate suggested we work together on our group project since we had similar research interests around undocumented students. I replied, 'What makes you believe that my research interests focus on undocumented students?' She responded, 'Well, you have a thick accent, and you moved to the United States when you were in middle school. Aren't you undocumented?' I remember being angry and upset, not because she assumed I was an undocumented student, but because another Latina labeled and stereotyped me for my accent and immigration journey.

Now as a scholar, my comments at academic conferences have been dismissed. Not too long ago, I was invited to do a lecture on diversity at a university. At the beginning of my presentation a member from the audience raised his hand and said, 'You are stupid.' I followed him by asking 'What makes you believe that?' He responded, 'Because you have an [Latino] accent.' Through the process of understanding my accent and confronting individuals' stereotypical views, I have learned to navigate two worlds within multiple languages and an accent. I can consciously 'hide' my accent if I choose not to speak. Depending on the environment, I decide if I need to speak slower and enunciate more so others do not question my intelligence and ability to speak English. Since I arrived at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, and through my educational experiences, I have learned that I need different languages to communicate with others and myself: a secret language that brings me closer to reflection, to my family, to my friends, and to my research. Now, I speak 'academic,' Standard English, and Spanish, working

class and slang English and Spanish, Chicano Spanish, *Spanglish*, *chilango*, and *Zacatecano* dialog. As an emerging scholar, I recognize that my voice has been lost; yet, I understand that with my PhD and by simply writing this piece I have fought to reclaim my *voz de poder*.

Latinx in education

Despite anti-affirmative action, anti-bilingual education, and anti-immigrant policies, Latinx students remain a part of the US educational experience (Núñez et al., 2013). Latinx educational enrollment and attainment has changed significantly over the past years, reflecting the group's growth in the US population and public educational system (Krogstad, 2015). The US Census Bureau (2015a) reported that Latinx are the fastest growing population. More than one million (2.1%) of Hispanics/Latinos will represent the nation's population between 1 July 2013 and 1 July 2014. In 2014, 55 million Hispanics/Latinos represented the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States and constituted 17% of the nation's total population (US Census Bureau, 2015a).

In 2014, of the 2.9 million youth age 16–24 who graduated from high school the overall college enrollment rate in the United States was 72.2% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015); however, Latinx are less likely than any other racial/ethnic group to enroll in and attend a four-year institution (Krogstad, 2015). The problem of Latinx not enrolling and attending post-secondary education starts during high school. Latinx high school students' dropout rate in 2000 was 32%, and in 2013 the dropout rate dropped to 14% among Latinx individuals who are 18 to 24 years old. As of 2013, the Latinx student dropout rate (14%) remains higher than any other racial group (Krogstad, 2015). Scholars have made the argument that in order to meet the needs of Latinx students in schools, bilingual education, educators, resources, and policy in support of bilingual education are necessary (Darder, 2012; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Pérez, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999). However, anti-bilingual education policy has marginalized and silenced Latinx' *voces de poder* (Darder, 2012; Núñez et al., 2013).

Historical context of education and *voces perdidas*

While Latinx political history is well documented in extant literature, it is not discussed or studied in the US educational curriculum, unless presented through ethnic studies or Latinx and Chicano studies. The political history of Latinxs is important to the context of understanding how this population has become *voces perdidas*, and how they continue to be a marginalized and targeted population (Vazquez, 2011).

