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## **A Letter from the Editor and Co-Editor**

In this issue of the *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, members of the bilingual community continue to document and disseminate the outstanding work and research taking place in universities and school campuses across the nation and internationally as they engage in activities associated with NABE's mission—to advocate for bilingual and English learners and families, and cultivate a multilingual multicultural society by promoting policy, programs, pedagogy, research and professional development that yield academic success. All of these themes are addressed in Volume 8.

Volume 8 includes ten outstanding articles in both English and Spanish that focus on a variety of timely topics, including: (1) preparing a community for two-way immersion; (2) language transfer in dual immersion program; (3) students with interrupted formal education; (4) teachers' perceptions of mainstreaming and ESOL classroom teaching; and (5) negotiating co-teaching identities, among others relevant topics. The issue includes two outstanding articles written in Spanish, *Inmersión lingüística para profesores AICOLE: Un enfoque comunicativo y práctico* by Dra Virginia Vinuesa Benítez and Xavier Gisbert Da Cruz of Madrid, Spain, and *Más allá de poly, multi, trans, pluri, bi: ¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos del translingüismo?* by Drs. Blanca Caldas and Christian Faltis.

This issue would not be possible without individuals who were successful in having their manuscripts accepted for publication—representing a 30% acceptance rate for Volume 8. Their work reflects the successful, informative and innovative research currently underway in sites across this nation and beyond. The presentation of articles in this issue would not be possible without the dedicated professionals involved with the publication of this Volume. Special thanks are due to members of the Editorial and Review Boards for their assistance in reviewing manuscripts in a timely manner. Special thanks are also due to our Editorial Assistant, Cinthia Meraz Pantoja, a graduate student at UTEP.

Lastly, we welcome Dr. Virginia Vinuesa Benítez as co-editor of the NJRP. Dr. Vinuesa Benítez is a professor at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos 1 in Madrid, Spain where she teaches courses in bilingual education in the teacher preparation program.

Dr. Josefina (Josie) V. Tinajero, Editor  
Dr. Virginia Vinuesa Benítez, Co-Editor  
June 2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Letter from Editor and Co-Editor</b> Drs. Josefina V. Tinajero and Virginia Vinuesa Benítez.....	7
<b>Caught Between the Push and the Pull: ELL Teachers’ Perceptions of Mainstreaming and ESOL Classroom Teaching</b> Dr. James Whiting. ....	9
<b>Negotiating Co-Teaching Identities in Multilingual High School Classrooms</b> Drs. Liv Thorstensson Dávila, Lan Q. Kolano and Heather Coffey.....	28
<b>Inmersión lingüística para profesores AICOLE: Un enfoque comunicativo y práctico</b> Dra. Virginia Vinuesa Benítez and Xavier Gisbert Da Cruz.....	44
<b>Multilingual Students and Language-as-a-Problem Oriented Educational Policies: A Study of Haitian-American Generation 1.5 Students’ School Language Experiences</b> Lindsay Vecchio.....	60
<b>The Planting of Seeds: Preparing a Community for Two-Way Immersion</b> Drs. Crystal V. Shelby-Caffe and Lavern Byfield.....	78
<b>What Students Do with Words: Language Use and Communicative Function in Full and Partial Immersion Classrooms</b> Dr. Katherine O’Donnell Christoffersen.....	92
<b>Language Transfer in a Dual Immersion Program: Cognates, Morphology and Language Contrasts</b> Allison Briceño.....	111
<b>Mothers’ Intimate, Imaginative Literacy Practices as Pushback</b> Drs. Maria E Diaz and Kathy Bussert Webb .....	133
<b>Más allá de poly, multi, trans, pluri, bi: ¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos del translingüismo1?</b> Drs. Blanca Caldas and Christian Faltis .....	155
<b>Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs): Actionable Practices</b> Drs. Audrey Cohan and Andrea Honigsfeld .....	166



**Caught Between the Push and the Pull: ELL Teachers' Perceptions of Mainstreaming and ESOL Classroom Teaching**

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Plymouth State University**

## Abstract

Seventy-one ELL teachers working in low-incidence settings were surveyed on their experiences teaching in both mainstream and ESOL classrooms settings. Responses showed a looming gap between the ideal of mainstreaming ELLs in a co-teaching model and the reality consisting largely of one-on-one push-in tutoring. Data reveal an overwhelmingly negative perception among participants toward working in the mainstream classroom in such conditions. The work in the mainstream classroom, although not without benefits, is work that leaves these teachers in a professionally disadvantaged position, one with a secondary status, both implied and real. This research has implications for ELL teachers, teacher educators and policymakers within an educational climate that promotes mainstreaming of ELLs.

*Keywords:* ELLs, Co-teaching, Mainstreaming, Low-incidence, Push-in instruction, Pull-out instruction

## Background

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs), also referred to recently as emergent bilinguals, in schools across the United States has steadily increased over the past two decades. With the growth in the number of ELLs new questions have been raised about how best to meet their educational needs. One answer that has been increasingly accepted, at least in theory, is that ELLs' language, content, and social skills benefit best from staying in the mainstream classroom. In addition, with the advent of No Child Left Behind (2002) there was an increased demand for accountability for learning outcomes. This increase in accountability led in turn to additional mandates to educate ELLs within the mainstream classroom rather than in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)-only settings. As McClure & Chanmann-Taylor (2010) note, despite this growing trend to keep ELLs in the mainstream classroom, there is relatively little research that examines the benefits of teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom rather than in an ESOL setting.

### **Mainstreaming: The Ideal of Co-Teaching**

Despite this lack of empirical data, the push toward mainstreaming has led to embracing a model that has brought the ELL teacher into the mainstream classroom as a co-teacher. There has been considerable writing that extols the benefits of the co-teaching ideal (Bell & Walker, 2012; Creese, 2006; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; Zehr, 2006). In this model the ELL and the mainstream teachers collaborate on teaching both the mainstream and ELL students. In spite of this strong backing from supporters of mainstreaming, this co-teaching model brings with it a host of challenges on the different roles and responsibilities of each teacher. Research has highlighted the potential power dynamics at play when two teachers teach together in the same room (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010), and also shown that this model can be time-consuming and requires buy-in from both teachers (Arkoudis, 2006; Friend, 2008). In addition, research (Abraham & Chumley, 2001; Harper, de Jong, & Platt, 2008; Harper & de Jong, 2009; Bell & Baecher, 2012) has pointed to the problematic nature of ESOL teaching in a climate that privileges mainstreaming

models of push-in instruction, and devalues work with ELL students by trained ELL specialists, in an exclusively ELL setting.

### **Mainstreaming in Low-Incidence ELL Settings**

The research on co-teaching has focused on high-population, high-incidence school settings. ELLs are found in both high- and low-incidence settings. “Mainstreaming” here refers to an ELL doing the same work as the non-ELL students in the class, with appropriate scaffolding and support. The students in this research were mainstreamed. In low-incidence settings, “mainstreaming” often means the ELL teacher works individually with his or her students in the mainstream classroom, for at least part of the day. This can take on different aspects but often boils down to the ELL and the ELL teacher sitting side by side while the mainstream teacher teaches the class. In this model the ELL teacher is supposed to scaffold and work one-on-one at the same time as the main lesson is being taught. Although co-teaching has been examined as a means of achieving mainstreaming mandates, there has been comparatively little recognition or research on this push-in “tutor” model of mainstreaming in low-incidence schools. The current research examines the experiences and perceptions of ELL teachers who work within this model, and compares them with their perceptions about pulling ELLs out of the mainstream classroom for work in the ELL space.

### **Research Question**

What do ELL teachers in low-incidence settings think are the pros and cons of working with their students in the mainstream (push-in) and ELL (pull-out) classroom?

### **Participants and Methodology**

A group of ELL teachers in one state were surveyed anonymously (Appendix A) on their perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of pushing ESOL instruction into the mainstream class or pulling out ELLs for work in the ESOL classroom. The survey, administered through SurveyMonkey, was placed on a state-ESOL listserv for TESOL professionals. The listserv has 632 subscribers. Of 107 employed ELL teachers in the state, 66% responded and completed the survey (see Appendix B for survey responses). These 71 respondents were generally well-trained and experienced ELL teachers -- 48% held graduate degrees in TESOL, 93% were licensed ESOL teachers in their state and over 75% had 10 or more years teaching ELLs. 38% of respondents worked with elementary-level students and nearly a third worked with students at different age levels, elementary through high school. Nearly 40% of the teachers taught in more than one school building. The survey contained both quantitative and open-ended qualitative questions (Dornyei, 2003). Written responses to the qualitative questions were recursively coded and grouped into emerging key themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These key themes and patterns of response are reported in the Data section of this paper.

## Data

### Push-in: Drawbacks of the Mainstream Classroom

The data show that 78% of the respondents did at least some of their work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This work in the mainstream classroom is mostly done with fewer than three students, and often one-on-one. Only 24% of these respondents describe their work in the mainstream classroom as co-teaching.

The data indicate that ELL teachers believe that working in the mainstream classrooms with a tutor model can actually adversely impact students' learning, primarily by increasing student anxiety and embarrassment. The respondents also indicated that this instructional model of push-in instruction for ELLs raises issues of control and autonomy, and professional identity for the participants, as well as logistical issues and the problem of ill-defined responsibilities.

### Student Embarrassment

Participants were asked to list pros and cons of working in the mainstream classroom. A consistent theme that emerged is the perception that for some students, it is embarrassing to sit next to a teacher and makes the student self-conscious, which negatively impacts his or her ability to learn. Participants noted that "older students are 'shamed' that you are there to help and everyone can see," and "they may feel self-conscious (esp. at middle school level) having me there."

It has long been acknowledged that language learning can be fraught with anxiety and the greater this anxiety, the greater the likelihood that learning is negatively impacted. As one teacher put it, "Students miss pull-out because my ELL room is a less risky environment where they can take bigger risks without being concerned about their English-proficient peers."

It is not hard to imagine ELLs, newly arrived in the United States, wanting to fit in with their peers, and feeling self-conscious and anxious about having a teacher attempting to assist them with the classwork, sitting next to them during a class. One participant summarized this view by saying, "They don't always want their friends to see they are getting the help." With their native-speaker peers sitting nearby and within earshot, the respondents indicate that students can be unwilling to practice or use their English and ask for help.

One participant summarized the phenomenon, writing, "The ELLs can feel marginalized when I am in the classroom. This may be mostly a social issue, but at times it impacts the students' attitude and effort." Research (Baker, 2007; Strong, 1983) has confirmed this influence of social and interpersonal factors on language learner motivation.

### Loss of Autonomy and Professional Identity

The issue of autonomy is apparent in the responses to the significant question of who determines what work the ELL teacher does with the ELL in the mainstream classroom: just 22% reported that they, the ELL teachers, determined this work. Although 61% report planning together with the mainstream teacher, this ideal of co-planning is belied by an overwhelming pattern that looks very different. The feeling that the ELL teacher largely gives up control over what work is done with ELLs in the mainstream classroom is indicated in responses such as this from one participant who noted, "I feel restricted when I am in the classroom. I cannot do the types of lessons

I would like to do . . . I do not feel that I really teach in this setting,” and another who noted that in the mainstream classroom, “I am doing more assisting than teaching ... sometimes I am just sitting and listening.”

These responses and others like them suggest that when the ELL teachers enter the mainstream classroom to work with their ELLs, their control over their own work is diminished and often their status too. Numerous respondents noted this shift in status that came with working in the mainstream classroom. “I often feel that I’m treated as a paraprofessional rather than co-teacher.” One participant noted that working with ELLs in the mainstream classroom made her “feel like an overpaid tutor”. These comments from teachers who hold licenses and have had graduate training suggest there is a strong emotional cost for ELL teachers who work in the mainstream classroom with their ELLs.

In the mainstream classroom their own professional knowledge is viewed as less important than that of the mainstream teacher, whose zone the ELL teachers needed to enter in order to work with the students they shared. Such ELL teachers believe that when they enter the mainstream classroom, they become, in the eyes of some of these teachers, aides, paraprofessionals, or tutors, working in service to the classroom teacher, who is seen as the central professional, and of that teacher’s curriculum.

The theme that ELL teachers cede control – whether in the event or in the planning, as one teacher noted, “I usually do what the teacher decides” -- is exacerbated by the fact that 25% of the respondents reported that the determination of where they work with their students, in or out of the mainstream classroom, is decided by the administration, without their input. That is, these teachers have limited or no control over their placement in a setting that they view as contributing towards the diminishment of their professional status and others’ respect for their knowledge.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the data show that ELL teachers overwhelmingly take a dim view of working in the mainstream classroom. When asked to choose where to work with their ELLs, not one of the respondents indicated they would choose to work in the mainstream classroom, if given the choice. Perhaps because as one participant noted, “I feel restricted when I am in the classroom. I cannot do the types of lessons I would like to do” and because of the belief that in this setting, as others noted, “the ELL teacher's time is not being effectively used” and “I do not feel that I really teach in this setting.” Perhaps most unsettling for these teachers are a sense of dislocation and lack of a clear purpose: one participant described this, among a list of the drawbacks of her work in the mainstream classroom, as “not being sure of my role while in the classroom.” In general, in the mainstream classroom, a distinct pattern emerged of ELL teachers perceiving themselves as the second fiddle, less empowered and taking their cues for instruction from the classroom teacher.

### **Less Focused Instruction**

Numerous respondents noted that a key drawback of working in the mainstream classroom was the mainstream emphasis on content and the subsequent inability to provide the ELL with targeted, intensive instruction. “ELL's don't receive as much focused teaching in language areas where they are weak,” one participant noted. These teachers reported that between the need to listen to the mainstream teacher and other limiting factors like having to work around the mainstream teacher’s lesson and pacing, there was little opportunity to provide comprehensible input for students. These teachers felt their teaching opportunities were constricted in the mainstream classroom and that their ELL’s did not get their needs completely met. “Students get

far less intense ELL services, I am more like a para in the classroom [and] ... students seem to make less progress.”

### **Challenging Logistics**

Adding to the mix is the frustration many respondents noted with the physical logistics of attempting to work with their ELLs in the midst of the mainstream classroom filled with competing voices and stimuli, an environment, as one participant noted, where there is “limited space to work with ELLs if they have not understood the lesson.” Many noted an additional challenge of working one-on-one in the mainstream classroom: “I often feel I'm disturbing nearby students.”

### **Ambiguous Responsibility**

Respondents noted that the presence of the ELL teacher in the mainstream classroom can raise the question, “Who is responsible for the ELL’s education?” As one participant noted flatly, “The mainstream teacher doesn't have to worry about providing excessive accommodations for the ELL while I'm in the room.” Another said that when the ELL teacher is in the room, “teachers do not have to concern themselves with making the lesson accessible to the ELL.” The mainstream teachers are allowed to feel that the ELL student is ‘taken care of’ and their attention can be directed elsewhere. Or as one respondent noted when discussing the push-in instructional model, “Teachers . . . feel that the student is the ESOL teacher's responsibility and they take a less involved role in the ELL’s instruction.” This raises the question of what happens to this ELL once the ELL teacher leaves the room. Does the classroom teacher then switch gears and refocus attention to *all* students in the room?

Responses highlight the gulf between the reality of the low-incidence, push-in tutor model and the co-teaching ideal. All these factors lead to a perceived sense of collective diminishment in this learning dynamic, for ELL teachers and students alike. An environment that engenders embarrassment or shame, frustration, and fear of disturbing the work of the mainstream teacher and students, is far from optimal for anyone involved. The ELL teacher takes on a secondary, less-professional status, and the ELL student is stymied and anxiety-ridden, the two hushed in the corner or huddled close together to limit the surrounding distractions and not disturb the “real” work of the mainstream classroom.

### **Push-In: Benefits of the Mainstream Classroom**

However, despite the misgivings about the effectiveness of mainstream classroom push-in instruction and their own role within it, a number of benefits were reported that accrue to both the ELL teacher and the ELL by working in the mainstream classroom. For the ELL teacher these include the knowledge of the mainstream classroom, its dynamic, its curriculum, and the mainstream students themselves. As with the critical responses to mainstream settings, the comments that speak of these benefits below have been chosen as representative of patterns of thinking among respondents.

For the ELL the respondents saw benefits largely centered around two facts. First, the ELL doesn't miss mainstream class-time work. Second, by not being pulled out for instruction, the ELL is seen as a member of the classroom and this may, therefore, boost self-confidence for some

students. This seeming contradiction with the drawbacks reported above suggests that this is a complex, nuanced situation, in which one size does not fit all.

### **Knowledge of the Mainstream Classroom**

For the ELL teacher the ability to take the pulse of the mainstream classroom appears to be one considerable benefit of this model. As one respondent noted, “Staying on top of the classroom curriculum . . . I have a good feel for what is being taught and what the assignments are.” The respondents noted that their work in the mainstream classroom, besides affording the opportunity to see the curriculum firsthand, also gave them a sense of the class itself. “I get a view of the tone and tempo of the classroom and can change/adapt my out-of-class tone/tempo to help the student adjust/function in that particular setting.”

Seeing what their ELLs encounter adds to the ELL teacher’s knowledge base with which they assist their ELLs. “I find it beneficial to observe my ELL students with their peers and teachers. It gives me a clearer idea of the classroom expectations. It gives me an opportunity to observe how directions are given and how difficult listening comprehension is.”

In addition, a strong pattern emerged of participants noting the importance of seeing mainstream students in the mainstream classroom. The knowledge of academic expectations for non-ELL students appears to be very helpful for ELL teachers, guiding their work with their ELLs and giving these teachers a grade-level standard. In addition, the observation of the ELL with their mainstream peers gives these teachers additional knowledge of what the ELL can and cannot do in social interactions. One participant summed this up in noting, “I get to know their peers. I can discuss peer relations with the ELL if necessary.”

### **Curricular and Social Benefits**

Respondents observed that for the ELL, a key benefit for staying in the mainstream classroom was not missing work conducted by the mainstream teacher. “Students have more time in their classroom which equals less interruption in their learning.” An additional benefit of having ELLs stay in the classroom is the social interaction with mainstream peers. As one participant noted, “Student doesn't feel isolated. Student picks up more language from other students. Student feels part of the group.”

For those respondents who did some of their work with ELLs in the mainstream class, 85% reported occasionally working with non-ELLs during this time. A number of these respondents saw this work with non-ELLs as having a positive impact on their ELLs. “The student can be viewed by their peers as similar to themselves. The native-speaking peers seek my assistance as well, which I feel is positive.” Indeed a number of respondents saw their work with other students, or the inclusion of non-ELLs in groupwork with the ELL, as sending to the mainstream and ELL student a message of equality. “If I serve other children needing assistance, no one is singled out as being “different”; all students regard me as a teacher who they might ask for help, [and it] lessens the stigma.”

The participants believe that not removing ELL students also delivered the message to others in the classroom, that ELLs can do the work of the mainstream classroom. One participant observed, “By not removing the students it shows both students and mainstream teacher that the students CAN do this, they just need appropriate supports and scaffolded instruction in order to

access the information.” Such a sanguine attitude assumes that such support is possible in this model, a belief that was questioned by many respondents.

In addition, staying in the mainstream classroom gives the ELLs themselves an important psychological boost, signaling that they too can handle the work of the mainstream classroom. “The students probably feel that they can remain in the classroom and complete the same work as their classmates.” As another participant noted, this window onto the academic abilities of their peers, especially as it relates to their own abilities, can give students who might lack academic self-confidence in their new language, a needed lift. “ELLs find that they are not at the bottom of the class.”

### **Pull-Out: Benefits of the ESOL Classroom**

Nearly all of the respondents, 97%, do at least some of their work with their ELLs outside the mainstream classroom, and 21% work exclusively outside the mainstream classroom. The data show that the respondents saw several key advantages for both the ELL teacher and student to pull-out ELL instruction, including fewer distractions for the student, greater autonomy and control for the ELL teacher over the curriculum, and finally the opportunity to create a safe zone for the students in the ELL classroom.

#### **Freedom from Distractions**

The data indicate that these ELL teachers view working outside the mainstream classroom with their ELLs as an opportunity to get work done free of the mainstream classroom’s interruptions. As one teacher put it, when the student is pulled out, “the students get a much needed break from the classroom and get purely comprehensible input with little or no distraction.” Respondents repeatedly described the mainstream classroom as one filled with “distractions”, “noise” and “commotion”, where it is difficult for the ELL to pay attention and concentrate on the work at hand. One respondent, echoing the sentiments of many others, noted that when pulled out for ELL instruction, “Student picks up on information more quickly because it’s quiet. Student gets a break from all the classroom commotion.”

#### **Control over Curriculum**

ELL teachers view working in their own classrooms as giving them the ability to control the curriculum, to make decisions on what and how to teach their students and crucially, the ability to individualize instruction to best meet their students’ academic needs. As one teacher explained, “I can design my lessons more freely, just depending on which skills I think the children need the most help on. I can design my own incentives, systems, and use my own teaching style with more freedom. I can decide what materials I will use and how I will approach teaching the student.” The ability to tailor instruction for the learner’s needs was consistently noted by teachers who pulled students out of the mainstream classroom. The importance of determining how and what is taught is expressed by this respondent, who described work in the ELL classroom with her students as allowing her “to be the lead teacher, planning activities myself that I think are relevant and helpful, dive deeper into subject material . . . [and have] control over curriculum and delivery of services.”

In contrast to their work in the mainstream classroom, these teachers viewed their work in their own classrooms as empowering and autonomous. For example, 69% of respondents reported that they determined the curriculum for pull-out instruction outside the mainstream classroom. They could make professional determinations of the needs of their students, to tailor the material, to determine what works and what doesn't for their students. In other words, these teachers, working in their own classrooms, acted as teachers rather than tutors. Working in the mainstream classroom largely removed these kinds of professional decision-making opportunities for the ELL teacher, and working in their own rooms returned it to them.

### **Safe Zone**

Participant responses consistently describe one of the key benefits of working with ELLs outside the mainstream classroom as providing a safe zone for ELLs, a refuge from the school, where a community and relationships could develop. A typical response from one respondent about working in their ELL classroom reads, "I can create a different environment for the students...specifically one of acceptance, appreciation, and where they can have freedom to be themselves and not be worried about comparing themselves to their mainstream peers."

The data complement the fact that ELLs are often a marginalized population within their schools, trying to adapt to a new language, culture and learning environment, which adds stress to their lives. The ELL teachers report that pulling these students out of their mainstream classroom often provides them with a psychic break. The ELL classroom becomes a place they can go to recharge and be validated. As one respondent put it, "My individual classroom is not only a learning space, but also a refuge for many of the ELLs where they can find security and a sense of place." The data indicate that there is a crucial learning component to this safe zone; working in the ELL classroom affords students a place where they can take linguistic and academic risks, and ask questions without fear of how they look to their mainstream peers. This fits neatly with the perceptions that the stress of the mainstream classroom can actually detract from the ELL's learning.

Participants noted that in the ELL classroom, "The ELL student can be free to make mistakes and relax without judgment from peers," and, "My ELL room is a less risky environment where they can take bigger risks without being concerned about their English proficient peers." Pull-out work serves as an opportunity for ELLs to work with not only the ELL teacher but with other ELLs. In these low-incidence settings, ELLs are often isolated within their mainstream classrooms, without ELL peers. The respondents report typically pulling out more than one student, from different classrooms, with the same level of English. In such cases the work in the ELL classroom provides these students a place to meet and interact with other ELLs. As one participant noted, in working with ELLs outside the mainstream classroom she is "building an ELL community". Respondents stressed the importance of the ELL space, which "allows the students to feel more comfortable to voice concerns or questions, as it is a small group, and with students who are in a similar situation." As one respondent said of the ELL classroom, "students feel more at home and cared for there than anywhere else in the school." The ELL classroom serves important academic, cultural and social functions in the lives of ELL students.

## Summary of Data

The data indicate that the ELL teacher-respondents saw both instructional models, pulling ELL students out and push-in ELL instruction, as having pedagogical and psychological advantages and disadvantages.

### However, the data point to three clear and key findings:

- The looming gap between the ideal of mainstreaming ELLs in a co-teaching model and the reality described by these teachers. The implied balance, and equal status, of integrated co-teaching contrasts with the reality of low-incidence mainstreaming. There is clearly a perceived contradiction between co-teaching in name, and tutoring in reality.
- The overwhelmingly negative perceptions ELL teachers have toward working in the mainstream classroom. For these teachers this work in the mainstream classroom, although not without benefits, is work that leaves them in a professionally disadvantaged position, one with a secondary status, both implied and real.
- The importance of a safe zone for ELLs in pull-out classrooms. This is a place where ELLs can work free from distractions and focus on work that is meaningful, and where ELL teachers can use their training to provide targeted instruction appropriate to their students' needs.

Participants also noted that the question of which model is better for a given learner, might be best informed by his or her English proficiency; many noted that push-in instruction is more effective for ELLs with higher levels of English. "I work in the mainstream classroom if the students have reached an intermediate or advanced proficiency." These teachers saw the push-in model as more effective for advanced students, and conversely the more intensive work of the ELL classroom as more effective for students with less-advanced English language abilities. As one representative comment noted, the push-in model "would not be effective for newcomers, who need some direct instruction on Basic English."

Although these teachers were able to see some advantages of their work in the mainstream classroom, there was on the whole a distinct appreciation and support for work with ELLs in the ELL classroom, with myriad pedagogical and psychological benefits. There was a strong across-the-board belief that ELLs benefited emotionally from their time in the safety zone of the ELL classroom. The participants also saw strong pedagogical advantages for this pull-out work, noting that the work in the ELL classroom was more substantive, and targeted the ELL student's needs. In contrast, the participants indicated that teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom posed distinct pedagogical challenges, with many saying it was difficult to target instruction to students effectively in this environment.

## Discussion and Implications for Practice

There are several ways in which both push-in and pull-out instructional models can be improved for both the ELL and the ELL teacher. These include greater collaboration between the mainstream teacher and the ELL teachers, with common planning time for both teachers,

information for mainstream teachers on the nature of ELL instruction, and discussions and agreements between ELL teachers and their mainstream colleagues on roles and responsibilities.