Many of the Latinx' successes and accomplishments have been overlooked by *voces de poder*. For instance, Latinx students are often times ignored in the educational curriculum in US higher education (Darder, 2012). Marx and Larson (2012) suggest Latinx students are still 'seeking to have their educational needs met in a system that has often rejected them' (p. 261). Historically, Latinx students have suffered and experienced the same inequalities as Black students and other minority groups in schools: poor and overcrowded facilities, underprepared teachers, and segregated schools (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Latinx students have been silenced for decades, and were involved in the fight for civil rights even before the *Brown v. Board of Education* was argued on 9 December 1952 (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Additionally, Castellanos et al. (2006) suggest 'understanding how the United States knowingly and willingly misappropriated land from Mexico is to know the beginnings of Latinx miseducation' (p. xxvii). Since the 1880s, Latinxs were marginalized and barred from the US. The *Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo* (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo), formally entitled *Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic*, was the beginning of *Mexicanos* losing civil and poverty rights. The peace treaty was signed on 2 February 1848 to end the Mexican–American War (1846–1848) between the United States and Mexico. The treaty allowed the United States to takeover Mexico's territory, including what is now Arizona, California, western Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah – the equivalent of 525,000 square miles. *Mexicanos* became conquered people overnight (Miguel & Valencia, 1998). For many Latinx, the treaty is a form of historical oppression and

continued discrimination that they continue to confront and feel today. The *Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo* marks a historical movement of *voces perdidas* for the Latinx community in the US; Latinx' *voces* have been challenged, erased, unheard, and unrecognized by *voces de poder*.

While Latinx communities existed in areas prior to those lands becoming part of US, they were forced to participate in US culture but excluded from rights to the land and everything that comes with owning land. Specifically, they were excluded from the right to education. Below, I explore legal cases and the political and educational history of Latinx in the US education system to highlight how Latinxs have been marginalized, barred, and separated from education.

Independent School District v. Salvierra

In 1930, Latinx' civil rights became a primary focus when Mexican American students were illegally segregated on the basis of race in Del Rio, Texas, as outlined in the case of *Independent School District v. Salvierra* (1930) (Castellanos et al., 2006; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). Jesus Salvierra, along with other parents, sued Independent School District because Mexican American students were deprived of the benefits other white students had in schools. The superintendent testified,

Well we had a peculiar situation as regards people of Spanish or Mexican extraction here ... There are decided peculiarities of children of Mexican or Spanish descent which can be better taken care of in those elementary grades by their being placed separately from the children of Anglo-Saxon parentage, because the average Spanish speaking children know English as a foreign tongue, and consequently when you put him in a class with English speaking children and teach him according to the method of teaching English speaking children he is greatly handicapped, and we have that handicap extending clear up into High School in all content subjects, such as English and History, and where they come along together in the same grade we find again and again the children are handicapped because they are slow in reading English and read it with difficulty, and as a consequence fail in considerable numbers in English and History. (*Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Salvierra*, 1930, para. 4–5)

Despite the fact that the school district argued that Mexican American students were segregated based on their educational needs and that all students needed to learn English, the court ruled that the school district illegally segregated Mexican American students on the basis of race (Castellanos et al., 2006; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). The *Independent School District v. Salvierra* lawsuit is a clear demonstration of *voces perdidas* and *voces de poder* in education. As the Mexican American students struggle for equal educational opportunities, were segregated from attending school with white students, their experiences were silenced, ignored, unheard, and oppressed by *voces de poder*.

Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District

In 1931, Mexican and Mexican American students were blocked from entering Lemon Grove Grammar School because the school board did not believe that Mexican American students belonged in school because of their Mexican origin. Without the knowledge of the Lemon Grove community, a *caballeriza* (barn-yard or stable), a two-room school building, was built for Mexican and Mexican American students. Lemon Grove School District attempted to segregate Mexican and Mexican American students by separating them, by sending them to the *caballeriza*, from white students. The principal of Lemon Grove Grammar School welcomed and turned away Mexican students at the school door, directing them to the 'new school', the *caballeriza*. The parents decided to not send their children to school since they were not allowed in the main school. Parents organize *El Comité de Vecinos de Lemon Grove* (the Lemon Grove Neighbors Committee), and sought for assistance from the Mexican consul in San Diego and attorneys. On 13 February 1931, the committee filed a suit against the Lemon Grove School Board for racial segregation of Mexican student (Alvarez, 1986).