The need for dedicated, explicit collaboration between the ELL and mainstream teacher is a key component of effective push-in ELL instruction. The data show that without explicit time to plan together, the work of the ELL teacher is perceived as less effective. As one participant wrote, “Having the same plan time as the mainstream teacher is essential.”

Of course, this is more easily said than done. It requires both teachers to have a rare commodity, mutual time, available. With both sets of teachers likely already pulled in many different directions it is a challenge to make this happen. In today’s schools all teachers have considerable demands on their time; the mainstream teacher could easily have a hundred or more students in a high school setting. It is not hard to imagine the demands on this teacher’s time. Adding time to work with the ELL teacher might not rise to the top of the list. The ELL teachers too are pulled in many different directions, with multiple students spread across different grades.

What currently happens, as one ELL teacher noted, is “no common planning time, no access to pre-teach vocabulary, no time to explain how and why I am modifying the work.” In addition to the effort of trying to find the time to work with different classroom teachers, participants noted that even when there is planning time available, they encounter resistance from mainstream teachers to this additional demand on their time. “Teachers have difficulty understanding the role of an ELL teacher and will often not take the time to collaborate. The ELL teacher is seen as an aide.”

Yet if no collaboration happens beforehand between the ELL and mainstream teachers, then the ELL teacher arrives at the class to work with the ELL, with little or no idea what will happen in the class. This reduces the ELL teacher’s effectiveness considerably; there is no prep and, therefore, they are, as one participant noted, “winging it” in the mainstream classroom, watching the teacher’s lesson and attempting to modify work, teach vocabulary, and scaffold language and content, all on the fly. It is small wonder that the ELL teachers who are doing this feel that this environment reduces their ability to effectively teach their ELLs, along with the other drawbacks noted above.

Nearly every response mentioned the significance of missed classroom work when an ELL is pulled out. Regardless of which class is missed, and avoiding the discussion of which class is more important, one way to address this concern would be to schedule at least one period of the day for each ELL to receive pull-out instruction, in a time period where they are not missing academic work; perhaps this is a study hall period or a silent reading period. It should be within the school’s ability to ensure that the ELLs who are in mainstream classrooms also have a period of time to work with the ELL teacher, when they won’t miss academic mainstream classroom work. This time should not be the student’s lunch, recess or ‘special’ period. Working with the ELL teacher should not be seen as taking away a period the student looks forward to and which other students get.

Aside from logistics, the question of missing work raises the question of why the mainstream classroom work is seen as the more important work, the work that cannot be missed, and why the ELL classroom work is perceived as taking away from the central work of the school. Not one participant challenged this paradigm, or stated explicitly that for ELLs the work in the ELL classroom is of equal or greater importance compared to the mainstream work. One participant alluded to this inequality when noting “the main thrust” is always on classroom work as the ELL “needs to keep caught up.”

The strange phenomenon of a trained teacher with secondary status in the mainstream classroom raises the question of the long-term professional consequences of this environment. Why do trained professionals continue to accept such conditions? Clearly such a situation negatively impacts their work with their students. Some of that is likely unavoidable, as the mainstream class is a space that belongs to the mainstream teacher. However, there should be explicit work done to lessen the diminishment of the ELL teacher in the mainstream classroom and allow him or her to contribute to their students' learning as fully as possible.

What might this work look like? To begin with, administration should facilitate trainings and frank discussions on what the ELL teacher actually does. It seems that a first step is to demystify the work of the ELL teacher for the mainstream teacher, who is likely untrained in working with ELLs. To the mainstream teacher, the work of the ELL teacher might look like the work that a paraprofessional does with students. It is the job of the school administration either through specific workshops or trainings to facilitate this relationship.

Administration typically sets the tone in a school, and could promote the idea that all teachers are responsible for ELLs' education, and that these students are not just the responsibility of the ELL teacher. This kind of message does not exoticize the ELLs but sees them as an integral part of the school fabric.

But it is also the job of the ELL teachers themselves to clarify how their work is different from work done by paraprofessionals, as they interact daily with colleagues. This work actually should begin in teacher preparation programs, especially those training ELL teachers who might work in low-incidence settings. Prospective ELL teachers could benefit from leadership training, and this training should include strategies for working with mainstream teachers (Baecher, 2012; Whiting, 2012). In addition, programs for mainstream teachers could include strategies for working with ELLs. Finally, regarding the third main finding, the existence of the ELL classroom as a safe zone. It would seem that as schools push for mainstream instruction for ELLs, this safe zone for ELLs will be lessened or lost. It is, therefore, imperative for these students, many of whom have already experienced the psychic disturbance of changing cultures, schools, countries, and languages, that this space not be lost. Are there ways to expand the safe zone for these students? Can the mainstream classroom become a safe zone for ELLs? Can the whole school? If so, it requires work and commitment from all teachers, mainstream, ELL and otherwise, as well as from school administrators.

There are some limitations to this research. The participants were self-selected, that is, only teachers who chose to participate did. In addition to reporting the teachers' own experiences, the views of the students' experiences are as reported by the ELL teachers. The current study did not include administrators, mainstream teachers, families or the students themselves. Future research would examine the perspectives of these other groups, and compare them with the data reported here. Further, the data could be deepened by observations of these teachers in both mainstream and pull-out classroom settings, coupled with a close examination of student achievement scores.

The present situation, particularly in low-incidence settings, is one in which comparably trained professionals are nevertheless often working uneasily together and separated by wide gaps in expectations. A better understanding of how these educators see these gaps will help to close them.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Participant Survey**

1. How many English Language Learners do you work with?
  - a. 1-3
  - b. 4-7
  - c. 8-12
  - d. 13-18
  - e. 19+
  
2. What grade level do you teach?
  - a. Elementary
  - b. Middle School
  - c. High School
  - d. At more than one level
  
3. How many schools do you work in?
  
4. Where do you work with your ELLs?
  - a. In the mainstream classroom
  - b. Outside the mainstream classroom
  - c. Both in and out of the mainstream classroom
  
5. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, how many of your ELLs do you work with in this setting?
  - a. 1-3
  - b. 4-7
  - c. 8-12
  - d. 13+
  
6. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, is this work one-on-one or in a small group?
  - a. One-on-one
  - b. Small Group
  
7. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, do you work with non-ELLs as well as ELLs?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

c. Occasionally

8. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, would you describe your work as co-teaching?

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, who determines the work you do with your ELLs?

- a. I do
- b. The cooperating teacher does
- c. We determine together

10. If you provide services in the mainstream classroom, how many mainstream classrooms do you work in?

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-5
- c. 5+

11. Could you list one or two pros and cons for yourself, the ELL and the mainstream classroom teacher, of working with your ELLs in the mainstream classroom?

12. If you provide services outside the mainstream classroom, how many ELLs do you work with in these settings?

- a. 1-3
- b. 4-7
- c. 8-12
- d. 13+

13. If you provide services outside the mainstream classroom, do you have a dedicated space for ELL services?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Depends on the school and other factors

14. If you provide services outside the mainstream classroom, is this work primarily one-on-one, small group, or whole class?

- a. One-on-one
- b. Small group
- c. Whole class

15. If you provide services outside the mainstream classroom, who determines your curricula?

- a. I do
- b. The cooperating teacher does
- c. We do together

16. Could you list one or two pros and cons for yourself, the learner, and the cooperating teacher, of working outside the mainstream classroom with your students?

17. Who determines whether you work in the mainstream classroom or outside it?

- a. I do.
- b. The cooperating teacher does.
- c. The administration does.
- d. The cooperating teacher and I decide together.

18. Given the choice, would you prefer to work inside or outside of the mainstream classroom with your ELLs?

- a. Inside
- b. Outside
- c. Depends

19. If you answered "Depends", what factors affect your preference of where to work? (rate the choices below)

- a. The student
- b. The cooperating teacher
- c. The age and grade level
- d. The student's English proficiency
- e. The subject area

20. What job title best describes your position?

- a. Teacher
- b. Paraprofessional
- c. Administrator

21. Is your position full-time?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. What is your highest level of education?

- a. High School
- b. Some College
- c. BA
- d. MA
- e. MA +

23. What is your training in TESOL?

- a. None
- b. Have taken some classes in TESOL
- c. Have a TESOL certificate
- d. Have a graduate degree in TESOL

24. Do you have an ELL license or endorsement?

- a. Yes
- b. No

25. Number of years teaching ELLs:

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-5
- c. 6-10
- d. 11-15
- e. 16-20
- f. 21+

26. Number of years teaching in general:

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-5
- c. 6-10
- d. 11-15
- e. 16-20
- f. 21+

27. Your gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female

## Appendix B

### Responses to survey

Of 107 licensed teachers in the state, 71 (66%) responded to the survey.

All numbers below are in percentages.

#### CLASSROOM

Respondents who work exclusively in mainstream	3
Respondents who work at least partly in mainstream	78
Respondents who work at least partly in mainstream and consider their work as co-teaching	24
Written response rate of those who work at least partly in mainstream (Questions 11 and 16)	84
Respondents who work exclusively in pull-out	21
Respondents who work at least partly in pull-out	97
Written response rate of those who work at least partly in pull-out (Questions 11 and 16)	79

#### CURRICULUM

For mainstream class, mainstream teacher determines curriculum	16
For mainstream class, ELL teacher determines curriculum	22
For mainstream class, teachers determine curriculum together	61
For pull-out class, mainstream teacher determines curriculum	3
For pull-out class, ELL teacher determines curriculum	69
For pull-out class, teachers determine curriculum together	27

#### PREFERENCE

ELL teachers' preference to work in mainstream classroom	0
ELL teachers' preference to work in pull-out	30
ELL teachers' preference depends on other factors	69



**Negotiating Co-Teaching Identities in Multilingual High School Classrooms**

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## Abstract

School districts in the U.S. are increasingly calling on content area and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to work together to plan and deliver instruction in classrooms with linguistically diverse students. Such programming presumes, however, that collaborative teaching dynamics are unproblematic. The aim of this article is to examine ESL and content area co-teaching dyads at an urban high school in the U.S. southeast. Data were drawn from a year-long qualitative study of these classrooms and were analyzed using sociocultural perspectives on learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1998). Findings highlight structural factors that inhibit the development of positive co-teaching relationships, including top-down decision-making, inadequate training for co-teaching, and lack of time for co-planning. Positive relationships were formed on the basis of shared personal and pedagogical visions, flexibility and adaptability. In addition to recommendations for school-level changes, implications of this study center on the need to prepare teacher candidates for collaborative teaching through cross-disciplinary coursework that includes opportunities to practice and reflect on co-teaching.

*Keywords:* ESL, Co-teaching, Cross-disciplinary coursework, Multilingual, High School.

## Introduction

English learners (ELs) constitute the most rapidly growing segment of the student population in American schools, and developing the means to improve their academic outcomes is one of the most pressing issues in current educational policy and practice. In response, many school districts in the U.S. have adopted collaborative teaching policies as a means of ensuring that ELs receive the linguistic support they often need in academic content area classes, and as a means of reducing budgetary and physical constraints in over-crowded schools (Gottlieb, 2006; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). Some of the benefits of collaborative teaching include a smaller student-teacher ratio, greater opportunities for small-group instruction, and access to comprehensible linguistically and academically sophisticated content (Davison, 2006; York-Barr, Ghore, & Sommerness, 2007). However, school administrators often assume that the development of a co-teaching relationship is uncomplicated and inherently advantageous (Arkoudis, 2006). In reality, co-teaching is a complex and dynamic process involving multiple agendas and personalities, and teachers are often unprepared or unwilling participants in co-teaching situations (Davison, 2006; Murawski & Lochner, 2011).

A growing body of research has begun to examine interpersonal dynamics within co-teaching relationships in multilingual classrooms. Notably missing from the research, however, is an examination of co-teaching relationships in classrooms at the secondary level, and classroom-level data on collaborative teaching in particular (Hornberger, 2006). Through classroom observations and interviews with five co-teachers (three content-area and two ESL teachers) at an urban high school in the U.S. southeast, this article captures the perceptions of co-teachers as they negotiated administrative and curricular demands, pedagogical goals, physical space, and diverse teaching styles and philosophies. The study was guided by the following research questions: How do high school ESL and content area teachers in co-taught classrooms engage with each other and their culturally and linguistically diverse students? How do teachers view themselves as co-teachers within a multilingual classroom setting? And more specifically, how do teachers negotiate pedagogical goals and approaches in co-taught classes? This research evidence suggests

that while collaborative teaching across a variety of content areas can be beneficial, structural factors can inhibit the development of positive co-teaching identities and outcomes.

## **Background**

Co-teaching is a practice that is well established in the field of special education (Murawski & Lochner, 2011; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2013), and more recently in the field of bilingual and English language education. Research has begun to examine ESL/content-area teaching practices and outcomes (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2012) from a variety of perspectives, including social justice and inclusive models of instruction, teacher leadership (Theoharis, 2009), and collaboratively designed standards-based curriculum and instruction (Short, Cloud, Morris, & Motta, 2012). Nonetheless, research on collaborative teaching between ESL and content area teachers has largely focused on co-teaching in primary school contexts (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010), and in school contexts outside of the U.S. (Creese, 2006; Gardener, 2006). Despite the growing popularity of this model, the benefits of co-teaching arrangements for exceptional children and ELs are not at all clear in the literature to date.

Relationships can differ within each co-teaching model, each impacting the way in which instruction is carried out. Particularly useful to this article's analysis is Davison's (2006) framework of co-teaching relationships. According to Davison, collaborative relationships between an ESL teacher and content area teacher can take several forms, ranging from pseudo-compliance and passive resistance to a more productive and creative co-construction. Pseudo-compliance or passive resistance is the first level of collaboration. This exists when there is an implicit or explicit rejection of collaboration and preference for status quo with little or no real investment of time or understanding of why co-teaching needs to happen. Compliance occurs when there is a general expression of collegiality with well-meaning teachers who make minimal efforts to collaborate in planning and teaching. Convergence occurs when teachers embrace opportunities for professional growth and much more effort is made to engage in dialogue. The most productive model of collaboration exists when teachers can reach creative co-construction. Davison (2006) explains,

Teachers' roles become much more interchangeable, yet more distinct, [a] high degree of trust of other is evident, responsibilities and areas of expertise continually [are] negotiated, informing documents [are] seen as actively co-constructed and teacher-developed, conflicts in roles [are] seen as inevitable, accepted, even embraced, as a continuing condition which will lead to greater understanding (p. 468).

Among the documented challenges to co-teaching in multilingual settings are differences in ideology with regard to language use in the classroom, pedagogical approaches, and content-area background. For instance, although ESL teaching necessitates knowledge of linguistics and second language acquisition theory, the field is often viewed as "strategy-driven" and non-academic, and bilingual and ESL teachers are often marginalized within school contexts (Harper, de Jong & Platt, 2008). With this background in place, this article interrogates how co-teaching relationships and identities unfold in different ways in three different high school classrooms.

## Theoretical Frame

The review of literature suggests several competing themes regarding the impact of collaborative teaching on teachers themselves, particularly when co-teacher relationships are taken into account. As our research examines co-teacher identities in classroom practices, in theorizing our inquiry, we drew on sociocultural learning theory, and particularly on the notion of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which are “a set of relations among persons, activity, and the world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). As a construct, communities of practice rests on the theory that learning occurs through social interaction, and that learning shapes and is shaped by our identities in different contexts. Power dynamics, whether characterized by conflict and subordination, or by consensus and egalitarianism, are embedded within communities of practice and determine the potential for learning.

Wenger (1998) argues that the experience of learning and one’s view of oneself as a learner within a community of practice is a function of one’s imagination that connects particular activities to future possibilities: “Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities” (p. 4). Newcomers who join communities initially learn tasks that may be considered less important than those performed by key members of the community. Hierarchy is evident in any setting where individuals inhabit different roles, and, in relation to this study, academic content area teachers may view the work of ESL teachers as auxiliary, rather than viewing ESL teachers as experts of their teaching domain (Arkoudis, 2006).

Legitimate peripheral participation is that which is considered tangential, yet essential to the workings of a community project. In order for legitimate peripheral participation to occur, new members of the community must be granted on-going and continuous access to “old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation” (Wenger, 1998, p. 101). Control and selection, while present in all communities of practice, give rise to potential for manipulation of access, which can prevent legitimate participation.

## Research Context

As a region with a historically low immigration rate, the U.S. southeast has seen a rapid increase in its immigrant population over the past twenty years, and the changes precipitated by this rapid demographic transformation are particularly visible in the region’s public schools. The population of ELs enrolled in public schools in the state where this research took place nearly doubled between 2002 and 2007 (from 60,149 to 112,532 students). This demographic shift took place during an era of new education reforms, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Race to the Top. These reforms have prioritized high-stakes testing and teacher evaluations as means of reducing the achievement gap between white and historically marginalized students, including immigrant language learners. The focal school district began implementing collaborative teaching programs district-wide in 2007 as part of a “Strategic Staffing and School Turnaround Initiative,” which was intended to improve academic outcomes in its low-performing schools.

This study took place at Shady Oaks High School<sup>1</sup> over the course of one academic year. Located in a high-wealth neighborhood, the school had historically enrolled middle, upper middle, and upper class students living in the neighborhoods surrounding the school. District zoning policies had recently diversified the school's student demographics, leading to a 30% increase in its enrollment of low-wealth immigrant and racial minority students. The majority of the school's ELs were immigrants from Mexico and Central America, and refugees from Southeast Asia and Africa. There were four ESL teachers at the school. Students designated by the district as Limited English Proficient (LEP) were enrolled in at least one 90-minute ESL class per day in which they received instruction focusing on English language and literacy development. Besides ESL classes, ELs were enrolled in content-area courses required for graduation, as well as various elective courses, such as music and art. Roughly half of these content area classes were co-taught by content-area specialists and an ESL teacher.

## Participants

Data were comprised of interviews and observations of five teachers (two ESL teachers and three content-area specialists) at Shady Oaks High School, all of which were conducted by the lead investigator of the research team. Though more co-taught classes were observed, we purposefully selected the case studies herein for a variety of reasons. First, as the focus of our research is on co-teacher identities and relationships, observational data illustrates how individuals negotiate space, and embody subject positions differently. Second, taken together, the teacher interviews illustrate the range of responses to the co-teaching environment and practice. Finally, focusing on three cases allowed us to go into greater depth than would otherwise be possible with a larger sample size.

The teachers had between seven and twenty-five years of teaching experience, and each had little to no training or experience co-teaching. The co-teaching dyads were assigned by school administrators, and none of teachers within each dyads had taught together prior to the year in which this research took place.

*Table 1. Co-teaching dyads*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject/Grade</b>	<b>ESL Training</b>	<b>ESL Co-teacher</b>	<b>Co-teacher Training</b>
Mrs. Thomas	Biology (10 <sup>th</sup> grade)	No	Ms. Elway	No
Mr. Johnson	Algebra (10 <sup>th</sup> grade)	No	Ms. Elway	No
Mr. Wilson	Civics (11 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Yes	Mrs. Stevens	No

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are given throughout to protect confidentiality.

The principal researcher first observed a co-taught 10<sup>th</sup> grade biology class taught by Mrs. Thomas, a biology teacher in her 40s, who had been teaching at Shady Oaks High School for eight years, and Ms. Elway, an ESL teacher in her 60s who had taught ESL for twenty-five years. Until this year, Ms. Elway had taught earth science and biology classes to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade native speakers of English, many of whom she considered high achieving based on their performance in the class. One week prior to the beginning of classes, she was asked by a school administrator to co-teach a biology class with Ms. Elway. Mrs. Thomas had no training in working with ELs and had not attended any of the optional district-level workshops on teaching ELs (e.g., using Sheltered Observational Instruction Protocol approaches) or on co-teaching techniques. Ms. Elway had not taken coursework in biology since her undergraduate training, which she completed in the late 1970s.

The second pair (Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway) taught algebra to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Mr. Johnson, who was in his mid 30s, began his career as an elementary school teacher, specializing in math. He had been teaching at Shady Oaks High School for almost five years at the time of this research. Like Mrs. Thomas, Mr. Johnson also had no formal training in teaching ELs. On the other hand, Ms. Elway had not taken mathematics coursework since earning her undergraduate degree. Although both teachers had co-taught with other teachers at the school, neither of them had attended co-teaching training sessions prior to or during their partnerships.

The third pair (Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Stevens) taught 11<sup>th</sup> grade civics. Mr. Wilson, who was in his late 40s, had been a social studies teacher at the school for 19 years. He had taught one social studies class with another ESL teacher. He had attended workshops on teaching ELs in content-area classes, but openly expressed that these professional development opportunities presented him with no new insights on how to work with this population. Mrs. Stevens, who was in her 50s, had taught ESL for 10 years, and this was her first co-teaching experience. However, she held an undergraduate degree in history and felt, in her estimation, somewhat confident with the content of the civics class.

## Methods

This study is comprised of three individual case studies of the co-teacher dyads described above. Merriam (1998) defines *case study* as “intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system, such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community” (p. 19). The six cases reported herein are considered *instrumental case studies* that attempt to generate a general understanding of co-teacher relationships (Stake, 1995).

Research captured “naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10), the groundedness of data in local contexts over sustained time periods, richness of data, and an emphasis on people’s lived experiences in connection to their social worlds. Four 90-minute observations were conducted by the lead researcher in each class for a total of 18 hours of observational data recorded in field notes. Observations centered on social interaction within teaching practices, including verbal discourse between the teachers and with students, as well as their negotiation of space and materials. Three thirty-minute semi-structured interviews following the same interview protocol were conducted with each of the teachers by the lead author to gain a first-person sense of their self-identities, their attitudes toward co-teaching, as well as their perceptions of learning outcomes, classroom phenomena, social interactions, and pedagogical approaches. A total of nine hours of interview data were obtained, which we later

transcribed. Transcripts were completed by the lead author and co-authors, and then were cross-checked by all.

Data analysis occurred in several stages: 1) organizing data, 2) generating categories, 3) coding the data, 4) testing the emergent understandings, 5) searching for alternative explanations, 6) writing the report. Following methods outlined by Patton (2002) and Heath and Street (2008), upon transcription of interviews, working together, we read through the data and generated codes from interview responses, background literature, and the conceptual framework. Coding was generally organized around the interview questions posed, as well as the research questions that guided this study. Using a constant comparative, or recursive perspective, we juxtaposed data from observations and interviews with our underlying assumptions or hunches, as well as theories and concepts from the literature to create a dialogue between existing explanations and ongoing data collection and analysis (Heath & Street, 2008). We then separated the data analysis into two stages: *within-case* and *cross-case* stages (Stake, 1995). The within-case analysis focused on three descriptive, comprehensive cases, looking at contextual variables that factored into each. In the cross-case analysis, we looked for themes generated across all cases, documenting individual differences that arose between them. Each case was comprised of eight categories and sub-categories. The cross-case analysis focused on themes that emerged in all cases, as well as themes that were not common across the cases. Once analysis was complete, the lead author of this study conducted member checks in order to validate, or in some cases, dispel initial interpretations of data, and to verify the accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2007).

We stress that our findings represent our analyses of three co-taught classrooms at one high school in a district that was working to respond to the academic and linguistic needs of its growing EL population. These cases are not intended to represent all co-taught classes at the high school level. Findings can, however, challenge educators and scholars to consider conditions under which well-intentioned policies are enacted.

## Findings

The three cases presented reveal significant overarching themes as well as unique, case-specific characteristics, each of which is detailed below.

### Biology

Biology is a required for graduation in the state, though biology was not a tested subject within the state's academic accountability program. There were 33 students in Mrs. Thomas's (biology teacher) and Ms. Elway's (ESL teacher) co-taught 10<sup>th</sup> grade biology class. Twenty-four of the students were classified as ELs who had been in the U.S. for varying lengths of time. Eighteen of these students were Hispanic, four were Vietnamese, and two were Congolese. The nine non-EL students were retaking the course after having failed it the previous semester. The course was taught in a biology lab, which was comprised of several fixed tables, and students sat on stools facing the front of the room. Mrs. Thomas created a seating plan that placed ELs together by language group, and native speakers of English on the opposite side of the room. Ms. Elway was not consulted when the seating plan was devised. During one observation of the biology class period, there existed physical and emotional distance between Ms. Elway and Mrs. Thomas. Field notes from one observation depict a recurring scene in this classroom:

Mrs. Thomas began the class by having students work on questions on a worksheet related to DNA. Students pulled out a packet of worksheets Mrs. Thomas had given them the previous week. The worksheets contained content students were expected to know for a state-mandated end of course exam. [Ms. Elway was given the same packet to prepare for the course.] Ms. Elway walked around the room monitoring and offering assistance with vocabulary to ELs who asked for it. The classroom was noisy, with students getting out of their seats. Ms. Elway attempted to keep non-ELs focused, but the students ignored her. After a few minutes, Mrs. Thomas orally went over responses to the questions. There were few visuals around the room to assist students with comprehension, and content was not contextualized. A male EL in the right corner behind me seemed to know a lot of the answers to her questions to the group, which he uttered under his breath. Mrs. Thomas called on the same students to respond, none of whom were ELs. Students were then given five minutes to review their workbooks before they were to take a pop quiz on DNA. There was lots of chatter and the class wasn't focused during those five minutes. One student was at the pencil sharpener the whole time. Another student was sketching an anime character in their notebook. Another student put his head down on the table. Mrs. Johnson never established direct eye contact with Ms. Elway, and did not speak with her, and Ms. Elway, in turn, rolled her eyes at Mrs. Johnson and tried to keep herself busy by helping students stay on task.

As the content specialist in biology, Mrs. Thomas assumed all responsibility over lesson plans and the development of curricular materials. She gave all students the same unmodified materials, which Ms. Elway generally received the day before class. Ms. Elway's offers to meet to plan together were consistently turned down, and she felt she had no input either in planning, instruction or classroom management. In an interview she shared, "I have tried to set up meetings to plan, but [Mrs. Thomas] never can. Instead, I get the materials at the same time students do, though I feel like I should be one step ahead. But I'm basically just like them, except that I can understand the language and the general idea of what they're covering. It's demeaning to me that I come to class knowing about as much as the students do." Evident in this relationship was unwillingness on Mrs. Thomas's part to give Ms. Elway open access to course content.

Ms. Elway felt an investment in seeing students succeed, whereas she viewed Mrs. Thomas as not being overly concerned with their needs, as shown in her decision not to scaffold their learning through such means as modified materials, or visuals, and by not calling on English learners to respond to group questions. Mrs. Thomas also generally ignored classroom management issues. In contrast, Ms. Elway often circulated around the classroom to, in her own words, "put out fires." Ms. Elway admitted to deferring to Mrs. Thomas in spite of her desire to assert more control in disruptive situations: "I'd rather not get into an argument with Mrs. Thomas in front of the class over student behavior, so I do my best to work on the edges to keep kids on task."

Observations across several class periods revealed that the co-teaching relationship was defined by avoidance, submission, and a lack of trust. Mrs. Thomas shared that she was reluctant to co-teach with a non-science instructor because of the extra planning it involved, and because she preferred to teach on her own. In a separate interview, Mrs. Thomas admitted that she felt unprepared to meet the needs of ELs, and that she "looks forward to next semester, when I will teach AP biology, and other higher level classes, and when I'll have my classroom to myself...unless [administration] decides something else. I admit I'm not as good at working with

ESL students.” In contrast, Ms. Elway had generally positive experiences in other co-teaching situations and carried certain expectations regarding co-teaching relationships into this biology classroom. Instead, Ms. Elway related that she felt, in her words, like “a servant or a secretary” in Mrs. Thomas’s room. These findings suggest that in the absence of connection, and willingness to collaborate, co-teaching can be greatly limited in its student and teacher engagement potential.

## **Algebra 1**

Algebra 1 was a required course for graduation, and a course in which students were subject to state-mandated tests. Mr. Johnson (math teacher) and Ms. Elway’s (ESL teacher) 10<sup>th</sup> grade algebra class was comprised of thirty students, twenty of whom were English learners. The English learners were from Vietnam, Somalia, Pakistan, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. The remaining ten students were repeating the course having not passed the previous year. Field notes from one class observation suggest a radically different relationship from that of Ms. Elway and Mrs. Thomas:

Both Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway stood at the doorway greeting students as they entered the classroom. Students returned their greetings and took their seats, which were arranged in pods of three to four desks with ELs and non-ELs sitting together in “a team,” as Mr. Johnson referred to them. Students worked individually on a warm-up exercise while Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway checked in with one another and walked around the room checking students’ work. Mr. Johnson then went over the warm up on a Promethian board by eliciting and demonstrating algorithms and how to arrive at the correct response. Imagery, large, simplified text, uncomplicated slides, and manipulatives were used. Students were mostly attentive and took notes. Ms. Elway circulated the classroom throughout the period, helping students decipher the meaning of symbols and word problems, and ELs and non-ELs responded to her help and classroom management styles as much as they did toward Mr. Johnson. At one point, Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Elway to give an example of a problem he asked students to solve....

The two teachers floated in and out of shared spaces and drew on and legitimized each other’s areas of expertise. The material used was the same level as other algebra classes at the school, although it was taught at a slower, incremental pace. Mr. Johnson shared his vision in an interview:

All students, ELs and non-ELs alike, need patterns. If they have access to tools to succeed, they will do the work. This means that I need to explain and repeat things slowly and over and over again until they get it. And when they do it’s like a light goes off, and I give that student a leadership role in the class so that they can reach other students who don’t get it.

Mr. Johnson was aided by having had many of these students in class the semester before; he believed he had sufficient understanding of their academic needs. ELs were often reluctant to speak in his class, he shared, and he believed that support from an ESL teacher was needed in his classes to develop English learners’ language skills, better gauge their learning, and help maintain a positive classroom environment, which both teachers felt was sometimes challenging given the diversity of student needs. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway met regularly to discuss plans, adapt

materials and coordinate classroom roles. Their relationship was amicable and open, and they gave regular feedback to one another on teaching. Ms. Elway shared, “Many teachers see working with ELs as a service; Mr. J. sees it as a privilege. And he welcomes having me in the classroom, which makes my job a lot easier and more meaningful than when I feel like I’m a bother to the other teacher.” Ms. Elway believed that co-teaching with Mr. Johnson elevated her status as an ESL teacher within the school, in part because of Mr. Johnson’s popularity among ELs and non-ELs alike.

Overall, because of their shared teaching philosophies and approaches, Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway maintained a collegial relationship, which influenced students’ attitudes towards each other and their teachers. They displayed a professional disposition toward their work, which was evident in their planning and balanced instruction. They also both seemed to value each other’s areas of expertise. Mr. Johnson recognized the importance of Ms. Elway’s focus on content-area language, and Ms. Elway, in turn, respected Mr. Johnson for his content knowledge, his teaching, and his efforts to connect with students. This case illustrates that successes in co-teaching have much to do with the degree to which both teachers feel valued and needed for their knowledge, effort and approach to teaching collaboratively, and where teachers position themselves and each other positively.

## **Civics**

Like biology and algebra 1, civics was a required course for graduation. Mr. Wilson (civics teacher) and Mrs. Steven’s (ESL teacher) 11<sup>th</sup> grade civics class was comprised of 23 ELs and eight native speakers of English. The English learners were from Sierra Leone, Somalia, China, Vietnam, Russia, Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala. The classroom was arranged with desks in five rows, all facing forward. The room had an LCD projector, and there were posters and state and world maps hung around the room. At the start of class, Mr. Wilson routinely walked around the room greeting students by their names and joking with them in a serious, but affable manner. The atmosphere was welcoming and inclusive. He shared, “Teachers here generally view ESL students as second class – that they bring the school’s reputation down. I really work against this in the way I set up my classroom. I want all kids to feel welcome.” Mrs. Stevens checked in with the ESL students but typically stayed at the back of the room while Mr. Wilson greeted them.

In one class, Mr. Wilson reminded students of an upcoming exam, as well as how they should prepare for it. He told students their exam would differ from that of prior civics tests in that it would focus on vocabulary words as opposed to essays that emphasized students’ understanding of political processes. In a post-observation meeting, Mr. Wilson related that he slowed down instruction and offered more scaffolding to this class, though he expected students to be exposed to the same subject matter as the non-ESL Civics classes. Field notes illustrate this practice:

This lesson focused on the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Mr. Wilson passed out a worksheet containing guided notes because a foldable activity meant to increase students’ understanding of target vocabulary that students had previously done was not as successful as he had hoped. Mr. Wilson gave directions on how to take notes on the guided notes sheet, and provided a model of a partially completed worksheet. He asked students to give synonyms used several metaphors as he explained key terms and events. Mrs. Stevens stood at the back of the class during the entire lesson.

In a post-observation interview, Mr. Wilson shared:

The reality is that we are teaching in English and that's really hard for them. Language is not a vehicle for them for teaching the content, like it is for American kids. I find myself using a lot of images. Like if I have to explain what a raw material is, I show them a picture of a cotton field, and then a machine, and a shirt, just to show them the progression between a raw material and a manufactured good. This is something you take for granted with an English speaker. You can't go with a slug approach; you have to go with a buckshot approach and reach them as many ways as possible, whether it's a one day approach or a three day approach. Something's going to catch. The mastery thing is something I've worked on. This is why it's important to work with an ESL teacher. If we combine our ideas, something's going to work

In contrast to this statement, Mr. Wilson admitted that there was a power struggle between himself and Mrs. Stevens, and that the previous ESL teacher he worked with was more of a "team player," who shared resources and teaching ideas. He felt as though Mrs. Stevens was too passive and that she should be more proactive in helping students. On the other hand, he appreciated her help getting materials to students who had been absent from classes or who needed tutoring outside of his class. From her perspective, Mrs. Stevens believed that she was not given room to be proactive in the classroom, and while well-intentioned and a "very good teacher," Mr. Wilson was reluctant to give up control of the classroom. She added, "He just gets going and doesn't stop long enough for me to contribute. It's frustrating, because I'm not sure why I'm even there when I could be more effective with these students." Mrs. Stevens and Mr. Wilson did not plan together, nor did they share materials. These two teachers, nonetheless, displayed a collegial relationship in front of students. Mrs. Stevens concluded, "We need to have teamwork, because we cannot morally and professionally fail a student because they don't speak the language. But I don't feel as though I'm effective when I can't help a student with the language *and* content." In this case, Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Stevens appeared to work at cross-purposes. Mr. Wilson felt confident in his abilities to teach the class on his own, while Mrs. Stevens believed her expertise was necessary, but underutilized. The tension between Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Stevens largely stemmed from incongruent attitudes toward co-teaching as a practice and mandated policy within the district.

### **Cross-case Analysis and Discussion**

The results of this study corroborate the findings presented by previous scholarship on co-teaching in both special education and ESL fields (Davison, 2006; Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007; Keefe & Moore, 2004) and add to the body of growing evidence of factors that either facilitate or impede positive teacher relationships in co-taught classrooms. We highlight cross-cutting themes below that have implications for how the teachers came to view themselves and their work.

#### **Top-Down Partnerships**

That school administrators assigned teachers to co-teaching dyads left the teachers in all but one case feeling resentful, powerless, and ineffective in the classroom. The teachers were

placed in a situation of having to negotiate classroom space, roles, pedagogical practices and materials with co-teachers with whom they had little or no previous contact. In two classrooms, the teachers displayed relationships based on territoriality and incompatible pedagogical goals and methods. In the same two cases, teachers did not collaborate with one another on course planning, lesson plans were not shared, and the ESL teachers were given lower status, or, in the words of one teacher, “secretarial” roles within the classroom, as marginalized non-participants (Wenger, 1998). On the other hand, one of the cases presented a model of how co-teaching might look at Davison’s (2006) accommodation or convergence stages. One of these classes centered on preparing for end-of-year testing, as opposed to broader learning engagement with the subject matter. The ESL students in the classroom, in turn, were less interested in the material, tended to give up when they failed to comprehend content, and were more apt to engage in off-task behavior.

To alleviate tensions around status and legitimacy, it is important that teachers be included in decision-making around co-teaching partnerships well before the beginning of the school year. To minimize differing epistemological assumptions (Arkoudis, 2006), ESL teachers who have knowledge in specific domains should pair themselves with teachers in that content area. Content area teachers need opportunities to dialogue with ESL teaching staff and to observe ESL classes before planning for co-teaching. Co-teaching must be understood from a relational perspective mediated by individual identities, as well as from an instructional one. Teachers must feel a sense of agency over staffing decisions, and feel confident with and knowledgeable of the expertise their colleagues bring to the co-teaching context.

The teachers who desired time for collaborative planning found that scheduling conflicts hindered meaningful and comprehensive collaborative relationships. Preparation times that did not align, and mandatory after school staff meetings meant that teachers were limited in terms of when they could meet. All of the teachers felt that competing demands also stood in the way of their ability to form collaborative relationships with their co-teachers. The ESL teachers felt they had to spend considerable time learning or brushing up on content knowledge, which left them with even less time to meet with the content-specialist teacher. Mrs. Stevens (biology), Ms. Elway (ESL), Mr. Wilson (civics) and Mr. Johnson (math) also suggested the need for longer-term collaborative relationships so that they could work together with the same students over the course of two or more years. They held that teachers and students would benefit from consistency in terms of teaching styles and language instruction.

Similar to Davison’s (2006) findings, teachers in this study who spent little time planning together were limited to a task orientation, as opposed to developing long-range objectives that focused on broader academic outcomes. Co-teachers need opportunities to get to know one another; as these cases illustrate, co-teaching relationships depend equally on shared or compatible knowledge and skills, *and* collegiality, and adaptability.

### **Co-Teaching Identities**

In only one classroom – algebra 1 – did the relationship between the content area and ESL teacher epitomize learning in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), as these teachers had a shared vision of curricular goals, and of their position within the classroom. The content-area teacher in this and one other classroom held a positive attitude toward ELs in spite of his lack of long-term experience with this population. Both the ESL and content area teachers in these classes attempted to foster inclusivity and a collegial community within these classrooms by engaging

students in cooperative learning activities. ELs in these classes displayed general enthusiasm for the course content, and learning outcomes, in turn, were generally positive. These students were given legitimate peripheral participation in classroom discussions and other learning activities.

Two of the three content-area teachers expressed a desire for more classes where English learners are integrated with native-speaking peers. These teachers liked having English learners together in one class, as they felt they were able to get to know these students and target their needs and strengths more easily than in a classroom where they had to manage multiple student needs. Mr. Johnson (math teacher) noted a change in his attitude toward ELs as a result of his co-teaching experiences: “I used to see them as a challenge. Now I look forward to having them in my class. I wouldn’t have felt this way without Ms. Elway and [another ESL teacher].” Both Mr. Johnson and Ms. Elway felt that had become better teachers and had learned from one another as a direct result of their collaborative teaching relationship. In sum, those content area teachers who are better at co-teaching are simply better, more engaged, more motivated, more up-to-date teachers (e.g., Mr. Johnson), whereas those who struggle seem to be teachers who are simply not motivated to engage students in positive ways (e.g., Mrs. Thomas), irrespective of the co-teaching arrangement.

### **Implications**

It is increasingly apparent in educational policy that teachers are responsible for working with both children *and* adults in the classroom. What remains underemphasized is that working with teachers in the classroom is a skill that may take time to develop. While we stress the benefits of co-teaching as an instructional approach, our research also points to some potential pitfalls. Before and during the school year, teachers should be given additional preparation time that aligns with their co-teachers so that they can develop more collaborative two-way relationships, whereby the ESL teacher becomes more of an active player in designing and disseminating course materials and methods, and can challenge the privileging of content area over language development. Co-teachers should be included in sustained professional learning opportunities together, and be provided with guidance on how to successfully collaborate in instructional planning and in the delivery of pedagogical content (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Moreover, in their capacities to adapt and collaborate, teachers should continue to question and to transform current policies that, in some cases, leave them feeling marginalized, and undervalued for their expertise, or territorial and mistrustful of their colleagues.

In addition, one way to address the concern raised over the legitimacy of ESL teachers’ knowledge and expertise is to make this dichotomy less apparent in teacher preparation programs. Pre-service ESL teachers should receive more training in content areas, whereas content-area teacher candidates should receive more training in second language learning theory and ESL methodologies within their content areas. Teacher education coursework can be designed so that content-area and ESL pre-service teachers or teachers seeking advanced degrees have opportunities to work collaboratively on unit and lesson plans, designing materials, and selecting appropriate and engaging teaching approaches drawing on each others’ areas of expertise. This necessitates that faculty within content-area and domains and bilingual and second language education work together in a collaborative manner to design coursework that offers students authentic opportunities to learn from their colleagues. It is imperative that teacher educators model the very skills and dispositions they wish to see in their students by working across disciplines to develop innovative coursework that highlights the benefits of collaboration, in terms of enhancing

our knowledge and skills and adaptability (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Fieldwork placements that give teacher candidates a chance to work across program boundaries can build capacity for collaborative work while still in a supervised environment that fosters critical reflection. Teachers' attitudes and personalities must be considered to make sure collaborating teachers can get along and embrace the idea of collaborating, and they should have opportunities for facilitated reflection in order to foster collaboration (Davison, 2006). Findings stress the importance of conceptualizing collaborative teacher relationships in terms of how individuals position themselves and are positioned by others in the classroom context (Hornberger, 2006).

On a final note, as ELs represent a growing population in U.S. K-12 schools, teaching professionals will likely continue to hone and develop new instructional strategies to facilitate their success in school. The present study shows that much can be gained by drawing on scholarship on co-teaching in other domains, such as special education. Future research could further examine where knowledge about co-teaching in each of these fields overlaps, and where differences exist. Research can also analyze co-teaching relationships over a longer period of time, and in various contexts, including during planning periods. Research could examine the efficacy of professional training for co-teaching. Additionally, although continued attention should be given to teacher's perspectives on co-teaching, student perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of co-teaching could also yield important insights into the efficacy of co-teaching models. In which roles do students find co-teachers most helpful? How do students perceive of co-teachers in their respective roles? Do they attribute more power to one teacher over the other? Does co-teaching impact their learning positively or negatively? Continued attention to co-teacher relationships and practices is a critical step in ensuring that co-teaching is both effective and rewarding to the teaching and learning community within a multilingual classroom.

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**INMERSIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA PARA PROFESORES AICOLE.  
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## **Resumen**

La formación del profesorado AICOLE (profesores que imparten su asignatura en otro idioma utilizando el Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua) es sin duda uno de los mayores desafíos a los que se enfrenta cualquier administración educativa que quiera contar con un programa bilingüe de calidad. El presente trabajo recoge y analiza una modalidad de formación del profesorado, realizada y desarrollada por el Centro de Idiomas (CUI) de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos en colaboración con la Consejería de Educación de la Comunidad de Madrid. Se trata de una formación diseñada de manera específica para mejorar las competencias lingüísticas y al mismo tiempo dotar de herramientas y recursos a los docentes. Una formación destinada a cubrir y a satisfacer las necesidades y las demandas de los profesores AICOLE, de cualquier nivel educativo, cuyos resultados pueden confirmarla como modelo aplicable tanto en ámbitos bilingües como no bilingües.

*Palabras clave:* Formación del profesorado, AICOLE, bilingüismo

## **Abstract**

Training teachers in CLIL methodology is one of the biggest challenges any educational institution must face in order to have the highest quality bilingual program. This work summarizes collects and analyzes an in-service training modality, carried out by the Language Center of Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid-Spain) in collaboration with the Education Department of Madrid Regional Government. This training was specifically designed to improve the teachers' linguistic competence and at the same time, provide them with the necessary tools and resources. The in-service training modality we present in this work aims to meet and satisfy the needs and demands of CLIL teachers from all educational levels, whose results confirms it as a highly applicable model both in bilingual and non-bilingual fields.

*Key words:* in-service training, CLIL, bilingualism

## Introducción

La Resolución del Consejo de Europa, de 31 de marzo de 1995, relativa a la mejora de la calidad y la diversificación del aprendizaje y de la enseñanza de las lenguas en los sistemas educativos de la Unión Europea y la publicación de “El Libro Blanco sobre la educación y la formación- Enseñar y aprender – Hacia la sociedad del conocimiento” constituyen un punto de partida para el fortalecimiento de las lenguas extranjeras en los sistemas educativos. Este libro establece cinco objetivos fundamentales de la educación en Europa, siendo uno de ellos dominar al menos dos lenguas comunitarias además de la lengua materna. Defiende la importancia y el efecto beneficioso que supone aprender lenguas a edades tempranas, y la importancia del aprendizaje de las lenguas con el fin de conseguir una mayor movilidad futura tanto en el terreno educativo como en el profesional. También propone fomentar el uso de métodos pedagógicos innovadores y hace especial hincapié en mejorar la calidad de la formación de los docentes.

Posteriormente se establece el año 2001 como “El año Europeo de las Lenguas”, impulsado por el Consejo de Europa con el fin de concienciar a los ciudadanos, y en especial a los diferentes países de la Comunidad Europea, de la diversidad lingüística y de fomentar el aprendizaje de lenguas, lo que da un nuevo impulso a esta iniciativa. En febrero de 2002, el Consejo de Educación invitó a los Estados miembros a adoptar medidas concretas para promover la diversidad lingüística y el aprendizaje de las lenguas, la educación y la formación permanente tanto de sus ciudadanos como del profesorado. En uno de sus apartados insta a los estados miembros a que:

Impulsen la mejora de la educación y la formación de profesores y formadores que participen en la formación permanente para que desarrollen las aptitudes necesarias para la sociedad del conocimiento, garanticen, entre otras cosas, el acceso generalizado al aprendizaje de idiomas, el acceso de todos a las TIC y fomenten el aumento de la participación en estudios científicos y técnicos.

Teniendo en cuenta el éxito de la convocatoria del “Año Europeo de la Lenguas”, la Comisión publica en 2003 un plan de acción sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas y la diversidad lingüística en el que define objetivos específicos y acciones concretas según un calendario a corto plazo, entre 2004-2006 (Plan de acción 2004-2006 (COM (2003) 449 final). Los objetivos de este plan se enmarcan en cuatro grandes ámbitos:

1. Extender las ventajas del aprendizaje permanente de lenguas a todos los ciudadanos
2. Mejorar la enseñanza de las lenguas
3. Crear un entorno favorable a las lenguas
4. Establecer un marco propicio para el progreso.

El plan propone una serie de objetivos concretos para cada uno de los ámbitos. Respecto al primero “*Extender las ventajas del aprendizaje permanente de lenguas a todos los ciudadanos*” conviene citar dos de los objetivos relacionados con este artículo: El primero es el “*aprendizaje de la lengua materna más otras dos lenguas comunitarias*”. En este apartado u objetivo se especifica la ventaja de aprender una lengua diferente a la lengua materna a edades tempranas siempre y cuando los profesores se hayan formado de forma específica y adecuada para poder impartir la enseñanza a grupos cada vez más jóvenes y siempre y cuando dispongan de los materiales pedagógicos adecuados y tiempo suficiente. Por lo tanto la formación del profesorado

es una condición indispensable para impartir este tipo de aprendizaje. El segundo es el “*aprendizaje de lenguas en la enseñanza secundaria, la formación profesional y la educación superior*”. Los Estados miembros destacan la importancia de que los alumnos tengan una buena capacidad de comunicación. El objetivo es adquirir un nivel adecuado de comprensión oral y escrita en dos lenguas extranjeras, así como competencias interculturales

En cuanto al segundo punto del plan, “*Mejorar la enseñanza de las lenguas*”, es necesario que los centros educativos desarrollen una nueva cultura que les convierta en centros receptivos, dispuestos a incorporar nuevas técnicas y metodologías. Algunos de los objetivos que se plantean en este segundo punto, son mejorar la formación de los profesores de idiomas, la evaluación de las competencias lingüísticas y la formación de los profesores para que puedan enseñar sus asignaturas en al menos una lengua extranjera (AICOLE<sup>2</sup>/CLIL) son fundamentales y necesarios si se quiere dar un enfoque al aprendizaje de las lenguas, diferente al que ha tenido hasta ahora.

En línea con estos planteamientos, algunos países de la UE empezaron a diseñar políticas educativas para desarrollar programas conducentes a alcanzar estos objetivos. Entre ellos, en España cabe destacar la implantación de un programa bilingüe en la Comunidad de Madrid en el año 2004.

### **El programa bilingüe y la formación del profesorado en la Comunidad de Madrid**

La Ley Orgánica 10/2002, de 23 de diciembre, de Calidad de la Educación establece entre uno de sus objetivos prioritarios, promover el aprendizaje de lenguas comunitarias diferentes a la lengua materna y considera que este aprendizaje debe asentar sus bases en la Educación Infantil y Primaria. En su artículo 66, punto 1, especifica que:

Los centros docentes, en virtud de su autonomía pedagógica y de organización establecidas en la presente Ley, y de acuerdo con el procedimiento que establezcan las Administraciones educativas, podrán ofrecer proyectos educativos que refuercen y amplíen determinados aspectos del currículo referidos a los ámbitos lingüístico, humanístico, científico, tecnológico, artístico, deportivo y de las tecnologías de la información y de las comunicaciones” (Ley Orgánica 10/2002 de 23 de diciembre).

En concordancia con lo que especifica la Ley, la Comunidad de Madrid publica el 5 de marzo de 2004 una Orden ( 796/2004) cuyo objetivo es facilitar la selección de colegios públicos de Educación Infantil y Primaria en los que se implantará un proyecto de enseñanza bilingüe español-inglés en 25 centros en el curso escolar 2004-2005, comenzando en primero de Educación Primaria e implantándose gradualmente en el resto de los cursos de esta etapa. A lo largo de los años, el programa se ha extendido hasta contar con 335 colegios bilingües en el curso escolar 2014-2015. En la tabla que aparece a continuación podemos ver de forma detallada la evolución del programa, así como el número de alumnos involucrados en el mismo.

*Tabla 1: Progresión del número de colegios públicos bilingües 2004-2015*

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<sup>2</sup> AICOLE es el acrónimo de Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenido y Lengua utilizado principalmente en la Comunidad de Madrid y que corresponde al acrónimo inglés CLIL (Content and language Integrated Learning).

Curso	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007 2008	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2010- 2011	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
<b>Colegios</b>	26	80	122	147	180	206	242	276	298	318	335
<b>Alumnos</b>	1.481	5.180	10.949	18.439	27.248	37.765	48.689	58.608	66.000	80.000	88.000

Fuente: Dirección General de Mejora de la Calidad de la Enseñanza. Consejería de Educación. Comunidad de Madrid.

Se entiende por enseñanza bilingüe la dedicación de al menos un tercio del horario lectivo a la instrucción en Lengua Inglesa. Esto incluye cualquier materia como Conocimiento del Medio, Plástica, Música o Educación Física, quedando excluidas las áreas de Lengua Castellana y Matemáticas.

Son muchos los rasgos distintivos que caracterizan este programa entre los que caben destacar la participación voluntaria de los centros, la formación específica del profesorado, la exigencia de un elevado dominio de la lengua, el gran apoyo institucional, el compromiso de padres, profesores y equipos directivos y la evaluación sistemática de los alumnos. Los centros públicos podrán solicitar ser bilingües siempre y cuando cumplan una serie de requisitos tales como:

- la aceptación por parte de toda la comunidad educativa del centro y el apoyo del consejo escolar.
- la experiencia previa del centro, así como el número de maestros especialistas en Lengua Inglesa, con el fin de que el programa sea viable.
- los recursos de que dispone el centro, número de alumnos y de unidades.

Estas cuestiones son importantes, ya que el hecho de que los centros soliciten voluntariamente convertirse en bilingües implica una mayor motivación por parte del profesorado, así como un cambio en la metodología, lo que incidirá positivamente en el posterior desarrollo y resultado del programa.