The resulting lawsuit involving the segregation of Latinx students was the first successful national court case: *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District* in 1931. In this case the 'Superior Court of California Judge Claude Chambers ruled that separate facilities for Mexican American students were not conducive to their "Americanization" and hindered the English proficiency of Spanish-speaking children' (Castellanos et al., 2006, pp. xxviii–xxix). The court ruled that no school districts could segregate on the basis of national origin, Mexican descent or race (Castellanos et al., 2006; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012).

The *Independent School District v. Salvatierra* and the *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District* cases made significant contribution towards the advance of inclusion and fought against segregation in schools. Additional cases, such as *Mendez v. Westminster* and *the Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School Districts*, also contributed to equal educational opportunities for Latinx students, and helped pave the way for *Brown v Board of Education* (Valencia, 2005). The court system outcomes of these cases were to correct marginalization of Mexican students, the system did not change to correct the problem as marginalization, segregation, and racism still lives. Through the presented cases it is evident that the motives for integration were to benefit the *voce de poder*. Also, the cases illustrated how *voces perdidas* have historically been, and continue to be, marginalized by the US political system and the educational system. For example, most recently, the White House website eliminated all bilingual access; the White House website no longer includes an option for translating into Spanish. Cornel West (2011) stated that 'in the age of Obama [and Trump] the US Empire still hides and conceals forms of institutional and structural racism that permeate our schools, prisons, workplace, films, TVs and iPods' (p. 9).

English-only movement

The United States has no official language at the federal level; however, the most commonly spoken language is English, which is used nearly in all governmental functions (Ryan, 2013). Many states and territories have adopted English as an official language. Thirty-one states in the US have approved English as the official language (Liu & Sokhey, 2014). Although, there is no 'English-only' law; 'English-only' has become a political movement. In 1907, former President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, 'we have room for but one language in this country, and that is English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house' (1926, p. 554). Even in 2016, some presidential candidates believe that communities in the US should only speak English (Goldmacher, 2016). Academe, which is a microcosm of US society, is often in danger of duplicating the 'English-only' movement.

The 'English-only' movement was birthed from a desire to protect an American identity and from a fear of losing culture and language, especially as Europeans arrived to the United States (Crawford, 1996). For example, in 1787, Germans founded Franklin College after a large financial contribution by Benjamin Franklin (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Franklin College was the first bi-lingual college in the country, they offered an education in English and German. Furthermore, German immigrations expanded on the importance of research, science, technology, and graduate and technical schools. As Germans relocated through the United States and territory, citizens became threatened and started the English-only and English first political movement. Individuals who support the English-only and English first political movement have been characterized by Crawford (1997) as:

Citizens who want to preserve our common language and avoid ethnic strife; Bigots seeking to roll back civil rights advances for language-minority groups; Conservatives hoping to impose a sense of national unity and civic responsibility; Liberals who fear that bilingual education and bilingual voting discourage assimilation; Euro-ethnics who resent 'unfair advantages' enjoyed by Hispanics [Latinx] and Asians today; Politicians attempting to exploit a national mood of isolationism and xenophobia; Racists who equate multiculturalism and ethnic separatism; and, Americans who feel threatened by diversity, among other unsettling changes. (para. 3)

When the term English-only is applied in academia and research it promotes *voces de poder* to oppress *voces perdidas*. English-only and English first political movements support anti-bilingual education. Despite the rejection, oppression, and marginalization to Spanish-speakers, and other non-English-speaker communities Latinx have made a positive impact to advance and meet the needs of bilingual and Spanish-speaking communities. In 1853, Antonio Colonel became the first Latino to petition a local school board for bilingual education (Kanellos, 1997). In 1974, a Bilingual Education Act was passed by the US Congress to expand bilingual education. Additionally, in 1975, The National Association for Bilingual Education was founded to recognize and promote bilingual education. Regardless, the Latinx community has been and continues to be the *voces perdidas*, silenced and attacked by anti-immigration and anti-bilingual education movements. Creating opportunities to research and write in Spanish within academia generates powerful stories that uncover and recover the *voces perdidas*.

Integrating Spanish into research and writing processes influence and empower Spanish-speaking communities of people, validate the lived experiences and wealth of knowledge of communities of people, challenge the mainstream culture, question the status quo, and retell the legal and educational stories that have only been told through and written in English.

Cronin and Sosa-Masso (2003) and Darder (2012) explain that Latinx bilingual students experience cultural alienation, dualism, cultural separation, and negation in multiple environment spaces. Latinx students are forced to choose between academic success and their cultural community; these phenomena are reflected also in higher education outside the United States. For example, at the *Universidad Nacional De Colombia* (2006) and *Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí* (2007) require doctoral students to publish their studies in English and in international peer-reviewed journals in order for them to earn a doctoral degree (Ph.D.), in addition to their dissertation work.

In the United States, Latinx Spanish-speaking communities are restrained from accessing education and research in Spanish as there are many anti-bilingual education policies, no Spanish-only curriculum career, and no peer-reviewed journals that accept and publish scholarship in Spanish. Universities in Spanish-speaking countries, like *Universidad Nacional De Colombia* and *Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí*, require that students and faculty members publish their scholarship in English-language, peer-reviewed journals. From a global perspective, publishing in English-language peer-review journals gives the researcher, university more credibility, and a wider readership and audience. However, when universities in Spanish-speaking countries are required to publish only in English-language, peer-reviewed journals it is problematic as it is alienating communities of people from research, and not promoting access to education and research to their Spanish-speaking population. Language is one of the most important factors of a culture of any community. The abandonment of a home-language in favor of another language implies the loss of culture for *voces perdidas*.

How Latinx have prospered despite injustice

Since Europeans arrived in the Americas in the 1500s, Latinx have learned to survive and prosper throughout the power and privilege created by the *voces de poder*. Weber (1992) suggested that indigenous people had to follow the Spaniards' rules and learn the Spanish language 'in order to survive and prosper' (p. 307). As Spaniards made a significant contribution to education, they also silenced generation after generation of Latinx. Formal education in the Americas and in the United States was influenced by the European immigration. As Spaniards invaded and conquered the Americas in the 1500s (Weber, 1992), original languages of the indigenous people became the *voces perdidas*, while Spaniards introduced their culture, religion, and language.

Kanellos (1997) introduced some of the accomplishments that Spaniards (Hispanics) made in the Americas. For example, in 1505, the first elementary school was established in the Americas, in Santo Domingo. The school was for children of the Spaniards where students learned reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion (Kanellos, 1997). In 1513, the *Escuela de Gramática* (Grammar School) was established in Puerto Rico, an area that later would become part of the United States. Students attended, for free, the *Escuela de Gramática* to learn Latin language, history, literature, theology, sciences, philosophy, and art. In the same year *Escuela de Gramática* was founded, the Spaniards taught Latin to selected indigenous people in the Americas. The mission of an educational system became important to indigenous and mestizo people and it was offered by churches. Kanellos (1997) maintains that 'education for the Indians [and mestizos] became an important function of the missions from the *Floridas* to California' (p. 40).

All the while, the US reproduced an attack on non-English-speaking communities. For example, in 1851, Los Angeles city officials passed 'the first school ordinance supportive of bilingual education. It provided that "all the rudiments of English and Spanish language should be taught" in all the school subsidize by public funds' (Kanellos, 1997, p. 43). In 1867, Colorado territory required bilingual education in schools with at least 25 non-English-speaking students (Kanellos, 1997). Years later, on June 2, 1998, Proposition 227 passed, which 'eliminated bilingual education [in California] and to designate

English as not just the dominant language, but the only legitimate language in which academic learning is to occur' (Valenzuela, 1999, p. xv).

Uncovering and recovering *voces perdidas*

In order to uncover and recover *voces perdidas* we must encourage liberatory consciousness by making research accessible to Latinx-speaking communities. Spanish-speaking scholars should incorporate and translate theoretical frameworks that create a space for reflection and thoughtfulness of *voces perdidas*, as they have been silenced and ignored by power and privilege. We must center *voces perdidas* through research in order to build Latinx cultural capital and wealth (Yosso, 2006), and to understand and recognize their lived experiences.