Otro aspecto a tener en cuenta es la formación que reciben los profesores una vez que el centro se convierte en bilingüe. Originalmente constaba de dos partes: una fase inicial intensiva que pretendía mejorar la competencia lingüística del profesorado y establecer un nivel mínimo de partida y, que se desarrollaba en Madrid y posteriormente un curso de metodología AICOLE/CLIL (Marsh, 1994, 2002, Graddol, 2006, Dalton-Puffer 2007) en el extranjero durante el mes de julio que realizaban los maestros seleccionados. Inicialmente estos cursos se realizaron en el Reino Unido y, más tarde, también se incluyeron cursos en algunas universidades de Estados Unidos al tiempo que se puso en marcha un plan específico de formación en lengua inglesa en verano, aunque con proyección durante todo el curso escolar. Esta formación no solo iba dirigida a maestros especialistas en el idioma, sino también a todos aquellos que tenían previsto impartir su asignatura en la lengua meta.

En cuanto a la exigencia de un elevado nivel de competencia lingüística por parte del profesorado, y con el fin de dotar al programa de la calidad necesaria y de maestros que puedan impartir clases en inglés, los docentes deben contar con la habilitación lingüística necesaria para impartir un área diferente a la Lengua Inglesa en inglés. La Consejería de Educación de la

Comunidad de Madrid publica la Orden 1406/2006, de 14 de marzo, por la que “se regula el procedimiento de obtención de la habilitación lingüística en idiomas extranjeros de profesores de centros públicos y de centros privados sostenidos con fondos públicos, de Educación Infantil y Primaria y de Educación Secundaria, para el desempeño de puestos bilingües en el ámbito de competencias de la Comunidad de Madrid “(Orden 1406/2006:38).

Este programa tiene como objetivo que los alumnos adquieran un dominio adecuado tanto de la lengua castellana como de la lengua inglesa a lo largo de toda su escolaridad, recibiendo instrucción en la “lengua meta”, en materias tales como, Conocimiento del Medio, Plástica, Educación Física y Música a través de AICOLE (Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua) (Maljers, Marsh, Wolff, Genesee, Frigols-Martín and Mehisto 2010, citado en Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff and Frigols-Martin 2010: 11).

La enseñanza de determinadas asignaturas del currículo en otra lengua diferente a la lengua materna es una práctica que se lleva realizando con éxito, sobre todo en Canadá, desde los años 60, si bien los programas reciben nombres<sup>3</sup> diferentes dependiendo de la importancia que se le da o bien a la lengua o al contenido, o del tiempo de instrucción que se recibe en una u otra lengua; también es cierto que las razones por las que estos programas surgieron son muy distintas tanto en la implantación de programas bilingües en Europa como en España y en concreto el de la Comunidad de Madrid.

Lo que se pretende con este tipo de programas es que el alumno adquiera las competencias necesarias tanto en los contenidos de la asignatura como en el idioma, y para ello es preciso abandonar el enfoque tradicional de enseñanza de una lengua y desarrollar una nueva perspectiva donde no sólo se va a lograr el objetivo lingüístico sino que además, a través de ese idioma, los alumnos aprenderán contenidos y por lo tanto a comunicar en la lengua meta. Lo que inicialmente era la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera se convierte en algo diferente. La lengua deja de ser un fin para convertirse en un medio. El objetivo ya no es enseñar un idioma sino enseñar los conocimientos que el alumno tiene que adquirir a través de ese idioma.

Este nuevo enfoque supone un cambio no solamente de cultura sino también de metodología. Los docentes tienen que sumergir a los alumnos en la lengua meta desde el principio y tienen que hacerlo de forma comunicativa y no pasiva; hay que hablar de “adquisición” de una lengua (proceso inconsciente) frente al simple aprendizaje (proceso consciente) (Krashen ,1987). Para ello es absolutamente necesario que el profesor encargado de impartir esas asignaturas posea un nivel de inglés suficientemente alto para desempeñar su labor docente de forma apropiada.

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<sup>3</sup> Content-based second language instruction: este tipo de instrucción se ha utilizado extensivamente en América del Norte, y si bien pretende que los alumnos dominen el contenido y desarrollen la lengua, se pone más énfasis en el aprendizaje de la lengua (Nikula y Marsh, 1998). *Language enhanced or language enriched content instruction*: este término se utiliza frecuentemente para referirse al uso de una lengua no nativa como medio de instrucción; sin embargo se le da más importancia al contenido que a la lengua (*Ibidem*: 14). *Immersion*: con este término se refieren a la instrucción que se realiza por medio de lenguas que no son las maternas de los alumnos. Una de las definiciones más utilizadas para definir este tipo de instrucción es la que proporciona Genesee: Generally speaking, at least 50 percent of instruction during a given academic year must be provided through the second language for the program to be regarded as immersion. Programs in which one subject and language arts are taught through the second language are generally identified as enriched second language programs (Genesee, 1987:1). Estos programas también reciben el nombre de “**Dual Language Education**” (DEL) o “**Two-Way-Immersion**” y han sido definidos por Genesee y Lindholm-Leary (2012: 2) como: “*schooling at the elementary and/or secondary levels in which English along with another language are used for at least 50% of academic instruction during at least one school year.*”

## **Perfil del profesor AICOLE/CLIL**

El profesor AICOLE debe utilizar siempre la lengua meta en el aula ya que es fundamental que el alumno relacione “una asignatura-un profesor-una lengua”, pero ¿cuál debe ser el perfil del profesor AICOLE?

1. Es especialista en su materia.
2. Domina la lengua meta.
3. Integra contenido y lengua en sus clases a partes iguales (el contenido de la asignatura es el objetivo principal y la lengua el medio).
4. Utiliza metodología AICOLE (nuevos enfoques metodológicos, ilustraciones, mapas de conceptos, TIC, etc... para facilitar el aprendizaje).
5. Es capaz de programar y preparar clases AICOLE (la programación es un proceso fundamental para todo profesor y mucho más cuando hay que hacerlo en otro idioma).
6. Es capaz de elaborar sus propios materiales AICOLE (la mayoría de materiales AICOLE son elaborados por los profesores).
7. Es capaz de adaptar contenidos y lengua al nivel de sus alumnos. (la palabra “adaptación” debe estar siempre presente en un profesor AICOLE).
8. Sabe qué lenguaje específico debe utilizar para desarrollar los temas de su asignatura (estructuras concretas para contrastar, comparar, conectores, vocabulario, etc...) así como para proporcionar a los alumnos el apoyo necesario (andamiaje) durante el proceso de aprendizaje tanto a nivel lingüístico como de contenidos para que se consigan los objetivos establecidos.
9. Se forma y actualiza permanentemente en temas de AICOLE.

## **Cursos de inmersión lingüística organizados por la Dirección General de Mejora de la Calidad de la enseñanza de la Consejería de Educación y Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos**

Tanto el profesor especialista en un idioma como el profesor que decide impartir una materia en inglés (AICOLE) deben tener un excelente dominio del mismo. Tradicionalmente la formación inicial del profesorado en España se ha centrado en la formación académica y la formación de los maestros y profesores de idiomas no siempre ha asegurado la adecuada competencia lingüística. Los profesores reciben cursos de formación especialmente basados en metodología, algo también necesario si tenemos en cuenta que deben contar con las herramientas necesarias para poder desarrollar su labor docente de forma adecuada, pero debemos considerar también una formación específica sobre todo si tenemos en cuenta que no todos los profesores necesitan el mismo tipo de formación, ya que dependerá en gran medida del contexto en el que se desarrolle su labor profesional. El profesor que se encuentra inmerso en un proyecto bilingüe debe hacer frente a nuevos retos tales como crear sus propios materiales, adaptar los contenidos (vocabulario científico y técnico, “input comprensible”) de manera que sus alumnos lo entiendan, aprender a utilizar todos los recursos con los que cuenta, tales como las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, y los nuevos enfoques metodológicos, y debe hacerlo de forma eficaz. Todo eso es lo que proporcionan los cursos de formación que habitualmente se diseñan pero, ¿cuándo practican

su inglés?, ¿qué oportunidades tienen de poner en práctica sus conocimientos?, ¿cómo pueden mejorar sus competencias comunicativas?

De la misma manera que se pretende que el alumno que estudia en un centro bilingüe esté expuesto el mayor tiempo posible a la lengua meta, es fundamental, para los profesores que están actualmente involucrados en los programas y para los que lo estarán en un futuro inmediato, el estar no sólo expuestos a la lengua que deben enseñar sino a comunicar y practicar en dicha lengua.

Teniendo en cuenta todo lo anteriormente mencionado y con el fin de darle a la formación del profesorado de centros bilingües un enfoque diferente y práctico, la Dirección General de Mejora de la Calidad de la Enseñanza de la Consejería de Educación y el Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos pusieron en marcha en marzo de 2008 una iniciativa pionera en la Comunidad de Madrid dentro de la oferta formativa de la red de formación del profesorado: Cursos de Inmersión Lingüística, con el fin de mejorar la comprensión y producción oral de los profesores que trabajaban en centros bilingües, tarea nada fácil en un entorno social poco propicio para ello, y sobre todo considerando que las oportunidades que tienen de poner en práctica el idioma son escasas.

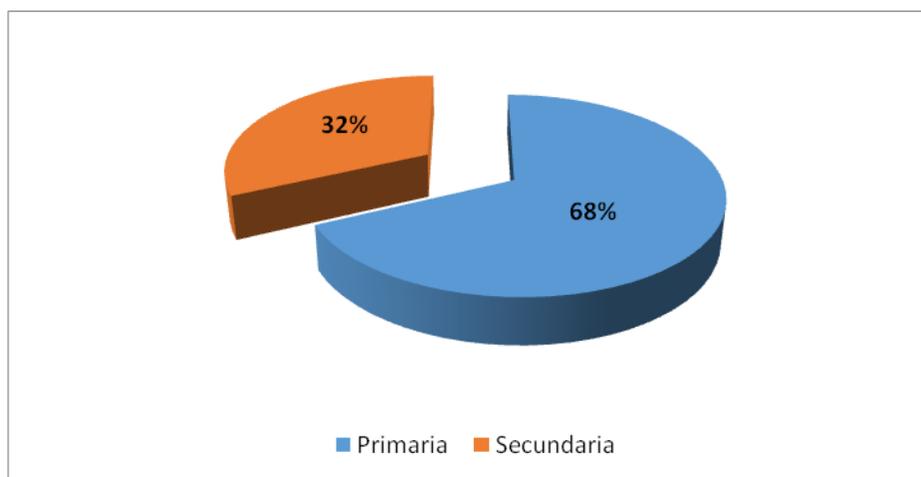
Estos cursos fueron diseñados por el centro universitario de idiomas de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos con un claro objetivo: conseguir que el profesorado mejorara su competencia lingüística a través de actividades enfocadas a reforzar dos de las destrezas más importantes, la comprensión y producción oral, sin olvidar un contenido metodológico subyacente ya que la mayoría de ellas eran susceptibles de ser adaptadas para su posterior utilización en el aula. Las actividades se centraban en el uso de estrategias altamente comunicativas, y dirigidas específicamente a la mejora de su competencia lingüística.

Esta inmersión lingüística se realizaba los sábados, tenían una duración de 10 horas y el inglés era la única lengua de trabajo. Contaba con un equipo de profesionales compuesto por profesores universitarios nativos con gran experiencia docente, y auxiliares de conversación, muchos de los cuales trabajan en centros bilingües apoyando a los profesores y, por lo tanto, conocedores de las necesidades de éstos. De esta manera se conseguía crear un ambiente 100% favorable a la lengua. El tamaño de los grupos era reducido (8 alumnos por grupo), por lo que la ratio alumno-docente nativo era muy alta (2,6 a 1).

Estos cursos inicialmente se destinaron a maestros especialistas de inglés y no especialistas que impartían docencia en el programa bilingüe, y tras comprobar los excelentes resultados, se ofertaron también a maestros especialistas de inglés de centros no bilingües y, posteriormente, a profesores de secundaria tanto especialistas como no especialistas, con el objeto de prepararlos para su incorporación al programa bilingüe. Con ese fin durante el mes de julio de 2008 y 2009 y siguiendo las mismas pautas que en los cursos realizados los sábados, se desarrolló una inmersión de 4 días (40 horas), esta vez dirigida a profesores de Educación Secundaria especialistas en diferentes materias y potenciales profesores AICOLE donde se hacía especial hincapié no sólo en mejorar su competencia lingüística sino también en temas relacionados con programación específica de su asignatura en la lengua meta.

De los más de 1700 docentes que realizaron este tipo de formación hay que constatar que teniendo en cuenta la oferta inicial del proyecto, el porcentaje de maestros que participaron en estos cursos de inmersión es mayor respecto al de profesores de secundaria tras y como muestra el gráfico 1.

*Gráfico 1: Profesores de primaria y secundaria que participaron en los cursos*



*Elaboración propia a partir de las encuestas realizadas en los años 2008-2009*

### **Análisis de resultados de las encuestas**

Es difícil comprobar la aceptación y el éxito de un programa o iniciativa, si no se cuenta con datos empíricos. Para ello, se realizó una encuesta a la finalización de cada uno de los cursos que proporcionaron datos fiables sobre el grado de satisfacción de los docentes que tuvieron la oportunidad de realizarlos. Con este fin, CUESA (Centro Universitario de Estudios Sociales Aplicados de la URJC<sup>4</sup>) en colaboración con el Centro de Idiomas, fue el encargado de analizar los datos resultantes de las distintas encuestas realizadas. En primer lugar se realizó una encuesta de necesidades donde cabe destacar un alto porcentaje que estaba de acuerdo o totalmente de acuerdo en que necesitaban mejorar su producción oral tanto para poder impartir su asignatura en la lengua meta como para poder mantener un grado de fluidez adecuado.

### **Encuesta de necesidades**

Esta encuesta corresponde a cuatro bloques en función de los factores a medir: organización e información previa de la que dispone el alumno, valoración docente, metodología docente y expectativas y objetivos. Los alumnos puntúan las evaluaciones según una escala del 1 al 5, siendo 1 muy en desacuerdo con la afirmación presentada y 5 muy de acuerdo.

Los gráficos que se presentan a continuación comparan las evaluaciones realizadas los sábados de inmersión del 29-03-08 al 07-06-08 y del 8-11-08 al 24-01-09.

- Necesito mejorar la expresión oral.
- Necesito mejorar la expresión escrita.
- Necesito mejorar la comprensión lectora.
- Necesito mejorar la comprensión auditiva.
- Necesito mejorar la gramática.
- Necesito mejorar el vocabulario.

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<sup>4</sup> Universidad Rey Juan Carlos

- Necesito mejorar la pronunciación
- Necesito mejorar la competencia discursiva
- Necesito mejorar la metodología AICOLE
- Necesito mejorar la integración en el currículo de las TIC's
- Necesito mejorar en la selección, creación y adaptación de materiales

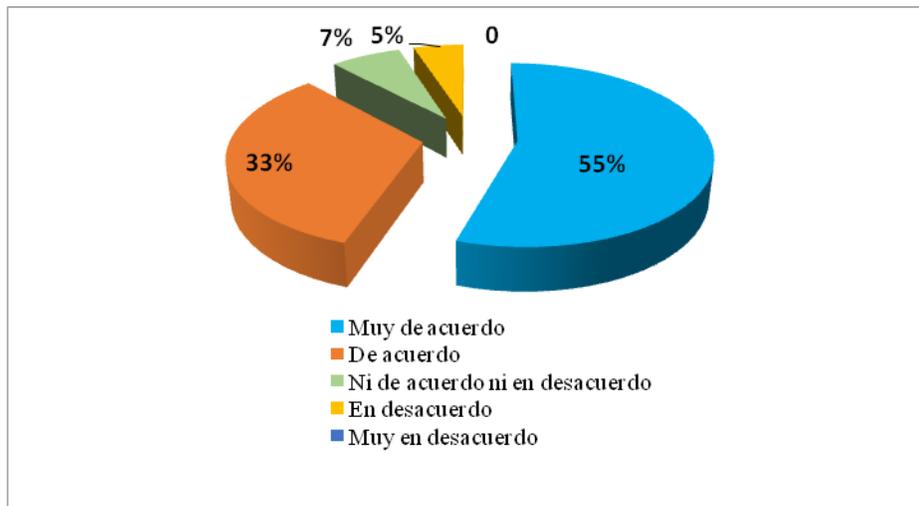
Los gráficos que aparecen a continuación son una muestra de tres de los puntos débiles de gran parte de los profesores. El 61% consideró que necesitaba mejorar su competencia lingüística, un 55% la pronunciación y un 52% reconocía que debería recibir más formación AICOLE.

*Gráfico 2: Necesita mejorar la expresión oral*



*Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA*

*Gráfico 3: Necesita mejorar la pronunciación*



*Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA*

*Gráfico 4: Necesita mejorar la metodología AICOLE*



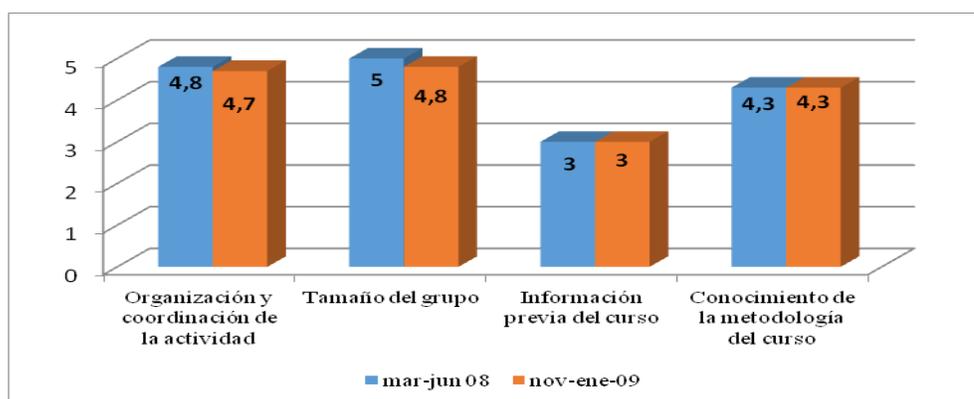
*Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA*

Al finalizar cada uno de los cursos se pasó a los participantes una encuesta en la que se les preguntaba sobre aspectos relacionados con el desarrollo del mismo y en la cual debían valorar la organización e información que habían recibido antes de su realización, la labor docente de los profesores que lo impartían, la metodología utilizada y un último bloque de preguntas enfocadas a valorar los contenidos, el grado de satisfacción y la necesidad de que estos cursos se impartieran de forma continua dentro del plan de formación de la Consejería de Educación. A continuación se muestran los gráficos de resultados de cada uno de estos bloques y las preguntas a las que debían responder.

### **Valoración de la organización e información previa.**

Este apartado está orientado a conocer la satisfacción del alumno en cuanto la organización de los cursos y los grupos, al igual que la información previa de la que el alumno disponía en el momento de matricularse.

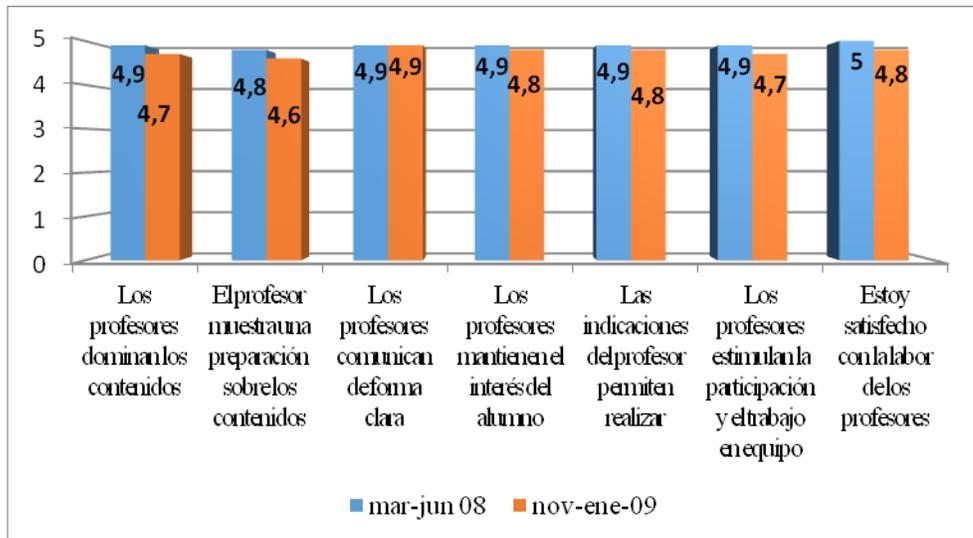
*Gráfico 5: organización e información previa del curso*



*Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA*

## Valoración docente.

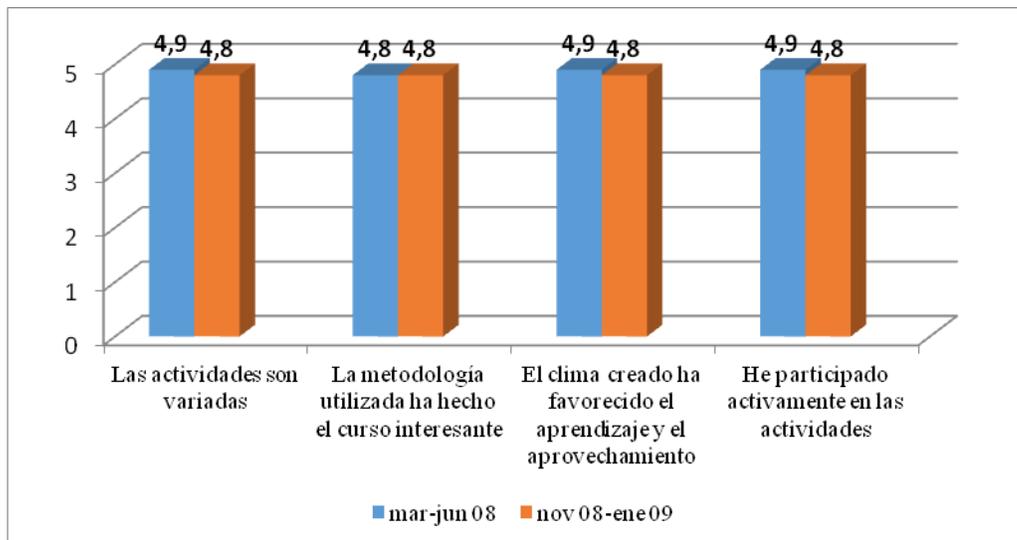
En este bloque se pide a los encuestados que valoren el desarrollo de los cursos y la actividad realizada por los profesores.



Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA

## Metodología docente

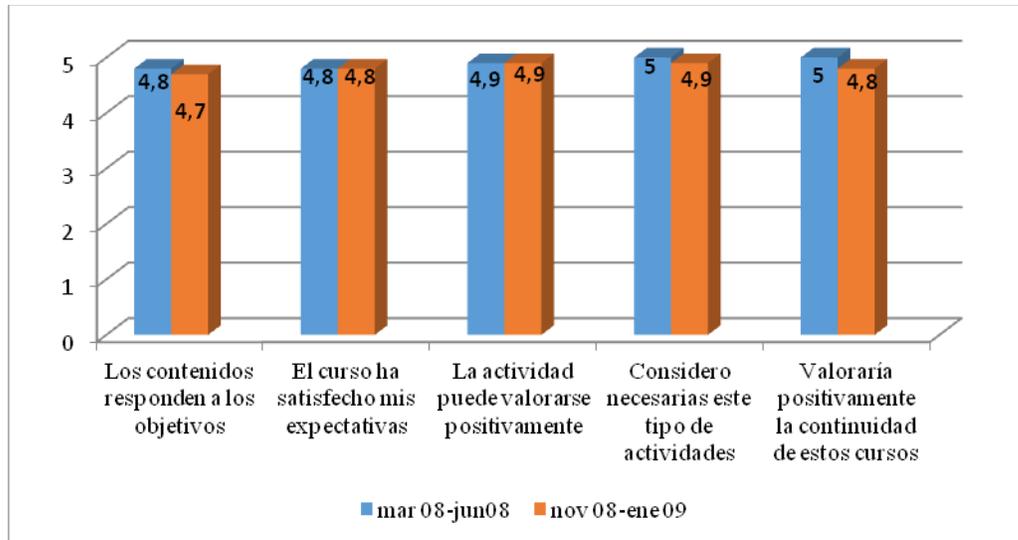
Este apartado recoge las opiniones en cuanto a la metodología, clima, y la participación personal en los cursos.



Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA

## Expectativas y objetivos

En el último bloque se analiza la opinión de los asistentes respecto a los contenidos, satisfacción y la opinión de continuidad y necesidad de este tipo de cursos.



Elaboración propia partir de los datos proporcionados por CUESA

Como se puede comprobar por los gráficos el grado de satisfacción de los participantes a largo de los más dos años que se realizaron estos cursos es muy alto. También se incorporó al cuestionario un apartado en el que se recogían las opiniones dadas por los profesores asistentes respecto de los cursos. Citaremos algunas como ejemplo:

*“Como curso de inmersión lingüística está a años luz de cualquier otro- incluidos los realizados en U.K y U.S.A. Se habla la lengua incluso entre “indígenas.”*

*“Creo que es la única oportunidad que como docente he tenido de realizar una verdadera inmersión lingüística.”*

*“Considero muy positivas estas iniciativas y me gustaría que fueran más extensas”.*

*“El equipo de profesores ha mostrado un interés y una disposición excelente. Los tiempos dedicados a cada actividad han sido los adecuados para mantener el interés”.*

*“Me ha parecido un curso muy útil: No sólo reciclas tu inglés de manera intensa sino que también aprendes nuevo vocabulario y estructuras. Actividades variadas, comunicativas y divertidas al mismo tiempo”.*

*“Deberían seguir haciéndose este tipo de actividades para los profesores de idiomas. Consiguen que hablemos en inglés y tengamos nuevas ideas para actividades en el aula”.*

La mayoría considera que este curso ha sido una iniciativa excelente, y subrayan la calidad profesional y la implicación del equipo de profesores, así como su satisfacción con la organización y coordinación del curso. Señalan a su vez, que el curso ha supuesto para ellos una inmersión intensa y real en un clima que favorece la comunicación en lengua inglesa. Finalmente consideran que éste tipo de cursos se deberían realizar más a menudo, y tener una cierta continuidad.