Theoretical frameworks that center *voces perdidas*

In this section, I outline Yosso's (2006) cultural wealth model, Anzaldúa's (2007) Borderlands/*La frontera* theory, and Salinas (2015b) crossover capital framework. All three theoretical frameworks promote the success for, and validate the multiple social identities of Latinx students in higher education, with an emphasis on linguistics capital. Furthermore, the three frameworks can be utilized to study Latinx student engagement and identity development because Latinx students have both 'privilege and challenges of constructing identity development by combining one or two races/ethnicities (i.e. Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana/o, Latina/o, or Hispanic' (Salinas, 2015a, p. 23). Similarly, bilingual Latinx students are challenged in navigating two-worlds (i.e. at home they might only speak Spanish, and in school they only speak English) (Anzaldúa, 2007; Salinas, 2015a). Latinx students may find challenges in navigating a white dominated and dictated admissions process, financial aid procedures, and curriculum.

Cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006) incorporates six types of capital that challenges 'traditional interpretations of cultural capital ... [and] ... focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged' (p. 69). The six forms of cultural wealth are: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. All six forms of capital represent how students of color access, navigate, and experience educational settings. The cultural wealth aims to capture social identities, experiences, talents, and strengths, and to empower and inspired students of color. Cultural wealth is vital to support and empower *voces perdidas*. All *voces perdidas* have aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. However, *voces de poder* have often secure capital, as a form of privilege that dictates, dominates, and indoctrinates ideologies with a specific partisan or biased belief. Linguistics capital must be recognized and implemented within academia to reflect that Spanish-speaker communities are in higher education. Spanish speakers know multiple languages and forms of communications that must to be permitted to express their unheard, lost voices, and narratives that have been erased and rejected.

Anzaldúa's (2007) the Borderlands/*La frontera: the new Mestiza* is a semi-autobiography that includes text and poems, in both English and Spanish, expressing invisible borders that exist between Latinx and other race/ethnicity groups, men and women, and lesbian, gay, trans, and queer peoples. The Borderlands/*La frontera: the new Mestiza* 'allows people to navigate these different social contexts and maintain knowledge of what it means to reside in these different social political intersectives' (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 8); Borderlands theory also breaks down 'the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcend' (p. 102). Anzaldúa's epistemology of duality promotes knowledge and consciousness of emotions by sharing *cuentos*, *narrativas*, *historias*, and poetry in Spanish-language. Her work challenges the status quo, and creates the space for *voces perdidas* to be shared in Spanish-language.

Lastly, the crossover capital framework (Salinas, 2015b) expands upon both the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006) and borderlands theories (Anzaldúa, 2007). The crossover capital framework provides an understanding of how individuals cross psychological, emotional, and (visible and invisible) geographical

borderlands. As individuals make the crossover from one landing space to another landing space, they consciously or unconsciously switch social identities that perform oppression and privilege. For example, bilingual speakers might choose to only speak English in higher education settings, as it is the dominant privileged language. If they choose to speak Spanish, they might experience microaggressions from their peers (Darder, 2012; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999). Similarly, the bilingual individual might only choose to speak Spanish at home, as their family members might not be fluent in English. Individuals switch social identities (i.e. linguistics) from one place to another place based on their own understandings of the social politics and pragmatics of these spaces.