## Conclusiones

La Educación Bilingüe es un desafío constante tanto para el profesorado como para las autoridades educativas. El éxito de un programa bilingüe depende enormemente del modelo del programa utilizado, de la formación del profesorado, de la implicación de la comunidad educativa, de los estímulos y la motivación que reciban los alumnos, del compromiso de los profesores y del apoyo de la administración.

El Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos ha adquirido un alto compromiso al implicarse en un proyecto de formación que permitirá a los profesores a garantizar el máximo nivel de calidad en su tarea docente.

La adquisición de una segunda lengua es un proceso largo, dificultoso y en el caso de los centros bilingües implica un gran esfuerzo por parte del profesorado que precisa de unos elevados conocimientos, de una constante formación lingüística y AICOLE y de un trabajo diario permanente.

El presente trabajo pretende resaltar la importancia de la formación del profesorado como elemento clave para la mejora de un programa bilingüe, no solamente porque una mejor preparación de los docentes produce una mejor formación de los alumnos, sino porque una formación de calidad y atractiva estimula al profesorado, le permite mejorar su confianza y su autoestima, le hace consciente de su protagonismo en el programa bilingüe y hace que se implique aún más en el proyecto.

No siempre las administraciones educativas dedican a las evaluaciones que los docentes hacen de los cursos a los que asisten la necesaria atención. Los profesores son perfectos conocedores de sus fortalezas y de sus debilidades, y por lo tanto de sus necesidades reales. La evaluación de la formación debería ser un elemento clave en la definición de la oferta.

La enseñanza bilingüe requiere un apoyo decidido por parte de la administración y un esfuerzo constante por parte de los profesores. Pero del mismo modo que enviar a nuestros profesores a cursos en el extranjero no es suficiente, tampoco lo es ofrecerles cursos de inmersión tradicionales. En el primer caso, la formación en universidades extranjeras resulta útil y provechosa si el curso y su desarrollo han sido diseñados de manera específica para los profesores que asisten al mismo, es decir teniendo en cuenta el perfil de los participantes, sus conocimientos, niveles, etc. En el segundo caso, un curso de inmersión que no cuente con una preparación y un diseño que ofrezca a los asistentes la formación, la información y la ayuda que precisan, ajustándose en todo momento a sus características y necesidades, producirá unos resultados mediocres que no tendrán en el aula el impacto deseado.

Por lo tanto cualquier curso de formación que se oferte, en el caso que nos ocupa relacionados con la enseñanza bilingüe y de manera específica de inmersión, debe ser producto de un trabajo serio, riguroso y, aunque el objetivo final sea la mejora de la enseñanza y de los resultados educativos de los alumnos, su primer objetivo debe ser el profesor que asiste al mismo, que dedica parte de su tiempo a mejorar su formación. Si este primer objetivo no se cumple, el segundo difícilmente podrá conseguirse.

Una buena planificación, realizada por expertos, nos llevará a alcanzar nuestros objetivos y a que los alumnos adquieran un alto nivel de competencia no solo del idioma sino también de conocimientos.

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**Multilingual Students and Language-as-a-Problem Oriented Educational Policies:  
A Study of Haitian-American Generation 1.5 Students' School Language Experiences**

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## Abstract

School language policies shape the learning experiences of all students attending an educational institution, but they have a particularly strong and lasting impact on multilingual students. This qualitative research study employed a series of five semi-structured interviews to explore the past and present school language experiences of two Generation 1.5 Haitian-American students enrolled in their first semester of college. Findings indicate that in the participants' Haitian primary schools and U.S. secondary schools, language-as-a-problem oriented policies contributed to discouraging the participants from drawing on their home language, Haitian Creole, as a resource for learning. These prior experiences seemingly continued to affect the participants in their first-year college writing courses, where they were hesitant to use Haitian Creole as a resource for composing writing assignments. It is argued that primary and secondary school language-as-a-problem oriented policies can have lasting effects on Generation 1.5 students, discouraging them from drawing on their multilingualism as a resource for completing school assignments. Suggestions for future research and the creation of educational and community resources promoting multilingualism as a resource for learning are provided.

*Keywords:* English language learners, multilingual students, Haitian students, Generation 1.5, language policy, composition

The proportion of children in U.S. schools who do not speak English in their homes is growing (Garcia, Klieffen, & Falchi, 2008). Among these emergent bilinguals (EB) are Generation 1.5 students, or students who were born and began their schooling outside of the United States, then immigrated to the U.S. and enrolled in primary or secondary schools. Generation 1.5 students have often had the opportunity to begin building academic language and literacy skills in a language other than English before enrolling in U.S. schools, a characteristic which distinguishes them from EB students who did not attend schools outside of the U.S. (Roberge, 2009). Empirical research has demonstrated the important role that a student's first or home language or languages can play when the student undertakes academic listening, speaking, reading or writing tasks in a second or additional language (Cummins, 1979; Grosjean, 1989). Thus, a Generation 1.5 student who immigrates to the United States draws on language proficiency built in his or her home country to assist in both acquiring and completing academic tasks in English (Grabe, 2009; Leki, Cummin, & Silva, 2008).

In his seminal paper, Richard Ruiz (1984) detailed three distinct language planning orientations, which he termed *language-as-a-problem*, *language-as-a-right*, and *language-as-a-resource*. Ruiz asserted that according to a language-as-a-problem orientation (p.18), an individual's first language, if it is not the majority language, is a handicap that can be overcome by the individual learning the majority language. By contrast, a language-as-a-right orientation (p.21) proposes that an individual has a basic human right to his first language, while the language-as-a-resource orientation (p.25) posits an individual's first language as a resource that should be developed for the benefit of both the individual and society.

Research in the field of social psychology has demonstrated that environments in which language-as-a-problem policies and practices are present discourage multilingual children from developing and drawing on their first language. By contrast, contexts with language-as-a-resource policies create environments in which children are more likely to value, develop, and utilize their first language proficiency when engaging in a variety of communicative tasks (Hamers & Blanc, 1982; 2000). Thus, in the context of education, a school's linguistic environment can influence

the extent to which multilingual children come to value and utilize their first language when learning.

Although language policy research often focuses on the perspectives or actions of stakeholders such as political leaders, state agencies, institutions, and classroom practitioners, this paper examines school language policies from the perspective of students educated under the policies (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Shohamy, 2006). The sections which follow describe the findings of a study that employed a constructivist theoretical perspective and used qualitative research methods to explore the potentially lasting effects of language-as-a-problem oriented education policies on students (Crotty, 1998).

## **Literature Review**

### **Haitian-American Generation 1.5 Students**

When statistics concerning the home language of EB students in U.S. schools are gathered, just one home language for each student is generally indicated. Such statistics fail to take into account that many EB students are multilingual, having lived in contexts where more than one language was used in their daily lives. For example, some EB students were initially educated in contexts where their home language differed from the language of school instruction. Refugee students who attended schools outside of their home countries and Generation 1.5 students educated in postcolonial contexts are examples of students who may have been initially educated in contexts where the language of home differed from the language of school instruction (McBrian, 2005).

Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students are a group with significant representation in U.S. schools who are initially educated in a postcolonial context where their home language, Haitian Creole, differs from the language of school instruction, most often French (Buchanan, Albert, & Beaulieu, 2010; Hebblethwaite, 2012; Locher, 2010). Haitian students are especially well represented in educational institutions located in certain regions of the United States, such as the Northeastern and Southeastern United States (Stepick, 1998; Zéphir, 2004). In the state of Florida, for example, Haitian Creole is the second most commonly spoken home language among EB students enrolled in K-12 public schools, and significant numbers of these students are Generation 1.5 students who initially attended schools in Haiti, then immigrated to the United States and began attending U.S. schools (Florida DOE, 2011; Florida DOE, 2015).

### **Mother Tongue Instruction in Postcolonial Settings**

As nations in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean gained their independence from European colonial powers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, numerous multilingual societies conceived of and enacted policies dictating the language of school instruction in their educational institutions (Lin & Martin, 2005). Some nations or communities chose to provide some or all educational instruction in a mother tongue, or local or national language, while others continued to use a colonial language as the sole language of school instruction (Spolsky, 2012; Tollefson &

Tsui, 2003). Haiti is a postcolonial nation which has continued to use French, a former colonial language, as the language of instruction in a great number of schools.

### **Language and Education in Haitian Schools**

After driving the French from the island during the Haitian Revolution, Haiti became an independent nation in 1804. Despite having forced the French off of the island more than 200 years prior, in contemporary Haiti, both French and Haitian Creole serve as official languages (Stepick, 1998). According to linguists, Haitian Creole and French are two equally complete and complex languages, which are distinct from one another and mutually unintelligible (Degraff, 2005). Although both French and Haitian Creole are the official languages of Haiti, it is estimated that up to 95% of Haitians are monolingual speakers of Haitian Creole, and Haitians use Haitian Creole in nearly all communicative situations in their homes and communities (Hebblethwaite, 2012). In spite of this fact, until the enactment of the 1979 Bernard Reform, all instruction and academic materials in school settings in Haiti were in French (Hadjadj, 2000).

The Bernard Reform was Haiti's first language-in-education policy, and it mandated that students receive early primary grades instruction and build initial literacy skills in Haitian Creole, then transition in middle school to receiving all school instruction and literacy activities in French (Dejean, 2010; Hadjadj, 2000; Locher, 2010). The Bernard Reform remains Haiti's official language-in-education policy; however, the policy has never been fully implemented for several reasons (Dejean, 2010; Trouillot-Lévy, 2010). First, believing that knowledge of French would provide their children access to higher status jobs, when the reform was enacted, Haitian parents of all social classes demanded that schools continue to instruct their children in French (Trouillot-Lévy, 2010). Moreover, because lessons in Haiti had been traditionally taught in French, and the government failed to provide a curriculum in Haitian Creole, teachers did not use the language to instruct students (Dejean, 2010; Hebblethwaite, 2012; Trouillot-Lévy, 2010). In addition, after the reform was introduced, the majority of books and other educational materials remained in French because the materials were generally produced by and purchased from French publishing companies. As a result of these factors, to this day, a great number of Haitian schools provide instruction and materials solely in French, a second language for Haitian students and teachers alike, while forbidding the use of Haitian Creole, the first language of nearly all students and teachers (Dejean, 2010; Trouillot-Lévy, 2010).

### **Language and Education in U.S. Schools**

After beginning their education in Haiti, Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students immigrate to the United States and attend schools in their new U.S. communities. Although U.S. schools are required by law to provide education that is linguistically accessible to all students (Lau v. Nichols, 1974), schools have no mandate to provide bilingual education (National Association of Bilingual Education, 2015). Researchers have argued that in the absence of a clearly articulated federal language-in-education policy, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has come to serve as a de facto policy (Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Menken, 2008). The law places pressure on students to perform well on mandated high-stakes standardized tests, which are very often given only in English. As a result, educators in many U.S. schools endeavor to hasten Generation 1.5 students' acquisition of English by providing language support that assists them in

learning English as quickly as possible, while failing to support the continued development of their first language proficiency (Center for Public Education, 2007; NABE, 2015).

After graduating from U.S. high schools, Generation 1.5 students may enroll in an American college or university. Colleges and universities generally gather data on the racial backgrounds, but not the ethnic or linguistic backgrounds of their students; thus, it is difficult to ascertain the college attendance patterns of Generation 1.5 students. However, empirical studies have demonstrated that many immigrant students, including Generation 1.5 students, intend to enroll in colleges and universities, and among the Black population, immigrant students are more likely than their American-born peers to attend a U.S. tertiary institution (Louie, 2005; 2007). In spite of many immigrant students' intentions to attend college, researchers have also found that immigrants and the children of immigrants face many barriers to accessing and succeeding in college. Some of these barriers include immigration status, low English language proficiency, a lack of adequate financial means, and inadequate preparation in K-12 schools (Greenman & Hall, 2013; Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009; Wells, 2010).

Although Generation 1.5 students face many barriers to accessing college, many do ultimately attend U.S. post-secondary institutions (Roberge, 2009). Empirical studies have demonstrated that Generation 1.5 students often find college language and literacy tasks novel and challenging because high school literacy tasks often include the memorization and reporting of facts; whereas college tasks include gathering information from academic materials and presenting critical written arguments (Callahan, 2005; Harklau, 1994; 2001). At many U.S. colleges and universities, Generation 1.5 students first engage intensively with these new and challenging language and literacy practices in a first-year English composition course (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009).

To support Generation 1.5 students enrolled in first-year composition courses, some colleges and universities have designed courses specifically for this student population. Evaluation studies of such courses have demonstrated that Generation 1.5 students' success on new and challenging college composition tasks is enhanced when they are encouraged to draw on their proficiency in, and knowledge of, their home language and culture (González & Moll, 2002; Moore & Christiansen, 2005; Murie & Fitzpatrick, 2009; Rendon, 2002).

Generation 1.5 students' willingness to draw on their first language as a resource to complete literacy tasks in an educational setting cannot be assumed, as many Generation 1.5 students have studied in educational environments where they were discouraged from using their first language proficiency as a resource to complete academic tasks (Hamers & Blanc, 1982; 2000). Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students serve as an example of a group of students who are unlikely to have been educated in primary and secondary school contexts where they were encouraged to draw on their first language, Haitian Creole, as a resource.

The sections which follow present empirical data from a series of interviews with Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students enrolled in a first-year college composition course. The study data aim to illustrate that the participants' language experiences in their K-12 schools were shaped by these institutions' language-as-a-problem oriented policies. These primary and secondary school experiences ultimately influenced the participants' views of the role that their first language, Haitian Creole, could and should play when they composed writing assignments for their first-year college composition course.

## Method

This paper draws on data collected for a larger study aiming to understand Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students' writing experiences in both Haitian and U.S. schools. In much of the data collected, the participants described experiences that were shaped by their schools' language policies; therefore, the sections that follow describe Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students' school writing experiences as shaped by their schools' language policies. To understand the participants' experiences, the study employed a constructivist theoretical perspective, viewing the participants as the study's primary producers of knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

Data collection for the study included conducting five sixty-minute, one-on-one interviews with each participant. The interviews took place over the course of the participants' first semester of college, during which they were both enrolled in a writing-intensive college composition course. In the initial interview, conducted at the beginning of the semester, the participants recollected and described their past experiences of language-use in general, and writing specifically, in both their Haitian primary schools and U.S. secondary schools. In four subsequent interviews, conducted at regular two-week intervals throughout the remainder of the semester, the participants described their experiences writing in their first-year college composition courses (see *Appendix* for sample interview questions). The participants' composition course writing assignments served as artifacts to prompt discussion in each interview.

In alignment with the constructivist theoretical perspective, participant interview data were analyzed using Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and subjected to two rounds of coding. During initial coding, each line of data was given an original code describing the data. These codes emerged from the data themselves. During the second round of coding, initial codes were merged to form focused codes. Then, focused codes were then arranged into a novel grounded theory of the participants' school language experiences. To ensure the validity of the theory, the researcher conducted a round of member checking interviews during which a condensed version of the grounded theory was presented to each participant in the form of a series of statements. The participants were invited to read and agree or disagree with each statement, then correct any statement with which they disagreed (see *Appendix* for sample member checking questions). Participants' corrections were incorporated into the final grounded theory.

One important element of the resulting grounded theory included the participants' views of their first language, Haitian Creole, and the role that it could and should play in guiding their reasoning and composing process of school writing assignments. The findings and discussion sections which follow provide a detailed description of this component of the larger grounded theory.

### Participants

Although data were drawn from larger study containing a greater number of participants, the experiences of two participants, Rudy and Steph, are described below. Rudy and Steph were both Haitian-American Generation 1.5 students who, at the time of the study, were enrolled in their first semester of college. Rudy was an 18 year-old man from an upper-middle class Haitian family, and Steph was a 20 year-old woman from a working-class Haitian family. Both Rudy and Steph moved from Port-au-Prince, Haiti to South Florida after the 2010 earthquake. Rudy arrived in

Florida in 2010 and Steph in 2011. Before immigrating to the United States, both participants had attended private Catholic schools in Port-au-Prince from kindergarten until the end of middle school, and Steph had also attended one year of high school at a private Catholic school. When they arrived in Florida both enrolled in their respective local public high schools, Steph in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and Rudy in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In spring 2014, Rudy and Steph graduated from their respective Florida high schools and enrolled in the local community college, Gulf College, in the fall of the same year. Both Rudy and Steph entered Gulf College with the goal of obtaining an Associate's degree in nursing. As they began to work toward their educational goal, both were enrolled in similar courses, including a required first-year composition course, Composition 1. In alignment with this study's constructivist approach, the findings which follow describe the participants' perspectives of their language and writing experiences in school contexts.

## **Findings**

### **Home and School Language Experiences in Haiti**

During their first interviews, the participants were asked to characterize their first language, Haitian Creole. Rudy described Haitian Creole as “broken French” because the language “doesn't have many rules.” In her interview, Steph explained that her father had told her that Haitian Creole “is a kind of a mix of French, Italian, German” and other languages that former Haitian slaves had learned from their masters, then combined to form a new language.

Rudy and Steph's descriptions of Haitian Creole suggest that they did not hold the language in particularly high esteem. Nevertheless, they both stated that when they had lived in Haiti they, like other Haitians, had spoken exclusively Haitian Creole with family and community members. When asked if his upper-middle class family members had spoken French at home, Rudy replied, “No, they spoke Creole. . . . Pretty much everyone [in Haiti] speaks Creole, everyone, everyone.” Steph concurred that she had spoken exclusively Haitian Creole in her home in Haiti. She stated, “I spoke it [Haitian Creole] at home every day. . . because I was born with it.” Thus, although they described the language in somewhat negative terms, Rudy and Steph had both used Haitian Creole in nearly all communicative situations with family and community members in Haiti.

Although they had used Haitian Creole as the sole language of communication with family and community members, in Rudy and Steph's schools, all instruction, materials, and communication had been French. When describing her school in Haiti, Steph stated, “All the books, they are made in French. . . . We do everything [all school subjects] in French.” The materials and instruction at Rudy's school had also been solely in French, and Rudy stated that all students had been “required to speak French at school. And if you didn't, you would have to stay after school, detention and stuff if you got caught [speaking Haitian Creole].” In Haiti, Rudy and Steph had attended schools where French was the sole language of instruction and communication, and the use of Haitian Creole was forbidden. However, they had lived in homes and communities where Haitian Creole was the sole language of communication.

## **School Language Experiences the United States**

When they enrolled in their respective U.S. public high schools, both Rudy and Steph were immediately placed in mainstream classes with English-speaking peers for all but one period of their school day. During the final period of the day, Rudy and Steph were provided English language instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class. Rudy enrolled in ESOL classes until he was able to pass the state-mandated, standardized reading and math tests required for graduation from all high schools in the state of Florida. Steph, on the other hand, was removed from ESOL class after only a few months in the United States. Researchers estimate that it takes five to seven years for EB students to become proficient in academic English; however, Rudy and Steph were considered proficient in English in a considerably shorter period of time (Cummins, 1980). The data collected did not provide reasons for their quick exit from ESOL services, and the participants themselves had relatively little insight into their former high schools' course placement decisions. Rudy and Steph simply indicated that they had taken ESOL classes, and once they stopped taking these classes, they spent the final period of their day in a mainstream English Language Arts class with English-proficient peers.

Both participants perceived their ESOL classes as a form of remedial education. When describing her experiences in her ESOL class, Steph stated, "When I first came [to the U.S.] I was in ESOL class. . . . A few months later they took me out because everything came so easy for me." In characterizing his ESOL class, Rudy stated, "When I moved here I was in ESOL. We pretty much read just like easy stuff, just like simple books." These descriptions suggest that Rudy and Steph perceived ESOL classes as intended for students who learned slowly or necessitated simplified materials; thus, in the participants' view, enrolling in high school ESOL classes marked them as slow learners who necessitated simplified materials.

The notion that their proficiency in languages other than English was an obstacle to overcome was reinforced by advice from the participants' high school ESOL and English Language Arts teachers, who encouraged them to avoid drawing on their multilingualism as a resource for completing school assignments. Rudy stated that his high school teachers had told him "many times" that when engaging in academic tasks he should "think in English, Rudy. Think in English." In high school Steph was also encouraged to avoid using Haitian Creole as a resource in academic settings. She stated that her school experiences had taught her that, "If [a student] already knows Creole . . . [he should] stop using it" and "develop other languages." In their U.S. secondary schools, due to their multilingualism, the participants were initially separated from their peers and placed in ESOL classes. Moreover, they were actively discouraged from using Haitian Creole as a resource for completing academic tasks.

### **Experiences Writing in Composition 1**

During this study's data collection period, the participants were full-time students in their first semester at Gulf College. Steph and Rudy were enrolled in different sections of a required first-year composition course, Composition 1. Every Composition 1 course at all public colleges and universities in the state adhered to several mandated course requirements, which included composing a minimum of four essays totaling at least 4,000 words during the course of the semester.

During their interviews, Steph and Rudy noted that they found the length and breadth of writing assignments in the course challenging, explaining that composing numerous essays ranging from 500 to 1,000 words was a novel task. In addition, they noted that the range of compositions they were required to write, including narrative, analysis, compare and contrast, and research essays was also new. Moreover, the participants remarked that they were completing these new and challenging writing tasks in English, a language in which Steph and Rudy felt they were still developing their proficiency. In her interview, Steph characterized herself as “still learning” English, and Rudy described his writing as having “mistakes that I won’t be able to realize. . . . since English is not my first language.” Thus, in Composition 1 both participants engaged in new writing tasks required to be produced in a language in which they had yet to achieve their desired proficiency.

### **Composing Bilingually**

Rudy and Steph drew on their proficiency in Haitian Creole to varying degrees when writing assignments for their Composition 1 courses. In describing his composition process, Rudy stated, “When I am writing English I don’t think in English. . . that’s too much. I just think in Creole and then. . . translate to English.” Rudy acknowledged that his composing practices contradicted those promoted by his former teachers. He added, “I heard that if you think in another language it’s harder to write in English. But I don’t find it that way. . . .When I am thinking really deep, I try to think, sometimes in Creole and sometimes in English.” He concluded, “I just think it’s easier.”

As compared to Rudy, Steph drew less on her proficiency in Haitian Creole when composing Composition 1 assignments because she felt it was generally preferable to use English to guide her reasoning and writing process. Steph stated that she “forced” herself to the greatest extent possible to think and write solely in English. She added that she only used Haitian Creole to search for individual vocabulary words that she did not know in English, stating that when she was writing, if she became “confused by one word” she would “look at it in the dictionary.” However, she felt it was best to maximize her use of English during the composition process because she already knew Haitian Creole; therefore, she needed to “stop using it” in order to “develop other language(s).”

### **Discussion**

In both Haiti and the United States, the participants experienced language-as-a-problem oriented policies in their schools (Ruiz, 1984). These policies seem to have had cumulative effects on the participants, ultimately shaping their views of their use of Haitian Creole when writing Composition 1 assignments.

### **Language-as-a-problem Oriented Policies in Haitian schools**

In the participants’ schools in Haiti, language-as-a-problem oriented policies were in place at both the school and classroom level, and these policies mirror the findings of those who have studied the contemporary linguistic situation in Haitian educational institutions (Locher, 2010;

Trouillot-Lévy, 2010). Although the students in Rudy and Steph's schools spoke Haitian Creole as their first language, they were forbidden from using the language on school grounds, and Rudy and Steph indicated that children who did not comply with this policy were punished. Punishing Rudy, Steph, and their classmates for speaking Haitian Creole suggested that the use of their first language in an educational setting was a transgression so grave that it required disciplinary action. The participants' schools' policies requiring the use of the French language generally communicated to students that Haitian Creole had no role to play in an educational setting.

These school policies requiring French language-use gave rise to classroom practices that included providing all instruction and materials in French and requiring students to complete assignments in French. The provision of educational materials and instruction solely in French indicated to Rudy, Steph, and their classmates that there was a connection between school knowledge and the French language. Moreover, the practice suggested that the ideas communicated in schools could not be transmitted and acquired in Haitian Creole. The policies and practices privileging French language-use in Rudy and Steph's schools framed the use of Haitian Creole as a problem and potential hindrance to the acquisition of school-based knowledge.

### **Language-as-a-problem Oriented Policies in U.S. Schools**

After time in Haitian educational environments, where Haitian Creole played no role in students' education, the participants immigrated to the United States, where language-as-a-problem oriented school policies and classroom practices were again in place. When they initially arrived in their U.S. schools, the participants were enrolled in ESOL classes where they were provided English language instruction in isolation from their English-proficient peers. Rudy and Steph regarded this instruction as inferior, and their experiences align with the findings of empirical studies of the quantity and quality of ESOL instruction in U.S. secondary schools (Callahan, 2005; Harklau, 1994; 2001). As a result of their perceptions of ESOL instruction, Rudy and Steph wished to join their peers in mainstream English classes. They felt that attaining the proficiency necessary to be transferred from ESOL to mainstream English classrooms signaled their readiness to study the same material at the same pace as their peers. Thus, according to Rudy and Steph's views of their U.S. schools' policies, their proficiency in Haitian Creole was again a problem to overcome.

Compounding school-level policies, in the participants' U.S. classrooms, Rudy and Steph's teachers enacted pedagogical practices that encouraged the use of English to the exclusion of other languages. These practices included providing instruction solely in English and actively encouraging EB students to "think in English" when completing school assignments. Such classroom practices framed the participants' first language proficiency as a hindrance to success on classroom assignments.

### **Composing Bilingually**

After attending Haitian primary and U.S. secondary schools that employed language-as-a-problem oriented policies and practices, the participants enrolled in Composition 1 during their first year of college. For Rudy and Steph, Composition 1 was a demanding course in which they were required to produce a large number of written English assignments. The participants' first language could have served as a powerful resource to guide the participants' Composition 1

reasoning and writing processes (Leki, Cummin, & Silva, 2008). Although the participants did draw on their bilingualism to varying degrees when composing, they both framed the use of Haitian Creole when writing in English as contrary to recommended school language practices.

In describing her writing of Composition 1 assignments, Steph spoke of “forcing” herself to the greatest extent possible to think and write English. This approach seemed to align with her belief that drawing on her proficiency in Haitian Creole when completing composition assignments degraded the quality of her writing and slowed her speed of English acquisition. As a result, Steph restricted her use of Haitian Creole to the translation of individual vocabulary words while writing in English.

Rudy’s approach to writing Composition 1 assignments differed from Steph’s. Drawing more heavily on his Haitian Creole proficiency, Rudy conceived of ideas in both Haitian Creole and English, then translated his ideas and wrote them in English. Although Rudy felt this composition strategy facilitated writing, he acknowledged that it ran contrary to his former teachers’ advice to “think in English.” Although Rudy and Steph ultimately approached completing their Composition 1 assignments differently, they both seem to have learned that it was considered desirable to both think and write in English when completing composition course assignments.

Rudy and Steph experienced their schools in both Haiti and the United States as educational environments in which they were actively discouraged from using their first language, Haitian Creole, as a resource for acquiring and communicating knowledge. The language-as-a-problem oriented school policies and classroom practices in the participants’ Haitian and U.S. schools were relatively consistent, continually framing the participants’ proficiency in Haitian Creole as a hindrance to academic success. After more than a decade of educational experiences in such environments, the participants, like the bilingual participants in previous social psychology studies, may have internalized a notion that drawing on their proficiency in Haitian Creole to complete school assignments ran contrary to recommended learning practices (Hamers & Blanc, 1982; 2000). As a result, although they used Haitian Creole when writing Composition 1 assignments, they did so self-consciously, stating that use of the language contradicted what they had come to understand as recommended academic practice.

## **Implications and Future Studies**

Years of experience in school settings with language-as-a-problem oriented policies had lasting effects on Rudy and Steph, influencing their use of Haitian Creole as they undertook new and challenging writing tasks in a first-year college writing course. Rudy and Steph’s stories represent the experiences of two individuals, but these experiences may suggest a broader trend among Generation 1.5 students initially educated in postcolonial contexts, where students’ home and community language differs from that of school instruction. Generation 1.5 students initially educated in such contexts may arrive in U.S. schools viewing their first language proficiency as a problem in school settings, and the language-as-a-problem oriented policies of many U.S. schools may reinforce this view.

Future studies could explore the home country and U.S. school language experiences of Generation 1.5 students from a broader range of postcolonial contexts in regions such as Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Such studies could employ quantitative research methods to ascertain students’ levels of proficiency in their first language, the colonial language of school instruction, and English. After ascertaining students’ proficiency level in these

languages, qualitative research methods could be used to collect data pertaining to these students' experiences of and willingness to draw on their proficiency in various languages to engage with and complete tasks in school settings.

## **Next Steps**

Educators in the United States cannot change the language policies of other nations; however, they can take steps to advocate for language-as-a-resource oriented policies in U.S. K-12 and post-secondary educational institutions. Shifting the orientation of language policies in U.S. educational institutions is of particular importance because the numbers of students attending U.S. educational institutions from homes where a language other than English is spoken, including Generation 1.5 students, is steadily increasing (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). Schools and communities can take three important steps to embrace a language-as-a-resource orientation toward the linguistic resources multilingual students bring to U.S. schools. First, bilingual educational programs can be created and existing programs reinvigorated. In addition, all teachers can promote a language-as-a-resource orientation in their classrooms. Finally, educational and literacy resources in multilingual students' home languages can be provided in school and community spaces.

The proportion of students enrolled in bilingual education programs has decreased over the past decades. This decrease is the result of some states restricting bilingual educational programs and all states requiring students to take high-stakes standardized tests, which are often offered solely in English (Zehr, 2007). The provision of high-stakes tests solely in English and restrictive laws concerning English-only education are not inevitable. Proponents of bilingual education must inform others of its benefits and advocate at the community, state, and federal level to change English-only testing practices, repeal laws restricting bilingual education, and increase the number of bilingual educational programs in U.S. public schools.

In addition to demanding an increase in bilingual programs, advocates for multilingual students must inform all educators that multilingual students' first languages are never a hindrance to learning. Indeed, multilingual students' first languages serve as important resources in the acquisition of knowledge and literacy skills in an additional language (Cummins, 1979). Thus, all educators, including educators who provide instruction solely in English, must encourage and support student use of multilingualism as an important tool for learning.

Even if bilingual educational programs are expanded, many multilingual students will still lack access to a bilingual program in their school. In the absence of bilingual education programs, advocates for multilingual children can promote the provision of multilingual educational resources in school and community spaces. In all communities, books and educational resources in multilingual children's first languages must be provided in classrooms, school libraries, public libraries, and other community spaces. Making such materials available provides multilingual children resources to increase both their first language proficiency and academic knowledge. Moreover, provision of such materials provides a clear message to multilingual children that their first language has an important role to play in classroom, school, and community settings.

The findings of the present study suggest that continuously learning in educational contexts with language-as-a-problem oriented policies can have cumulative negative effects on students. Multilingual students have the right to be educated in settings where they are able to build literacy skills and content-knowledge in both their first language and the majority language. Thus, advocates for multilingual students in the United States must continue to fight for an increase in

bilingual programs in U.S. public schools. In the meantime, multilingual students in the U.S. should be educated in environments where pride and proficiency in their first languages are fostered.

## *Appendix*

### **Sample Interview and Member Checking Questions**

#### **Interview 1**

- Please draw a timeline of your education and mark the major events in your education.
- Please tell me the story of your education using the timeline you drew.
- Please tell me about two specific writing/reading tasks that you completed when you attended school in Haiti. (What was the assignment? How did you complete it? What was the result?)
- Please tell me about two specific writing/reading tasks that you completed in your U.S. high school. (What was the assignment? How did you complete it? What was the result?)

#### **Interviews 2-5**

- Describe this essay.
- What did you pay extra attention to while writing this assignment?
- What ideas, materials, strategies, resources, or past experiences did you use to write this assignment?
- What changes did you make from early drafts to the final draft?
- What do you feel you did well on this assignment?
- What would you like to change about this assignment?

#### **Member Checking Questions**

- Agree or disagree with and correct the following statements:
  - A bilingual student should avoid thinking in Haitian Creole when writing in English
  - The main reason for writing in Composition 1 class is to finish the essays and get a good grade
  - It is best to have an essay checked by a native English speaker before turning it in

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**The Planting of Seeds: Preparing a Community for Two-Way Immersion**

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## Abstract

The examination of TWI programs is a burgeoning field and there is minimal work that specifically focuses on the foundational processes that contribute to implementation of TWI programs in a given school. This case study presented here centers on the agency of a group, the Los Niños Bilingual Coalition, whose expressed purpose was to establish a dual language program in a rural university town. Specifically, the questions guiding this study are: (a) What endeavors (individual and group) serve to lay the foundation for the implementation of a dual language/TWI program? (b) What challenges do groups encounter in their endeavors prior to the implementation of a dual language/TWI program? (c) How do groups respond to challenges faced during the pre-implementation process? These questions were not easily answered and the discussion provided herein provides but a glimpse into all the efforts undertaken to implement a TWI program. In searching for answers to these questions, we hope to provide assistance to others who are interested in implementing a TWI program.

*Keywords:* Two Way Immersion, Dual Language, Diversity.

Fueled by both long-term historic immigration patterns and more recent ones, the language diversity of the country has increased over the past few decades” (Ryan, 2013, p. 15). Census reports indicate that of the population in the U.S. ages five and over, 60 million (20.8%) speak a language other than English in their homes (Ryan, 2013). Of those who speak a language other than English, roughly 14 million (23%) are between the ages of five and nineteen; the age span during which children in the U.S. attend K-12 schools. During the 2012-2013 academic year, approximately 4.4 million students in the United States were classified as English learners (ELs) (US Department of Education & National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). Despite the steady increase in ELs, students who enter U.S. schools speaking a language other than English are often viewed from a position of deficit. Many teachers as well as those in the English speaking community view these students as having both linguistic and intellectual problems that must be corrected. A consequence that ELs face as a result of deficit thinking is the devaluation of their home language and the need to completely assimilate while embracing the dominant language and culture. One proposed remedy to this “language as a problem” orientation (Ruiz, 1984) is to offer EL students some form of bilingual education.

### Language Diversity in U.S. Schools

The richness in cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity present within the U.S and, by default, within schools, is evident in the data provided above. Consideration must be given as to how we are serving children who enter the U.S. educational system with a home language other than English. With the authorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there has been a call for accountability regarding the academic performance of students with limited English proficiency (United States Congress House Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2002), as well as an outward show of support from a previous Secretary of Education for the implementation of dual language immersion programs (Bali, 2000). In an editorial, current Secretary of State, Arnie Duncan, and Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of English Language Acquisition in the Department of Education, Libia Gil, noted that:

Today, a world-class education means learning to speak, read and write languages in addition to English...we have a valuable yet untapped resource within the estimated 4.6 million students learning English... the heritage languages our English learners bring to school are major assets to preserve and value...(Duncan & Gil, 2014, para. 5 & 8).

If, as a goal of education, we are preparing students to participate in an increasingly global society, then multilingualism must be both encouraged and supported. In addition, students' funds of knowledge should be viewed as valuable resources within classroom (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Once emphasis has been placed on culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2014), students will come to view themselves and their peers as capable contributors to the learning process. Yet, the cultural lean toward deficit thinking is underscored by the scarcity of two-way bilingual and dual immersion programs that actively support multilingualism and an emphasis on culturally sustaining pedagogies.

### **Programs for ELs**

Currently, within the U.S., there are a number of approaches used to teach ELs; each method aligning with one of two divergent models: 1) transitional bilingual education programs (TBE) that, ideally teach part of the curriculum in a language other than English (e.g., Spanish) along with English as a second language (ESL), and 2) dual language immersion programs such as two-way bilingual education or two-way immersion (TWI). Differing in their assumptions, approach and anticipated outcomes, there are supporters and detractors on both sides. There are some who might define TBE and dual language programs similarly since the ideal organization of a TBE program is earmarked by ELs receiving content area instruction in their home language (L1).

Given the limited number of TWI programs identified in the Center For Applied Linguistics's directory, it stands that many TBE programs in the U.S. either fully submerge ELs in English, or opt to offer early exit ESL services peripherally, as either a pull out or push in program. The primary goal of TBE programs is assimilation and is subtractive in nature. Students placed in TBE programs are transitioned into speaking English in a relatively short period of time and there is no concern for development of biliteracy nor home language. In many instances, the teacher providing the TBE services, does not even share the same language as the EL. In contrast, having a primary goal of bilingualism and biliteracy for both every student regardless of their home language, Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan (2000) speak of the additive nature of dual language immersion programs in which students' culture and language are valued and are seen as linguistic capital. Utilizing both English and a non-English language (target language) for separate amounts of instructional time, TWI provides one such program model. Duncan and Gil (2014) note the following regarding dual language:

...many schools and communities across the country have established programs to encourage mastery of multiple languages...in effective dual-language classrooms, English learners and English-proficient classmates are provided opportunities to learn academic content while simultaneously becoming proficient in both languages (para. 10).

In U.S. contexts, most programs that are designated as TWI, are taught using some combination of Spanish and English and are designed using the 50:50 model, 90:10 model, or 80:20 model. Deeply embedded within each of these programs is a philosophy about second language learning that drives the instruction that ELs receive. TWI programs are designed to positively draw from students' funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) as a means to create cross-cultural awareness and linguistic transfer while maintaining an emphasis on high academic achievement ("Two-way immersion education: The basics," n.d.).

There are merely 458 TWI programs identified throughout the U.S. (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015). This is an insufficient number of school-based programs as there are millions of ELs requiring services across the nation. As many school districts continue to subscribe to a deficit model, attempts to implement effective TWI programs are often met with resistance. Therefore, it is important to explore the pathway leading to implementation of a TWI program. Within this article, we describe the efforts of a group formed specifically for the purpose of establishing a TWI program within a community.

There is an abundance of literature regarding the implementation of successful dual language programs. However, resources addressing the challenges faced prior to full implementation and the steps taken to overcome those challenges are lacking. Christian, Howard, & Loeb (2000) noted that many questions about TWI remained unanswered and that those questions related particularly to implementation of TWI programs. While many explorations of TWI programs have occurred since the initial assertion, there are still rich opportunities to further investigate questions concerning implementation.

## **Methods**

The question arises that if research has shown that an additive context along with ongoing L1 instruction are crucial to successful language learning, why isn't the dual language model being used widespread to educate ELs within U.S. schools? Perhaps the answer lies within Clark, Flores, Riojas-Cortes, and Smith's (2002) claim that the process of implementing a dual language program can be tumultuous and requires educators to carefully reflect on their own biases and misgivings in relation to the community that they are serving. As the examination of TWI programs is a burgeoning field, and there is minimal work that specifically focuses on the processes that contribute to implementation of a TWI program in a school and community, our work here provides a glimpse into one such case. The current discussion centers on the agency of a group whose expressed purpose was to establish a TWI program within an elementary school.

## **Research Question**

Specifically, the questions guiding this study were: (a) What individual and group endeavors serve to lay the foundation for the implementation of a TWI program?; (b) What challenges do groups encounter in such endeavors prior to the implementation of a TWI program?; and (c) How do groups respond to challenges faced during the pre-implementation process? In searching for answers to these questions, we hope to provide assistance to others who are interested in implementing a TWI program.

## **Data Collection**

Program development and implementation involves a dynamic process with a multitude of vantage points from which to view the experience. Data were collected over the course of one year and involved observation and semi-structured interviews. The use of both observations of group meetings about TWI program development, and interviews with key people involved during the pre-implementation phase allowed various facets of this ever changing process to be captured. In addition, the interviews provided descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researchers could develop insights as to how subjects interpreted some piece of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Even within groups whose primary purpose is to implement a dual language program, an individual group member's view of the process is unique. Interviewing multiple group members provided an indication of the groups' dynamic, complex nature. Observational data collected during multiple group meetings of the Los Niños Bilingual Coalition (LNBC-a pseudonym) as well as during a community conference hosted by the group served to add depth to the information gathered during interviews.

## **Research Context**

The context of this study was a rural, Midwestern town flanked by a national forest, as well as numerous orchards, vineyards, and wineries. The driving economic forces in the area included a major university, a state and a federal prison, and several manufacturing facilities. The nearby orchards employ large populations of Spanish speaking migrant workers, and subsequently, many of the children of these families attend local schools.

Situated within a community of approximately 25,000 people, Stark Elementary (a pseudonym) is a public elementary school and is one of four attendance centers in the school district. Students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grades attend Stark before moving on to the second and third grade building. Stark is separated by 245 miles from the nearest TWI program and, once implemented, its TWI program became one of only sixteen schools in the state offering a TWI program at the elementary level. With a rapidly growing population of ELs and support from the nearby university, Stark became the focus of the LNBC's efforts to implement a TWI program.

## **Participants**

A university faculty member spearheaded efforts of the LNBC. The group was comprised of local educators and parents, all interested in TWI programming. Each participant was sought because of their varied role within the group. The roles were as follows: person who spearheaded the TWI implementation efforts, liaison between local school administration and LNBC, parent, community member, local school administrator, and a local teacher. Three of the participants, Janet, Michele, and Linda were members of the LNBC. They were each affiliated with the local university and were actively working with the surrounding community to inform them about TWI programs. The final participant, Yvonne, was an administrator in the Etherton Consolidated School District (ECS), located roughly 400 miles north of Stark Elementary. Yvonne was involved in initiating a TWI program in her hometown and continued to oversee that program in her role as a district administrator. Three of the participants identified as White, while Janet identified as Jewish.

## Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded and field notes supplemented the recordings by providing contextual information gathered during the interview. Recorded interviews were then transcribed and data were examined for recurring themes within the context of program implementation efforts. Themes identified within individual interviews were then cross referenced with interviews from other participants. The cross referencing served as a sort of cross-case analysis (Meriam, 2001; 2009) that allowed us to examine data from our participants as individual cases that contributed to our understandings of the main case (efforts of the group). We were able to identify thematic patterns that we then referenced against observational data, and information gathered during additional, informal, conversation style interviews with the participants. The intentional mapping of the identified themes with other data was critical in supporting triangulation (Stake, 1995; 2005) and providing for robust understanding of LNBC's efforts to start a TWI program as we sought answers to our research questions.

## Findings

The incentive for wanting to implement a dual language program can be markedly different from one community to the next. However, the overriding factor seems to be the academic achievement of both ELs and language majority students. Though Janet, the faculty member at the nearby university who spearheaded the LNBC also lived in the school district, she did not have children of her own that would benefit from her efforts. We were curious to learn how and why Janet undertook such a lofty endeavor. Janet described how she became interested in starting a local TWI program:

I got the idea one year ago when I attended the La Cosecha Conference in Albuquerque, NM and I talked to people from Colorado who had problems getting their own program started...I asked them...how they got their program started and they said they formed a consortium. But...that you have to just start talking to people and organizing people and getting them together to meet regularly and talk about it. I came back all excited about that and...I put an email out to people I thought would be interested saying, "let's start this"...and people said "we're interested" and we set up a meeting time and off we went.

The first seed had been planted. It was at the La Cosecha Conference that Janet met Yvonne, an elementary administrator who had successfully overseen the implementation of a dual language program over 400 miles away. Yvonne would prove to be an ally in the dual language efforts taking place on Janet's home front. Below, Yvonne discussed the impetus for the dual language movement in her hometown:

Parents [in Etherton] had wanted this for ten years. They first approached the school board in 1995 and the school board kind of rebuffed them and said "go write a charter proposal", which they did. They...got money together. They hired a consultant and they wrote a charter school proposal...we sent people out to visit programs and just did a thorough investigation of program models and research across the country...the school...figured that they would just get a charter school proposal every fall if they didn't do something for the parents... We started two kindergartens in the fall of 2000.

## **Forming the Los Niños Bilingual Coalition**

Years after Yvonne's efforts in Etherton were successful, one of the researchers delved into a graduate course offered as a linguistics "workshop". Every participant enrolled in the workshop held an interest in TWI and later became the core members of the LNBC along with various members of the community. The expressed intent of the group being to inform parents, teachers, administrators, and the community about TWI programs in hopes of garnering support for implementing a program locally. It was at this time that one of the researchers met Janet, the professor who taught the workshop and spearheaded the LNBC. In addition, Janet had already recruited her colleague Michele as well as Linda, a bilingual education teacher who worked in Stark's school district. While meeting with like-minded individuals proved fruitful, Janet knew that in order for her idea to blossom, it was time to move the discussion beyond the intimate group.

Additional seeds were planted when, under Janet's direction, the LNBC organized multiple conferences and town hall meetings in hopes of sparking a local parental interest in TWI. The purpose of the conferences was to inform parents, teachers, and administrators about the benefits of dual language immersion, the rights of ELs according to the state code, and discuss efforts to develop a local program. There were approximately 200 people in attendance at the first conference representing 78 families. Of the families present, 100% expressed an interest in dual language immersion.

Local families were eager to have a TWI program in their community. However, the LNBC's efforts seemed to be met with resistance from local school administrators and a general disinterest from local teachers. Therefore, Janet decided to offer trainings to local teachers and administrators. Having now garnered the support of additional parents, LNBC members began rallying the school boards in an attempt to encourage interest in the program. The LNBC also presented data supporting the feasibility of having a TWI program in the local community.

## **Buds of Resistance**

The group's efforts were mildly successful and the idea did not appear to be taking root with district teacher and administrators. LNBC members soon began to suspect that sentiments within their community were consistent with the national resistance to bilingualism. As the group continued to organize informative conferences, support from local teachers and administrators was questionable. Janet conducted an in-service for local administrators that focused on bilingual education, dual language instruction, and the research and laws supporting and encouraging both. To her dismay, there was a dismal showing of fifteen local administrators and the impact of the training seemed negligible as there were no immediate changes or discussions that stemmed from her efforts.

Janet expressed frustration about the many disregarded opportunities extended to teachers and administrators by the LNBC. She was perplexed when she "sent invitations to the school boards and administrators of five districts offering them \$1000 per person to attend the La Cosecha Dual Language Conference and not a single one accepted it". Her experiences with another nearby town with the most Spanish speakers in the area fueled her belief that they were "not interested and basically said that "we're very happy with our programs and we're not interested in considering this and we don't want to go to any conferences. We don't want to learn more about this". Janet was disappointed that no one from Stark's school district would go to La Cosecha and that other nearby districts did not even respond to her offer.

Acknowledging that LNBC had seemingly met strong opposition from the school boards in the majority of nearby communities, Both Linda and Michele formulated opinions as to why this has occurred. As a local ESL teacher, Linda's perspective was unique. She was a core member of LNBC as well as a tenured teacher within the district. It was at her urging that the local district even began an ESL pull-out program. She had a strong positive relationship with fellow teachers, building and district administrators, and university faculty. Noting the lack of support from Stark's superintendent, Linda believes that local administrators view the university's involvement as overreaching. "They felt the university was coming in and saying "this is what you're going to do...[the] district hears 'here's what we want you to do and here's how you're going to do it, here's when you're going to do it'..." Rather than seeing the university as a resource, local districts viewed it as a threat. This was obvious when the LNBC presented data and information to the local school board about the state statute regarding ELs. As Linda explains, "People [LNBC and professors] have been seen as rude. At the last board meeting we were told to stop coming in and being so confrontational and that if we would not be confrontational...no way were they ever going to talk to us if we were coming in pointing the finger at them..." Resistance from local administrators was most notable in their lack of response to and interaction with LNBC. Not one single local administrators attended the community conferences or town hall meetings.

As a university faculty member, Michele, on the other hand, saw things from a different perspective. It was her belief that the resistance was the result of historically tense race relations in the community; tensions which she believed were exclusive to this community. Michele is much more forgiving in her explanation when she states that "there are issues in [the town and in local] schools that have existed for decades...It appears...that many things have been allowed to fester and our attempts to bring this to the school administrators and people have been...not understood in a lot of ways." She also attributed the resistance to "misunderstandings and miscommunication".

Michele acknowledges that communities are complex and that every community is different. But, she understood that obtaining the support of community members, school and district administrators, and local teachers was crucial in order for LNBC's dreams of a TWI program to come to fruition. Michele attributed the school board's admonishments on the strong personalities of LNBC's group members. She realized that their passion and zeal for TWI may have been overbearing and impeded the school board member's ability to listen. But, revealed that ultimately, LNBC wanted to meet privately with the school board and district administrators to discuss the possibility of implementing a TWI program at Stark.

### **It Takes a Village**

Despite the seeming resistance to a TWI program, the LNBC continued to press forward, attempting to rally parents in support of the program. Unanimously, interviewees agreed that parental support was key to any efforts to implement a TWI program in a community. Yvonne, the administrator from ESC, explained that garnering active parental support was crucial to getting the TWI program in Etherton started. She noted that "They [parents] have to lobby the school board. They have to be talking at school board meetings, they have to be sending school board members... copies of research. They have to find somebody in the district that will listen to them". It was Yvonne's contention that parental support would be the driving force that swayed the district.

The LNBC was all too familiar with the challenges of maintaining a core group of parents who were willing to consistently stand up for the TWI program. Both Janet and Linda spoke about the need for parental support. Here, Janet spoke about the presumption of deflected responsibility:

...I think that although people want it and if there were a program they'd be the first in line to sign up...I'm not sure because of the culture of this community... that people have the temperament to fight...people from Etherton told us "you've got to go to every school board meeting and demand and demand and demand. I don't know if people from [this part of the country] have the stomach to get into a hostile situation. But, I do think they want a program very badly...they seem to expect that the university people are going to go to the school board meetings and fight their fight for...But, it's got to be their fight!

However, unlike Janet, Linda believed that the lack of parental involvement was a natural consequence of "children grow[ing] quickly and...moving out of that targeted age". She conceded that there was difficulty in gathering support from parents whose children may very well have moved on by the time the program was fully implemented.

### **Concerns about Funding**

As discussions progressed to program design and possible implementation, the question of funding was inevitable. With educational budget cuts, districts were and are struggling to recover those funds from alternate sources. At a time when money is tight, many underfunded programs are being cut. Participants acknowledged that, inherently, finances are a consideration when any new program might be implemented. However, because of Michele's involvement with other bilingual initiatives, she recognized that "You're not looking for additional funding. You're going to have the same teacher and...it's just regular funding. There's also Title III money that can be used...there are bilingual funds that can be used for efforts like this to buy material". Other districts within the state accessed state and federal funds for their TWI programs. Yvonne unabashedly acknowledges that ESC used state funding to start their program. In addition, she noted that they regularly "used [state] funding for all the extra since [their] two-way immersion teachers [were] replacing teachers that use to be in that position...it's the most cost effective method." Yvonne was adamant that TWI was more cost effective and, her experience confirmed that notion.

### **Job Security**

In working with local teachers and trying to inform them about dual language, the matter of job security was a frequent recurrence. Local teachers expressed apprehension about supporting a program which they believed threatened their jobs. Was it possible to reassure veteran, monolinguals that their position would not be sacrificed in lieu of a bilingual teacher? Throughout LNBC's discussions with the school board and administrators, an unusually large number of teachers retired or left the district. In Yvonne's district, no one ever lost his/her job because of the TWI program. It was all done through attrition. She explained that "as somebody retires they're probably replaced with a bilingual teacher. There always was [the sense that teachers

might lose jobs]. The teachers always knew that if they were monolingual in English...they would be relocated.” She emphasized the fact that no one lost their job altogether.