Yosso (2006), Anzaldúa (2007), and Salinas (2015b) frameworks can be used to study the intersections of Latinx students in higher education to further understand their multiple identities (social identities of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, linguistics, and (dis)ability) and their lived experiences intersect. Furthermore, the three frameworks encourage writing and publishing in Spanish as a form of creating liberatory research and methodologies that transform academia and theorize critical spaces for Latinx communities. The frameworks must be used to analyze and understand how Latinx construct consciousness and constantly navigate the power of asymmetry of *dos mundos, dos culturas, and dos idiomas* (Anzaldúa, 2007; Salinas, 2015b; Yosso, 2006). The frameworks invite writers, story tellers, and readers to celebrate and share lived experiences and personal narratives in Spanish, and to engage in critical reflection of how Latinx in academia engage in the fight for their liberation. Academia must embrace and create a new library in Spanish in order to shift the stories, hopes, dreams, and lived experiences of *voces perdidas* into *voces de poder*. All three frameworks challenge higher education to create 'change, *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción*' of a new language (i.e. Chicano Spanish, Spanglish) for *voces perdidas* to communicate and share 'un nuevo lenguaje. *Un lenguaje que corresponde a un nuevo modo de vivir*. Chicano Spanish [and Spanglish] is not incorrect, it is a living language' (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 77).

Support and highlight voces perdidas

Language is a method of communication for people, in which one can think, hear, speak, read, or write. Language is part of people's history, culture, and informs the developing structure and the meaning of words (García & Wei, 2014). In general, there are four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Edwards, 2012). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills can be used to measure language abilities and proficiency, with an understanding that each skill may have divergent levels of expression. Furthermore, in his work, Edwards (2012) states 'everyone is bilingual'. Most humans might know how to think, listen, speak, read, or write at least a few words in a language other than their home-language (e.g. an English speaker might be able to say *gracias* and *muy bien*). Although, the competency of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a language might be different at the personal and social level, individuals can be considered as bilingual. Being bilingual is a form of linguistic capital and is a form of 'intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style' (Yosso, 2006, p. 78).

If we, researchers and educators, take the approach that Latinx communities are bilingual, we need to acknowledge, validate, and empower non-English-speaking communities. The US Census Bureau (2015b) reported that at least 350 languages are spoken in homes across the United States. In addition, there are '150 different Native North American languages, collectively spoken by more than 350,000 people, including Yupik, Dakota, Apache, Keres and Cherokee' (para. 2). While some representatives of the government, and of academia support the 'English-only' law, the US Census Bureau (2015b) acknowledges the wide-range of language diversity in the United States. Additionally, the report highlights the 15 largest metropolitan areas. For example, in the New York metropolitan area, more than a third of the population speaks a language other than English at home with 192 different languages spoken. In the Miami and Los Angeles metropolitan areas, over half of the population speaks a language other than English. While English is the most spoken language in the United States (230.9 million English only speakers), Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language (37.6 million Spanish speaker),

followed by Mandarin (2.9 million), Tagalog (1.6 million), Vietnamese (1.4), French (1.3 million), Korean (1.1 million), and German (1 million) (Ryan, 2013). These facts make the United States a multilingual community.

El perdón

Academia needs to create spaces for individuals to write their lived experiences in Spanish and, validate the work, talent, and skills when writing in Spanish language. In her work, Anzaldúa (2007) wrote poetry in Spanish to characterize and illustrate her pain and lived experiences in two worlds. Inspired by Anzaldúa's work, I write in Spanish to illustrate how the lived experiences of Latinx in higher education have been invisible. Parallel to hook (1991), I write in Spanish because 'I am hurting – the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory [Spanish poetry] desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me' (p. 1).

El Perdón

*Como profesor les pido perdón
La academia se olvidó de nosotros
Nos ignoró, nos engañó*

*Nuestra historia, cultura y tradición
Siguen en su poder, se enriquecen con lo nuestro
Deciden nuestra historia e intervienen en nuestro destino*

*Es por eso que escribo en español, nuestra lengua
Para documentar y expresar nuestras ideas
Nuestros sentimientos, nuestro dolor*

*¡Por qué es mi sueño que las voces del poder
Aquellas que opacan y matan
No nos vuelvan a borrar jamás!*

*Que nunca más se pierdan nuestras voces
Nuestras tradiciones y nuestra identidad
Como se perdieron en el pasado*