Participants sensed a reluctance on the part of Stark’s administrators to hire bilingual educators. Janet understood that districts often faced situations in which they had unexpected openings. However, she expressed frustration with Stark’s administrator’s unwillingness to hire equally qualified bilingual teachers. Further, it appeared that they did not feel obliged to hire bilingual teachers, instead referring them to a district surrounded by orchards and having a high concentration of Spanish speaking migrant workers. Janet, who also happened to hold a teaching license, rebuffed “bilingual means I can teach in English [also]. I’m a good teacher in English [also]...It’s ridiculous”. Interestingly, there were several who were certified bilingual teachers who were members of the LNBC and, who had applied for and not been hired for a position in Stark’s school district.

## **Discussion**

The challenges faced by the LNBC are not dissimilar to dual language efforts taking place all across the country. The process that leads to the implementation of a dual language program in the U.S. is wrought with the same tensions that have long fueled the immigration debate (Lessow-Hurley, 2013). The underlying resistance to the dual language movement is rooted in cultural and linguistic dominance. The current discussion surrounding bilingual education is embroiled in the American superiority complex.

Overall, the challenges faced by the LNBC speak to larger issues. Nonetheless, there are grassroots movements springing forth across the nation. The participants in these movements, like the participants in Etherton and the members of the LNBC, are people who believe that bilingualism’s time has come and is valuable. Numerous calls to action have been made in favor of TWI programs. So, how might the process unfold for others interested in implementing a TWI program? What endeavors serve to lay the foundation for the implementation of a TWI program? The answer to this question varies. Be it a whisper into someone’s ear extolling the virtues of dual language or a cult-like movement of vigilante parents demanding bilingualism for their children, it is time for that call to action to be answered. Once acted upon, the process begins to unfold as seeds are planted into the minds and hearts of the local school board members, administrators, and community. This sowing requires tenacity, grace, and the skillful art of subtle seduction. The suitors must remain steadfast in their efforts to unite parents and community members while maneuvering the delicate balancing act in which school board members and administrators are dissuaded from deferring to business as usual.

What challenges do groups encounter in their endeavors prior to the implementation of a dual language/TWI program? The participants identified several challenges faced by the LNBC. Though the data presented seems to distinguish multiple challenges, the overarching themes are community involvement and buy-in from local administrators, teachers, and school board members. Here we see two very different aspects of the pre-implementation phase; one in which parents were the driving force behind the movement and one in which university faculty members were the driving force. Undeniably, parents wield more power in making demands of the district in which their children attend. Local parents in Stark’s school district were slow to realize the power that they had in swaying the school district in support of a TWI program. The hesitance on the part of parents’ to ruffle the feathers of administrators was less an issue of them having the

“stomach” for fighting and more an issue of living in a relatively small community in which all of their actions were under a microscope and could reflect negatively on the very children whose behalves they were rallying.

As stated, though it was not difficult to pull together groups of parents who were in support of the program, it was extremely difficult to ask them to be the voice for a program from which their children may never benefit. This was an ongoing struggle for the LNBC. They addressed the issue by continuing to hold conferences and educate parents to garner additional supporters whose children might benefit from their efforts. In this regard, it was almost like the constant selling of a dream, for parents who wanted something different, something more for their children.

The clashes with the school board and administrators presented a great challenge. This appeared to be partly the result of miscommunication and partly related to personality conflicts. It is easy to take someone’s words and actions and view them as hostile. Whereas, if you really knew that person, you would know that their zeal for equity and their desire to see all children succeed is the fire that ignites their flame. This lack of understanding was a major impediment during the pre-implementation process. Once personality conflicts occurred, parties from both sides viewed those from the other as rude, unresponsive, and conniving. If they stepped back, they would have seen that they all wanted the same thing, what was best for the children.

Other issues developed primarily as a result of the aforementioned conflicts. Concerns raised on behalf of the district about funding and job security were pseudo-challenges. They were passive retaliatory tactics used to stonewall the LNBC’s efforts based on the personality conflicts. From the moment that the superintendent decided that Janet was overbearing, it seems that she also decided to wash her hands of anything related to the TWI program. Granted, the sentiment about Janet within the LNBC was similar. Janet had a strong personality and even stronger opinions. However, because coalition members had developed a relationship with her, they knew that her intent was not ill willed. The district’s claim that funding was not available was found to be untrue. The school district was already receiving funds to run a bilingual education program. However, they chose to allocate those funds toward a pull-out ESL program. The funds could have been used to support the TWI program. In addition, there was a potential pool of bilingual teachers, several within the LNBC, for the district to hire had they chosen to do so.

LNBC dealt with the clashes between their group and the administrators and board members by actively recruiting individuals who maintained positive working relationships with the administrators. These LNBC members were then positioned such that they conducted business on behalf of the coalition. Inquiries about funding sources and teacher job security were addressed by the coalition, who submitted a detailed proposal with a rationalization for how the program might operate within the district. This strategy proved very successful for the group as a 50:50, Spanish/English TWI program was implemented at Stark just two years after the LNBC’s first official group meeting. In addition, one of LNBC’s group members was hired as the district’s first teacher with a bilingual certification for the TWI program.

## **Conclusion**

Despite legislation whose peripheral objective is to close the achievement gap between language minority and language majority students, a major disparity still exists. Likening the educational system to a levee, there is a breach that negatively impacts not only language minority students, but other minority students as well. Many of the existing bilingual education programs in the U.S. continue to subscribe to subtractive, compensatory methods for educating language minority students. Though additive enrichment programs such as TWI are most successful in

educating ELs, their expansion is relatively slow here in the U.S. This study examined the challenges that the Los Niños Bilingual Coalition faced during the pre-implementation phase of a TWI program. A more complete rendering of this problem would be evidenced by further researching the pre-implementation phase of dual language programs throughout the U.S. as well as abroad. Realizing that the culture of a given community has an impact on program implementation, it is imperative to speak with community members and parents in addition to those affiliated with the group that supports implementation of dual language programs.

If our view of bilingualism and multilingualism here in the U.S. is shifted and turned upon its head to reflect the plurality that we often purport to uphold in this country, then perhaps we, as a society, will begin to value multilingualism and the accompanying literacy and embrace TWI as a tool for promoting such. Perhaps, it is at that point at which we will begin to view ELs in our schools as assets from whom we can learn, instead of as liabilities who are overburdening our school systems. Future generations will then reap the benefits of all the seeds that have been sown in the name of bilingualism.

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**What Students Do with Words: Language Use and Communicative Function in Full and Partial Immersion Classrooms**

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## Abstract

Over the past 35 years, language immersion programs have been steadily increasing in number throughout the U.S. The popularity of these diverse, linguistically complex educational programs has led to a rather extensive body of research on language immersion and dual language contexts. Research, however, has thus far focused primarily on the quantification of language use (the amount of target language versus first language use) in different settings and with different interlocutors. Very few studies have probed the interesting and significant sociolinguistic question of what students ‘do’ with languages in the classroom. The present study fills this research gap by investigating the communicative functions of student language use in full and partial Spanish immersion classrooms among kindergarten, first and second graders. Twelve hours of recorded spontaneous classroom speech were analyzed for communicative functions. The results show that contrary to the existing research, students in this classroom use Spanish for a wide variety of communicative functions. These findings suggest that previous depictions of the diglossic classroom speech community may be influenced by the concept of figured worlds (Holland et. al., 1998), whereby our imagined typical immersion classroom differs from the actual reality of student language use.

*Keywords:* Communicative function, language choice, language immersion, ethnography of speaking

## Introduction

Language immersion classrooms are characterized by the teaching of content (such as history, math, and literature) in two different target languages and have been steadily increasing in number throughout the U.S. for the past 35 years (Lenker & Rhoades, 2007). While specific features vary across programs, such as the students, context, and the division and amount of language instruction, these programs are most often differentiated by the one-way or two-way distinction. In one-way programs, all students are second language (L2) learners or foreign language learners of the target language; research has thus far focused mainly on one-way immersion (for a review, see Mackey, 2007 and Swain et. al., 2002). Two-way immersion programs, on the other hand, are characterized by a student population which includes both L2 learners of the target language and native or heritage speakers, who have learned the language of instruction as a home language. A second signification distinction is that of full immersion and partial immersion (or dual language) programs. In full immersion, the target language is the language of the instruction for the entire day. In dual language programs, content is taught in one language (Spanish) half of the day and another language (English) for the second part of the day. The language program under examination in the present study is a transitional program, meaning that at this school pre-K and kindergarten classes are full immersion while first through fifth grades are partial immersion, with half of the instruction in English and half in Spanish. The terms ‘full immersion’ and ‘partial immersion’ are used in this study in part due to the fact that students actually switch classrooms and teachers for the part of the day when they have English instruction. The popularity of language immersion along with its unique diverse, linguistic complexity has led to a rather extensive body of research over the years. The present study adds to the growing body of research on two-way immersion programs (for a review of the literature, see Howard & Sugarman, 2007).

Most early research on language immersion programs was informal, observational or anecdotal in nature (such as Blanco-Iglesias & Broner, 1993; Broner, 1991; Heitzman, 1993). When scholars acknowledged this tendency and the fact that it resulted in an “insufficient empirical basis on which to draw firm conclusions about the discourse characteristics of immersion classrooms and, therefore, about the impact of classroom interaction styles on language learning” (Genesee, 1991, p. 190), it set a strong research agenda for systematic research on actual language use in the immersion classroom.

Early informal observational and anecdotal research suggested that students used less of the target language throughout the years and especially in the upper grades (Blanco-Iglesias & Broner, 1993; Broner, 1991; Heitzman, 1993). Tarone & Swain (1992) responded to these reports with a sociolinguistic explanation that as a speech community, the immersion classroom naturally becomes increasingly diglossic over time, meaning that the students increasingly use certain language varieties (in this case, the majority language or target language) for distinct purposes, interlocutors, and settings. Tarone & Swain (1995) base this claim on two sources of evidence: first, a 26 month long longitudinal study of an English as a second language (ESL) student in Australia, beginning when he was five years old (Liu, 1991, 1994), and secondly, an interview with an immersion program graduate (Swain, 1993). In the first case, it is important to note that the situation is distinct from that of a typical immersion language program. Nevertheless, in lieu of similar available research from immersion classrooms, Tarone & Swain (1995) compare student-teacher and student-peer interactions for an ESL student ‘Bob’. They note that Bob uses a much more limited range of functions, mostly responsive, in conversation with the teacher, compared to conversations with peers which are overall more assertive and initiating including a much wider range of functions: commands, arguing, insulting and criticizing. In the second case, the graduate of an immersion program remarks on her lack of access to a target language vernacular, or informal language, for performing certain linguistic functions such as for saying, in the interviewee’s words, “Come on guys, let’s get some burgers” (Swain, 1993, p. 6). The researchers, in turn, speculate that the reason students use more of the majority language instead of the target language as they advance in their grade levels is their lack of access to the target language vernacular. This theory reveals a persistent concern related to the range of communicative functions of student language use in immersion classrooms and calls for further research along this line. While scholars have responded to the call for systematic research on language use in the immersion classroom, it has primarily led to the quantification of target language versus the majority language use by students, often separated and analyzed according to interlocutor (teacher versus peer) or setting (teacher-led versus small group). Research on the range of functions of student language use within the immersion classroom, on the other hand, has been vastly understudied.

The present study aims to fill this gap in the research through an ethnographic case study which forms a part of a large-scale, ongoing investigation on language use by students in a Spanish immersion program. The current paper focuses on the functions of language use by 30 Spanish immersion students from kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms, including 24 L2 learners of Spanish and 6 heritage language learners. The investigation itself included over 24 hours of participant observation in the classrooms, and the core dataset for this analysis includes 12 hours of spontaneous classroom speech which has been transcribed and coded. This study addresses the insufficient existing data on the actual purposes and functions of student language use in the immersion classroom, beyond the quantification of which language is used in certain settings and role relationships. The present study, thus, answers the important question: What do Spanish

immersion students do with words? Insights into immersion students' functional use of the target language and majority language within the classroom holds important implications for understanding language learning in this unique educational setting.

## **Literature Review**

### **Language Use in the Immersion Classroom**

Concern for systematic research on actual language use in the immersion classroom prompted much investigation over the past several decades. Up until this point, however, it has remained widely dominated by studies which quantify the amount of the target language and majority language spoken in the classroom. Beyond the mere quantification of language choice, scholars have sought to explore the influence of related factors including the individual's language background (heritage speaker of target language v. L2 learner of target language), interlocutor role (teacher v. peer), interlocutor language background (L1 speaker of target language v. L2 speaker of target language) and classroom setting (small group v. large group instruction). A summary of the findings shows many similarities in addition to some notable discrepancies. While most studies demonstrate a general student preference for speaking the majority language (Potowski, 2004, 2007), some studies show that the student's language background had an effect on language use (e.g., Ballinger & Lyster, 2011). Additionally, most research demonstrates a tendency for students to speak more of the target language with the teacher than with peers (Potowski, 2004). Speaking with heritage language speaker peers was alternatively found to enhance target language use (e.g., Panfil, 1995; Ballinger & Lyster, 2011) or demonstrate no effect (Potowski, 2004, 2007). This inconsistency reveals a need for more research into language immersion programs, given the fact that so many qualitative variables are at play. (See Ballinger & Lyster, 2011 for a detailed literature review of research in one-way and two-way immersion classrooms.)

Notably, studies focusing on the amount of each language used with whom in different contexts only reveal so much. For instance, it does not tell us what the students are saying or what they are in essence 'doing' with the words they use in the respective languages. It is for this reason that the present study on the communicative function of language use stands to make a considerable contribution to current understandings of language learning in the immersion classroom.

### **Functions of Language Use in the Immersion Classroom**

While research on the functions of language use in the immersion classroom is sparse, there are a notable few. To my knowledge, only three articles have explored the functions of student language use in the immersion classroom, setting aside those which involve the functions of teacher talk (Kim & Elder, 2005; Legarreta, 1997). First, Broner & Tarone (2001) present a unique analysis of a specific language function in the immersion classroom, dealing with two distinct types of language play. Their study makes an important contribution to the role of language play in language learning and the process of second language acquisition. However, it differs from a more general analysis of the broad range of functions for language use presented in the present study. Second, Dornyei & Layton (2014) present a socio-cultural study of student language use which reveals that while students imitate teachers and translators' language use in large group

settings, small group settings include diverse multilingual discourses. The researchers particularly report that small group work demonstrated creative dialogues about language and identity. Last, Spezzini (2010) investigates student patterns of language use among 34 12<sup>th</sup> graders from an English immersion school in Paraguay. The findings suggest a drop in the use of the L2 during structured activities in immersion classrooms as students progress to upper grades. Interestingly, Spezzini (2010) did look at more specific functions of language use. For instance, she found that students reported using Spanish for emotions at a rate of 78% especially for strong emotions. For thinking and dreaming, the use of Spanish dropped to 60%. Thinking may have included academic purposes. For recreational reading a mixture of Spanish/English was reported at a rate of 27%, only Spanish was reported at a rate of 21% and for doing math only 17%. Significantly, all these findings are based on student self-reports which can give a certain type of knowledge only.

Of particular import the present study is research focusing on students whose L2 is Spanish, since this describes 80% of the students in this study's corpus. In a sociocultural analysis of a one-way Spanish immersion classroom, Fortune (2001) found that the students spoke Spanish 1/3 of the time, with more Spanish correlating with the proximity of the teacher, writing and math problem-solving and interlocutor. Broner & Tedick (2011) found similar patterns of Spanish correlating with teacher proximity. They also found that Spanish use was more likely during instructional time, for on-task talk, and depending on task type and activity structure. These results confirm in part the language immersion classroom as diglossic but a qualitative analysis of classroom conversation and 'languaging' (Swain, 2000) depict language choice as highly complex.

### **Communicative Function**

Although linguistics originally encompassed aspects of language use and language structure, the field was strongly impacted by Noam Chomsky's (1965) abstract notion of linguistic 'competence' as idealized language inside the mind, which should be regarded more important than and entirely separately from 'performance'. This resulted in a split in the field of linguistics which yielded a *product* tradition which focuses on language structure, and an *action* tradition which emphasizes language use (Clark, 1992). While the field continues to be dominated by primarily cognitive/mentalistic approaches, more recently scholars have called for social/contextual orientations (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Liddicoat, 1997). Integral to this change was Hymes' (1972) coining of 'communicative competence' as an alternative to Chomsky's 'competence'. In addition to grammatical knowledge of a language, communicative competence emphasized the importance of the rules for appropriate use, or "communicative form and function in integral relation to each other" (Hymes, 1994, p. 12). Hymes went even further as to outline the 'ethnography of speaking' (1974), a methodology concerned with "situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking as an activity in its own right" (p.16). Under the 'ethnography of speaking', a key concept set forth by Hymes is that of a 'speech community' which naturally includes a variety of speech styles and registers suitable for different contexts. Another important notion is that of 'communicative function' (Hymes, 1974) is a unit of analysis which recognizes the purposeful nature of linguistic interactions and focuses on patterns within the speech community. Instead of isolating one abstract linguistic code for study, Hymes (1974) advocates investigating all varieties found within a speech community according to: 1) speech events, 2) constituent factors, such as sender, receiver, topic, setting, and 3) functions of speech events, in which the focus is the difference between/among communities. Hymes (1974) outlines 7 broad types of function as follows: expressive, directive, poetic, contact, metalinguistic, referential, and

contextual. For Hymes (1974), the primary objective of the ethnographer is to determine which functions are being “encoded” and “decoded”, in other words, which functions are intended and perceived by participants (p.34). Around the same time, Austin’s (1962) “How to Do Things with Words” was published based on a series of lectures and introducing the concept of “speech acts”. Searle (1969) brought “speech act theory” into the realm of linguistics, further dividing Austin’s (1962) illocutionary act into 5 categories: representatives/assertives, directives, commissives, and declarations. Although the lists of “communicative functions” and “speech acts” are similar, “there are differences in perspective and scope which separate the fields of ethnography of communication and speech act theory” (Saville-Troike, 2003, p.13). The present study aligns most closely with Hymes’ ‘ethnography of communication’, but both fields have undeniably influenced the present analysis.

## **Methods**

### **Setting and Participants**

The present study took place in a two-way Spanish immersion program in Tucson, Arizona which offered Spanish, French and German immersion classes for children from preschool (age 3) through 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of the study. This school is an independent school requiring tuition, and although scholarships are available and utilized by a few students, the students are mostly mid-high socioeconomic status. At the school, the preschool and kindergarten classes are full immersion classes, and those students receive instruction in the chosen target language with the same instructor the entire day, excluding lunch, recess, and extra-curricular activities. This program is a transitional immersion program, since students transition from a full immersion to a partial immersion program. From first through fifth grade, the students switch to a partial immersion program where they Spanish is the language of instruction for half the day and students then switch classrooms and teachers for the second part of the day which is in English. In the Spanish immersion program, the instructors for the kindergarten, first and second grades were Peruvian. The study included 30 students from the kindergarten (4 female, 4 male), first grade (7 female, 4 male) and second grade (5 female, 6 male) classes. Of the 30 students in the study, 24 (12 female, 12 male) were L2 learners of Spanish and six (4 female, 2 male) were heritage speakers of Spanish students. The heritage speakers of Spanish were diverse, including two students who were born in Mexico, three who had a mother who was born in Columbia, and one who was born in Ecuador. In the kindergarten class, one heritage Spanish speaker was born in Mexico and one girl who was born in the United States and grew up in a bilingual home. The first grade class included only one heritage Spanish speaker, a female who was born to a Columbian mother in the United States and grew up in a bilingual home. In the second grade class, the three heritage Spanish speakers included one girl who was born to a Columbian mother in the U.S. and grew up in a bilingual home, one girl born in Ecuador, and a boy who was born in Mexico. It is important to note that the three children who grew up in bilingual homes were exposed to both English and Spanish at an early age and do not constitute English language learners, although the two boys from Mexico and the girl from Ecuador could be classified as English language learners with primarily English-speaking parents and experiences in Spanish-speaking countries.

## Data Collection

For this study, I was involved in participant observation for 24 hours of student classroom time, both observing and assisting the instructor when possible. The corpus of data for the present analysis is 12 hours of transcribed audio-recorded data from the kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms. Several small microphones were placed at different ‘centers’ stationed around the rooms in order to record student speech. These recordings were later combined and transcribed into a single transcription. Each recording and transcript represents an entire day of Spanish language instruction for the class. Notably, the kindergarten students were in their Spanish classroom for six hours while the first and second graders were in their classrooms for three hours each due to the aforementioned nature of the half day in English class and half day in Spanish class for the other grades.

## Data Analysis

The unit of analysis employed was a turn of speech (Ellis, 1994; Levinson, 1983), defined as any time an interlocutor stopped talking or was interrupted by another interlocutor’s turn. Each individual code-switch was then coded based on 1) language background of the speaker, 2) language of turn (Spanish, English or Both), 3) grade level, 4) initiative v. responsive turn, and 5) communicative function. Bilingual turns were coded as ‘both’ for several reasons. First of all, there is substantial debate over what constitutes a code-switch; for instance, whether it may be a single-word switch or multi-word switch. Secondly, the present analysis focuses on the communicative function of turns of speech by language use. (See Christoffersen, 2014 for a detailed analysis of the discursive functions and grammatical patterns of code-switching by students in this setting.)

In performing the analysis of communicative function, the categories were influenced by the ‘ethnography of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974) and speech act theory (Searle, 1969); however, the resulting categories were created by the researcher based on major themes that emerged from the data. The categories of communicative function used in the present data analysis include: playing, positioning (blaming, arguing), evaluating/complaining, commanding/reprimanding, thanking/apologizing, joking, requesting, requesting information, and assertions (storytelling, answers, declarative statements). It is important to note that while function may coincide with a certain turn of talk, it often does not. Thus, in the coding of this data, many turns were coded with multiple functions. In other instances when no clear connection could be made to the outlined examples of communicative functions, no communicative function was coded for that turn of talk. Below is a series of examples of communicative function from the present study’s corpus according to the nine categories.

### 1. Playing

BETO: I am the police dog. [in a role play activity]

### 2. Positioning

JESSICA: Señora, Matthew está hablando en inglés.

### 3. Evaluating/Complaining

CARLA: Yo tenía este seat. [when researcher sat down, having taken her seat]

4. Commanding/Reprimanding

JESSICA: Matthew, ¡no jugar!

5. Thanking/Apologizing

TARA: I didn't mean to do that.

6. Joking

SEÑORA: ¿Qué color es el uniforme?

TARA: ¡Uniformio! [Says smiling]

7. Requesting

BRIANNA: After can I be it? [Asking to change roles in a role play game]

8. Requesting Information

BEN: Señora, ¿una placa es a badge?

9. Assertions

VICTOR: En norteamérica todos los policías son negros.

## Results

The results of the present study are organized into three major sections: 1) a quantification of the general patterns of Spanish/English use, 2) an analysis of the communicative functions of language use, and 3) a qualitative analysis of communicative functions of language use. The first section provides an overall depiction of the classroom setting and patterns of language use broadly described, also allowing a point of comparison to the considerable body of research on the quantification of target language versus majority language use in the immersion classroom. The second section explores the communicative functions of student language use in the Spanish immersion classroom which adds a significant and widely understudied perspective. The third and final section describes in more detail the findings of communicative function of language use in the immersion classroom including specific examples from the present corpus and a possible explanation for the discrepancy with previous research.

### Overall Patterns of Spanish/English Language Use in the Immersion Classroom

An investigation into the overall patterns of Spanish/English student language use in the Spanish immersion classroom provides an important general picture of the setting. It also affords a point of comparison to the large body of research which has already been conducted throughout the past couple decades quantifying L1 and L2 use in the immersion classroom. The overall patterns of Spanish/English use will be described by grade level and language background.

**Overall language use by grade level.** Research throughout the years has shown a tendency for students use less of the target language as they advance through grade levels (Blanco-Iglesias & Broner, 1993; Broner, 1991; Heitzman, 1993). As depicted in Table 1, the frequent use of Spanish in first and second grades (73.2%) may seem to confirm the findings of Blanco-Iglesias & Broner

(1993), who noted a peak in the use of Spanish during structured activities during second grade. It does not, however, follow their reported trend for a subsequent drop in Spanish language use in second grade (80.0%). Additionally, the high percentage of Spanish turns in all grades (34.4%, 73.2%, 80.0%, respectively) seems to question whether the classroom as a speech community becomes increasingly diglossic (Lee, Hill-Bonnet & Gillispie, 2008; Tarone & Swain, 1995) with a decreased use of the target language.

*Table 1. Language use per turn across grade level.*

<i>Language</i>	<i>Kindergarten</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</i>		<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Spanish	34.4	(99)	73.2	(115)	80.0	(56)	52.4	(270)
English	51.4	(148)	15.9	(25)	04.3	(3)	34.2	(176)
Both	14.2	(41)	10.8	(17)	15.7	(11)	13.4	(69)
	55.9	(288)	30.5	(157)	13.6	(70)	100.0	(515)

**Overall language use by language background.** Since the immersion classroom under investigation includes both heritage speakers of Spanish and L2 learners of Spanish, it is appropriate as well to compare Spanish/English language use by language background. As might be expected, heritage speakers of Spanish speak more Spanish (75.0%), but Spanish also comprises a majority of the turns of talk by L2 learners of Spanish (44.1%), resulting in a sum of 51.6% of classroom conversational turns in the target language (Table 2). This suggests that while language background does influence language use, all students use more Spanish than English and turns including both English and Spanish. Also, there are more L2 learners of Spanish in the class than heritage speakers of Spanish, it is fitting that L2 learners would have more total conversational turns in the dataset (75.5%).

*Table 2. Language use per student turn across language background.*

<i>Language</i>	<i>Heritage Speakers of Spanish</i>		<i>L2 Learners of Spanish</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Spanish	75.0	(84)	44.1	(152)	51.6	(236)
English	21.4	(24)	37.7	(130)	33.7	(154)
Both	03.6	(4)	18.3	(63)	14.7	(67)
	24.5	(112)	75.5	(345)	100.0	(457)

## Communicative Functions of Language Use in the Immersion Classroom

The major point of contribution of the present paper is the exploration of the communicative functions of student language use in the classroom. The categories of communicative functions which emerged from the data and were influenced by the ‘ethnography of speaking’ (Hymes, 1974) and ‘speech act theory’ (Searle, 1969) include: playing (games, songs), positioning (blaming, arguing, bragging), evaluating & complaining, commanding & reprimanding, politeness (thanking, apologizing), joking, requesting, and requesting information. The following section of results will be separating into analyses of communicative functions in the Spanish immersion classroom by language use, grade level, and finally an overall picture of the communicative functions used by students in the target language, in this case, Spanish.