*Que aún en este mundo lleno de guerra y miseria
Nuestras voces sigan inyectando un poco de fantasía cada día
para no morir de tanta realidad*

*Al morir una voz se lleva historias, futuros, cultura y tradición
Cada palabra que se va sin publicar
Se lleva consigo ganas de expresar, luchar, cantar, llorar, amar y soñar*

*Pero incluso la voz más fuerte y llena de poder se espanta
Cuando oye el eco de las voces unidas
El rugido de un pueblo que se levanta.*

I hope this poem inspires readers to write and promote the Spanish language as a method of healing and to fight a system that has erased history, stories, knowledge, emotions, and many lived experiences. I do not translate the poem *El Perdón* in English because, in translation, the meaning of the language, words, and feelings are lost. For example, based on cultural and geographical areas, Spanish-language is often diminutive as a form of communicating and expressing feelings: *carrito* (little car) *cosa* (little thing), *niñito* (little kid), *abuelita* (little grandma), *parquesito* (little park). In English, there are a few words that we can use diminutively; some of those words are: doggy (dog) and thingy (thing).

Writing in Spanish can create the space for communities of people to share feelings, traditions, history, hope, and dreams. Moreover, writing in Spanish is about challenging the status quo and documenting history accurately. Often, some authors emphasize history from one perspective, one standpoint that highlights the feelings of power and privilege and disclaims the feelings of pain and guilt. Scholars, educators, and administrators of higher education need to radicalize academia to create a social transformation for marginalized communities of people. Writing in Spanish can empower

Spanish-speaking scholars, activist, and students to narrow their own histories, and being ambassadors to their own lived experiences.

Conclusion

Higher education is lagging behind when it comes to serving, supporting, and advocating for non-English-speaking communities (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Higher education institutions have the responsibility to advance and cultivate intelligence with students and communities through research, teaching, and service. In recent years, college and universities have prided themselves for being inclusive, diverse institutions through initiatives with the purpose of helping and supporting Latinx students. Yet, Latinx students and non-English-speaking communities are silenced as the educational system overlooks their learning and lived experiences through curriculum and research in Spanish language. Latinx is the largest and fastest-growing marginalized population in the United States (Castellanos et al., 2006), and they continue to pursue meeting their needs in the educational, political, economic, and social systems that often reject them. Despite rejection, oppression, marginalization, and other challenges, Latinx continues to make contributions in education, government, economics, literature, arts, sciences, technology, and many other fields.

Scholars, educators, and administrators must be able to write in Spanish language and other languages to build a library for those that do not speak English. In addition, 'educators, scholars, and student affairs practitioners [must] promote and develop ... scholarship in Spanish and "Spanglish" that represents the obstacles and challenges Latinx face, while recognizing their skills and achievement' (Salinas, 2015c, p. 119). Writing in Spanish, or different languages will challenge anti-immigration and anti-bilingual education. This will provide opportunities to create *voces perdidas* into new *voces de poder*. Academe and higher education institutions must create a culture and outlets to publish in Spanish-language peer-review journals; and create career curriculum programs, and educational and social programming in Spanish-language for students and their families. Yet, academe and colleges/universities must take in account the talents, skills, and efforts of productivity for promotion and tenure for faculty researchers that create scholarship in Spanish language. If academia truly wants to advance and promote *voces perdidas* into new *voces de poder* for Latinx students in higher education, then we must invest in a library for Spanish speakers that supports the social, political, economic, and educational movement of the Latinx communities. 'If the academy refuses to change, we will change it ... We will change the academy, even as the academy changes us' (Rendón, 1992, p. 63).

Note

1. Individuals within the Latin American communities of people have ceased using the term Latinx, preferring to use 'Latinx' to challenge or conquer heteronormativity of language, patriarchy, and gender. I use Latinx in this work as a liberatory practice that begins to recognize and center the intersectional and non-binary gendered identities in our community. Although some scholars and activists have begun using the term Latinx in their research, this term has not been fully accepted by standard discourse in academia.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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