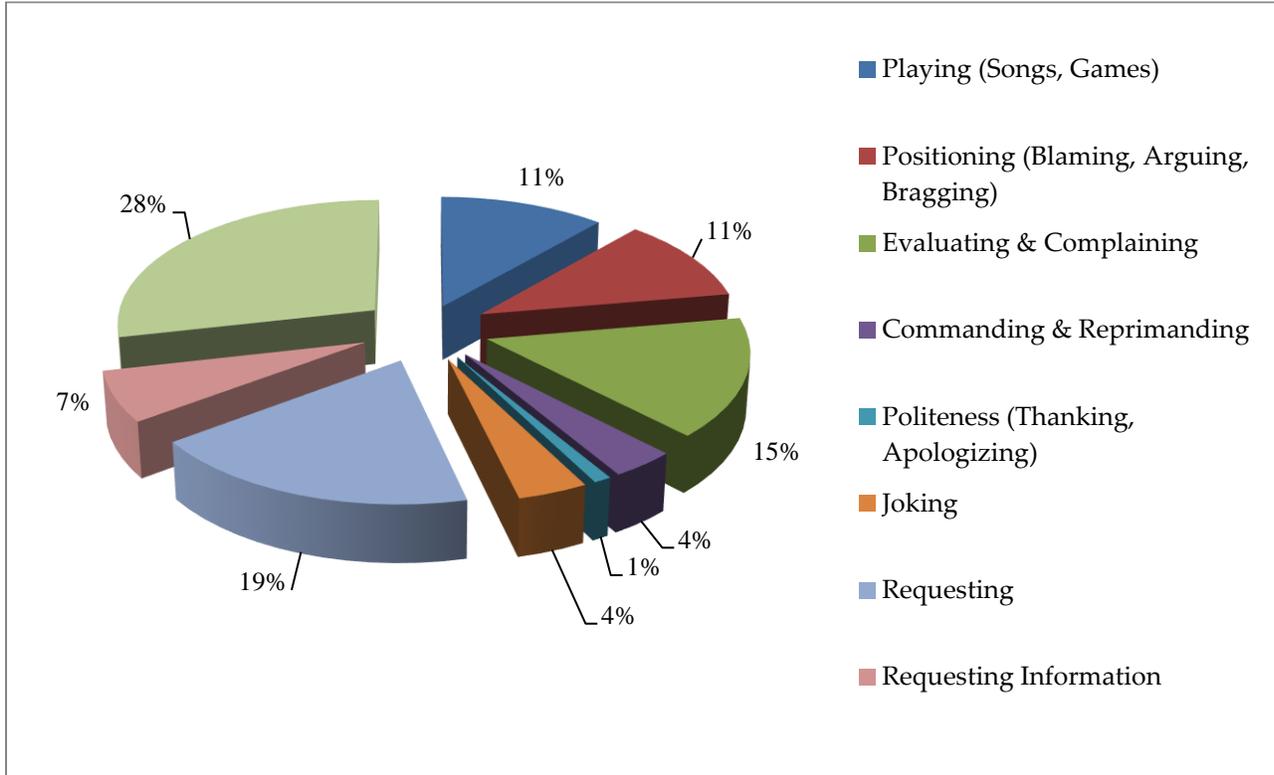
**Communicative Functions by Language.** At first glance the results in the following table (Table 3) may seem rather predictable, given the fact that the most common communicative function for Spanish turns is assertions (37.8%), comprised mainly of answers to questions and requests (17.0%) mostly for asking permission from the teacher. The English turns seem to tell a similar story as the most common communicative function for English, playing (95.6%), does not seem surprising.

Table 3. Communicative function per student turn by language.

<i>Communicative Function</i>	<i>Spanish</i>		<i>English</i>		<i>Both</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Playing	05.7	(16)	95.6	(19)	09.2	(6)	07.9	(41)
Positioning	08.1	(23)	04.4	(16)	10.8	(7)	08.8	(46)
Evaluating/Complaining	13.4	(38)	20.3	(35)	10.8	(7)	15.4	(80)
Commanding/Reprimanding	03.5	(10)	02.9	(5)	01.5	(1)	03.1	(16)
Politeness	01.1	(3)	01.7	(3)	00.0	(0)	01.2	(6)
Joking	05.3	(15)	01.2	(2)	01.5	(1)	03.5	(18)
Requesting	17.0	(48)	15.7	(27)	27.7	(18)	17.9	(93)
Requesting information	08.1	(23)	04.7	(8)	06.2	(4)	06.7	(35)
Assertions	37.8	(107)	33.1	(57)	32.3	(21)	35.6	(185)
	54.4	(283)	33.01	(172)	12.5	(65)	100.0	(520)

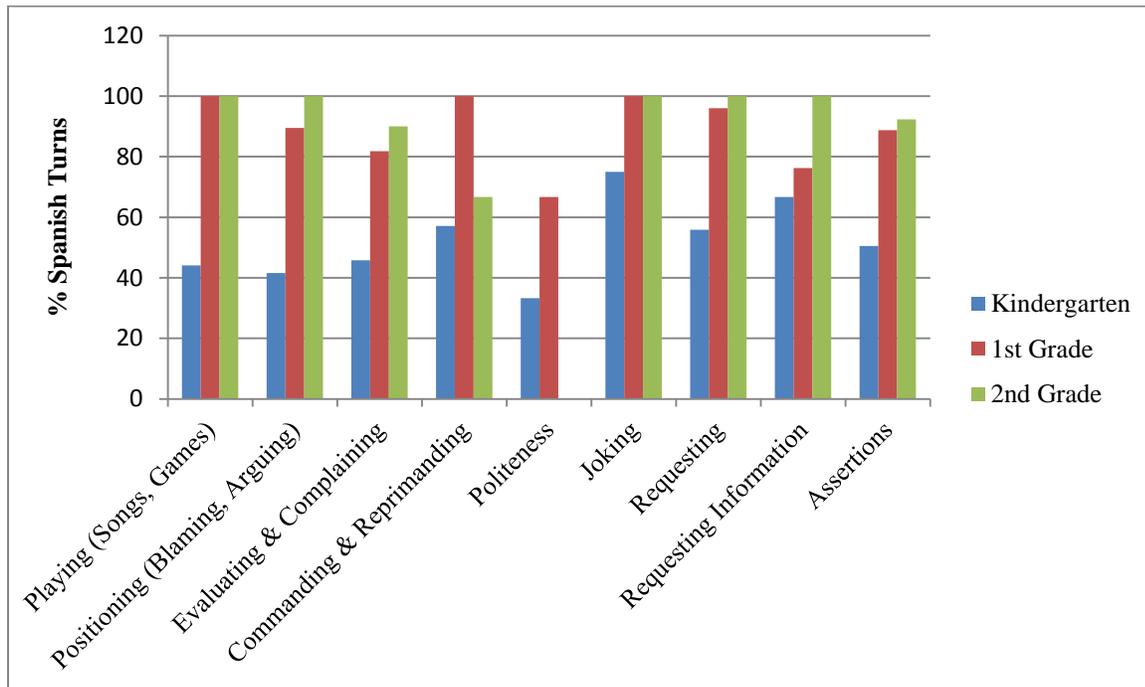
The interesting point here is that students continue to use Spanish, the target language, for a wide variety of functions (Figure 1), contrary to what others have speculated (Tarone & Swain, 1995). For instance, Table 3 demonstrates that students use Spanish for evaluating/complaining (13.4%) and positioning (8.1%) for their third and fourth most common communicative functions of Spanish turns. This may be due to the fact Tarone & Swain’s (1995) hypothesis was based on an ESL student in a classroom in a very different context (Liu, 1991, 1994) or that the reported findings from their immersion student graduate differed from reality (Swain, 1991). On the other hand, it may be related to the high degree of variability in contextual and social factors across immersion programs. It is certain that more research is needed in order to further explore this question.

Figure 1. Communicative functions of target language (Spanish) use out of total Spanish turns



**Communicative function by grade.** Since several scholars have suggested that immersion classrooms may become increasingly diglossic as students advance through grade levels, it is also appropriate to analyze communicative function by grade level. The following chart (Figure 1) depicts the total Spanish turns by grade level, showing the breakdown by communicative function. Interestingly, the findings show no drop or dramatic change in communicative function for the Spanish language across grade levels. Instead, it shows that students in all grade levels use Spanish for a wide variety of communicative functions. A few exceptions include the fact that the dataset did not find any tokens of Spanish politeness for second graders; however, the students did not exhibit politeness in the dataset in English either. Secondly, the first graders seem to demonstrate a great preference for using Spanish for commanding and reprimanding. Since this is a cross-sectional study and not a longitudinal study, findings should be considered with caution, given the likelihood that differences in individuals and classes affect the results.

Figure 2. Percentage of Spanish turns per communicative function by grade.



### Qualitative Analysis of Communicative Function in the Immersion Classroom

**Request, complaints, and evaluations.** As depicted above (Table 3, Figure 1, Figure 2), requests, complaints and evaluations are all among the top initiated L2 interactions in the Spanish immersion classroom. Common requests throughout the dataset included materials, food, water, and change in activities. Complaints were usually made about other students, while evaluations were opinionated comments on a wide range of topics.

<i>Request</i>	TOMMY: Yo quiero pan. <i>I want bread.</i>
<i>Complaint</i>	LAURA: Sra. Alvarez, Marcos está jugando. <i>Mrs. Alvarez, Marcos is playing.</i>
<i>Evaluation</i>	NATALIE: Me gusta este. [picking up a Littlest Pet Shop toy] <i>I like this one.</i> LYDIA: No, esta como aliens. <i>No, this like aliens.</i> NATALIE: Yo creo es Cuddlebugs. <i>I think it is Cuddlebugs.</i>

This last example of an evaluation is particularly interesting, because the girls were whispering among themselves at their desk at a moment when they should have been listening to a poetry presentation. This demonstrates how students in this classroom speech community construct their own spaces for using the target language for a wide variety of functions.

**Commands, arguments, and insults.** Furthermore, students command, argue and insult in their L2 with their classmates.

*Command*      VICTOR: Cristina, ponlo allí. Mira.  
*Cristina, put it there. Look.*

*Argument*      TARA: Ella tiene el pencilbox. Hide it aqui.  
*She has the pencilbox. Hide it here.*

LAURA: Pero no es aqui, mira!  
*But it is not here. Look!*

*Insult*      JOSUE: Nick tiene un bebé.  
Nick has a baby.  
[The baby being referred to is Marcos, who Nicolas helps a lot.]

None of these target language utterances contain informal target language forms, but instead students are modifying academic language in order for it to serve an informal function. For instance, here “bebé” can take on a new meaning, and students have learned that “mira” can be both instructional, as in the command example, and emphatic, as in the argument example.

**Informal teacher/student interactions in L2.** Additionally, quite frequently these informal initiative interactions occur between teacher and student.

*Joke*      JULIE: Mira. Hay una araña.  
*Look. There is a spider.*

SRA. A.: ¿Dónde?  
Where?

JULIE: En la planta.  
*In the plant.*

SRA. A.: Ooh! Sabe que no me gusta.  
*Ooh! [playful tone] She knows that I don't like them. [directed to researcher]*

The teacher involvement in student initiated L2 interactions is a significant indication of the reason why students may use the target language for a wide variety of functions in this school. Additionally, the following depiction of Spanish immersion kindergarten instructor's teaching philosophy sheds light on the situation.

Kindergarten Instructor: [Quiero] que [los niños] sientan que yo soy parte de ellos, que yo juego con ellos, que yo los quiero. Entonces no que me vean a mi como una figura muy arriba y yo abajo, no. Yo soy parte de ellos. Y yo creo que esta es la diferencia en que ellos se sientan ansiosos para aprender, de venir a la escuela, de querer aprender.

*I want [the children] to feel that I am a part of them, that I play with them, that I love them. So, not that they see me like a figure who is very high and I below, no. I am a part of them. And I believe that this is the difference that makes them feel anxious to learn, to come to school, to want to learn.*

An egalitarian philosophy of teaching where neither is “very high” or “below” may be a reason for the students’ use of the target language for a wide variety of contexts and functions. Future studies on the impact of school philosophies would be useful to clarify the impact of school and individual instructor philosophies of education on the communicative functions of student target language use.

**Unimagined functions and forms in the immersion classroom.** According to popular critiques of immersion schools (Tarone & Swain, 1995), students in such programs exercise a limited range of functions in the target language. Expected functions of student target language use may commonly include requesting (such as permission), requesting information (asking questions), and assertions (answering questions). However, these noticeably comprise only 54% of the total communicative functions of Spanish turns from the present dataset. So, the remaining 46% of communicative functions in Spanish are unanticipated uses of the target language within the Spanish immersion context. This contrast may be due to the notion of figured worlds presented by Holland et. al. (1998). The figured worlds construct would argue that these alternative communicative functions of the target language use do not fit with our imagined or figured world of a typical classroom. We do not at first envision arguments, jokes and complaints as a part of the classroom.

*Positioning* [Argument about a missing pencil box]

ERIC: Ella tiene el pencilbox. Hide it aqui. Mira.

*She has the pencilbox. Hide it here. Look.*

SARA: Pero no es en aqui. ¡Mira!

*But it is not here. Look!*

*Evaluating* [Side conversation about Littlest Pet Shop toys]

NATALIE: Me gusta este.

*I like this.*

LYDIA: Esta como aliens.

*This like aliens.*

NATALIE: Yo creo es cuddlebugs.

*I think it is cuddlebugs.*

These examples depict how students use Spanish and Spanish/English to discuss or argue over common occurrences during the school day, yet these forms of discourse are often not acknowledged within the immersion classroom. Instead of acknowledging certain functions of language use within the classroom, all forms and functions of language must be recognized in classroom research in order to give a comprehensive overview of language use in the immersion classroom.

## **Conclusion**

The present study has contributed to the growing body of research on two-way immersion programs, especially with its unique endeavor to discover what students “do” with words through an investigation of communicative function. First, the paper presented an analysis of overall patterns of language use in the kindergarten through second grade Spanish immersion classrooms. An analysis by grade level differed from other research in showing a steady increase in the amount of Spanish conversational turns from kindergarten through second grade. Additionally, all grade levels demonstrated a high percentage of Spanish use, which brings into question whether there is a drop in L2 use as students progress through grade levels in all immersion programs, as has been previously reported (Broner, 1993). Furthermore, the present study found that while heritage speakers of Spanish use more Spanish in the classroom, L2 learners of Spanish use more Spanish than English.

The investigation of communicative functions of language use in the immersion classroom elicited the greatest contribution, since until this point there has not been a similar study on overall communicative functions of language use by students in language immersion programs. The top two communicative functions of Spanish turns in the classroom were rather unsurprising: assertions (37.8%), commonly answers to questions, and requests (17.0%), usually students asking permission. Similarly, the top communicative function for English turns was playing (95%), which is an expected choice for students in a society where English is the majority language. Interestingly, though, students did use the target language, Spanish, for a wide variety of functions including evaluating/complaining (13.4%) and positioning (8.1%), or blaming and arguing. There was no significant change in communicative functions for Spanish across grade levels, which provides a different perspective from previous claims that the immersion classroom becomes increasingly diglossic over time (Tarone & Swain, 1995). However, it is significant to note that the findings may well be impacted by the impact of gender, race, ethnic community involvement, parent’s English proficiency, and income among other factors (Lutz, 2006). Further research is needed to examine communicative functions of language use as correlated with these significant social factors, and it is important to note that the differences in patterns of language use can be expected in different classrooms. Furthermore, as Achugar (2008) notes a stronger linguistic marketplace for Spanish in a Southwest Texas border town, this elite bilingual program may attribute significantly to the social capital ascribed to Spanish and its use across various communicative functions.

Lastly, a qualitative analysis of communicative function in the classroom reveals that students use the L2 or target language for a wider variety of functions than may be expected. The difference between the expectation and the observed findings from this systematic investigations may be explained by the notion of “figured or imagined worlds” (Holland et. al., 1998). The “figured worlds” construct would suggest that some communicative functions, such as arguments,

jokes or complaints, do not fit with our imagined or figured world of a typical classroom. Therefore, previous mostly anecdotal and observational research may not have acknowledged the entirety of student language use and hence the breadth of students' communicative competence. Moreover, an interview with a Spanish immersion teacher demonstrated the instructor's egalitarian perspective on the teacher/student relationship with no one in the classroom "very high" or "very low"; the teacher stated "I am part of them." This demonstrates the influence of individual teacher philosophies on student language use in the immersion classroom, revealing the importance of a large body of studies from a diverse group of immersion programs in order to gain a better understanding of language learning in this educational setting.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

While the findings of this study are of great import, there is another significant aspect of the current research endeavor. This project carries with it the hopes to shift our perspective on immersion student language use. While use of the target language is vital for language learning, we should also seek to realize that we need not focus solely on the amount of target language use by the type of target language use. As Hymes (1974) argued decades ago, we should seek to emphasize student development of "communicative competence" in which they gain not only grammatical knowledge of the target language but also the ability to employ that language appropriately for a variety of functions and settings. For example, teachers could develop writing tasks that are not only formal essays but emails, chat messages, text messages and posts on social media. The class could also use Spanish audio and video clips from movies and cartoons using vernacular or slang and discuss these different types of speech and their use.

Furthermore, if we are to consider the language immersion classroom as a speech community, we need to recognize learners as actively constructing rules for appropriate use of their languages. Teachers could conduct action research in their classrooms, listening to 'what students do with words', the functions of language use and the languages used for those purposes. These insights gained from specific classroom speech communities would allow teachers to determine the needs of their students.

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**Language Transfer in a Dual Immersion Program:  
Cognates, Morphology and Language Contrasts**

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## Abstract

This comparative case study explored language transfer patterns implemented in two elementary dual immersion classrooms. Following Dual Immersion norms, a strict separation of languages was maintained, which inhibited, but did not eliminate, the teachers' use of transfer practices. Research data included three months of classroom observations and monthly interviews with teachers. Findings showed that teachers used cognates and morphology to demonstrate similarities between Spanish and English, and they contrasted languages to help students notice and understand differences between the languages. Students evidenced independent use of these strategies (cognates, morphology and language contrasts), and transfer was observed both from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1. Teachers' beliefs about transfer influenced whether and how they taught it. Instructional implications include an expanded focus on theory and instructional practices that support transfer, and meaning-based vocabulary and comprehension instruction. Programmatic implications include reconsidering the strict language separation rule in Dual Immersion programs.

*Index terms:* Dual Immersion, cognates, morphology, language contrasts, emergent bilinguals, language transfer

### **Language Transfer in a Dual Immersion Program: Cognates, Morphology and Language Contrasts**

Morphemes and Spanish-English cognates are two sources of student knowledge that Dual Immersion (DI) teachers might build upon to facilitate acquisition of language in both Spanish and English. However, since a core principle of DI has been a complete separation of the two languages during instruction (Cummins, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001), transfer may not be a prevalent instructional practice despite recent research showing its efficacy with emergent bilinguals (EBs) (Escamilla et al., 2014).

Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian (2006) noted that transfer enables bilinguals to use their collective linguistic resources, which include common Latin and Greek-based morphemes (smallest units of meaning) and 10,000 to 15,000 Latin-based Spanish-English cognates (Lublinter & Hiebert, 2011). Since cognates are generally academic vocabulary in English but common words in Spanish (Lublinter & Hiebert, 2011), it has been suggested that native Spanish-speakers may have a "cognate advantage" (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012, p. 192) in learning English academic vocabulary. However, EBs' English vocabulary development typically lags that of their monolingual peers, compromising their ability to comprehend texts (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005; August & Shanahan, 2006). Despite the strict separation of languages, some teachers are using transfer practices. This comparative case study describes how two elementary DI teachers employed cognates, morphology and language contrasts to teach for language transfer, and it identifies some factors that influence their decisions about the use of transfer practices.

## Theoretical Framework

Skills, concepts and knowledge learned in one language can transfer to another language to facilitate learning (Cummins, 1979; Goldenberg, 2008; Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1995, 1996). A multilingual perspective states that EBs employ all their linguistic resources to learn languages and learn in those languages (Gort, 2006, 2008; Reyes, 2006). Based on a holistic view of the EB, a multilingual perspective acknowledges the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) and “linguistic, literacy and cultural repertoires” (Bauer & Gort, 2012, p. 5) that students bring to their literacy activities in school.

The reciprocal relationship between the first (L1) and second (L2) language undergirds the multilingual perspective. Cummins’ (2007) common underlying proficiency model (CUP) posits that the L1 and L2 develop symbiotically to enhance both languages. Cummins’ (2008) theoretical basis for the CUP model is the role of pre-existing knowledge as a foundation for learning, along with his interdependence hypothesis (1979, 2001) which states that when language is developed in an L1, it will transfer to the L2 under the appropriate conditions. He (2008) also argued for the purposeful use of students’ L1 to support their L2 and creating the appropriate conditions to allow transfer to occur, including accessing students’ prior knowledge in their L1 to support L2 acquisition.

Jiménez, García and Pearson (1995, 1996) corroborated the importance of transfer between languages when they found that proficient bilingual readers used what they know in both Spanish and English to comprehend text in either language, specifically using cognates and metacognitive strategies to facilitate their understanding. Other bilingual reading strategies include translating, transferring information between languages, and reflecting on text in either language (Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996). These skills appear to be evidence of a “Spanish-English bilingual schema for reading” (Jiménez, 1997, p. 227).

Cummins (2008) cited five specific types of transfer that might be possible in a given sociolinguistic context. The first is transfer of conceptual elements. Once concepts such as democracy or photosynthesis are learned in one language, they are known. The concepts do not change in a second language; only the vocabulary and the language structures required to communicate the concepts are different. The second type, transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, includes comprehension strategies that can be used in multiple languages. The third is transfer of pragmatics, such as turn-taking in conversation or the use of gestures to supplement oral communication. Transfer of specific linguistic elements, including cognates and morphology, is fourth. Finally, the transfer of phonological awareness, or the knowledge that words are comprised of sounds, is also transferable from one language to another. This study primarily focuses on how teachers support the transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, and the transfer of specific linguistic elements such as cognates and morphology.

## Literature Review

Recent syntheses of research have supported the multilingual perspective, showing that EBs use all their linguistic resources to acquire literacy in both Spanish and English. One synthesis (Cisco & Padrón, 2012) concluded that proficient bilingual readers understand that each language can support comprehension in the other, but less proficient bilingual readers do not share this understanding. The authors claimed that proficient bilingual readers use transfer, translation and cognates to assist in reading comprehension. In another synthesis, Genesee et al. (2006) concluded that L1 literacy contributes to and L2 literacy development. Yet, details about DI teachers' use of practices that support transfer is largely unknown.

### Reciprocal Nature of Transfer

Literacy and language are reciprocal among learners' languages. Vygotsky (1986) stated: The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own. The reverse is also true—a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations. (pp. 195-196)

Vygotsky's theory about the reciprocal nature of transfer is evidenced in two recent studies. Gebauer, Zaunbauer and Moller (2013) studied German-English dual language programs and found reciprocal transfer effects between L1 and L2 reading comprehension and fluency. They identified a dominance of L2 to L1 transfer in both reading comprehension and fluency and attributed it to the high proportion of L2 academic reading in dual language programs. Like Kieffer (2013) and Montecillo Leider, Proctor, Silverman and Harring (2013), Talebi (2013) found a focus on meaning to be central to multilingual reading and reported that reading strategies transfer from L1 to L2, L2 to L3 and L2 to L1.

### Transfer in Dual Immersion Programs

With bilingualism and biliteracy as primary goals of dual immersion programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2001), it would be appropriate for educators to use students' linguistic strengths as a bridge to their less-dominant language (Escamilla et al., 2014). However, in DI programs the languages are strictly separated to ensure that all students are using both languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Cummins (2008) posited that the separation of languages in DI programs has a limited research basis and he argued for the purposeful use of students' L1 where it can support L2 acquisition through cross-language transfer. He also warned that transfer of language and literacy may not happen without explicit instruction.

Gort (2008) and Reyes (2006) found that the use of both languages in a DI program facilitated EBs' negotiation of meaning regarding language, culture and writing. Gort (2006) also found that EBs use their full linguistic repertoire when writing, apply appropriate skills cross-linguistically as they write, and may temporarily apply linguistic elements and writing conventions of one language to the other. Others (Hornberger & Link, 2012) have called for the use of translanguaging in DI classrooms. Recently, Escamilla et al. (2014) argued for teachers'

intentional and strategic use of transfer in DI programs, specifically for simultaneous bilinguals, through their Literacy Squared program. Literacy Squared provides a holistic biliteracy framework for teachers to support bilingual language and literacy development, as the bilingual is not two monolinguals in one (Grossjean, 1989).

### **Cognates, Morphology and Contrasting Languages**

Vocabulary is a central component in EBs' reading comprehension (Jiménez, 1994). In one study, 76% of vocabulary words in fourth-grade science units were found to be English–Spanish cognates (Bravo, Hiebert & Pearson, 2007), as were 68% of the words judged to be difficult in middlegrade texts (Carlo et al., 2004). In English, Latin-based words are often considered more sophisticated than other words, providing Spanish speakers with a theoretical advantage in learning content vocabulary, particularly in the sciences where Latin terms dominate. For example, “construct” and “*construir*” are cognates descended from the same Latin word “*construere*” (Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011). While a Spanish-speaking child would learn “*construir*” from a young age, an English-speaking child might use the word “build,” which could be considered less sophisticated than “construct.” Cognates have been found to support ELs' English vocabulary and reading comprehension (Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August & White, 2011; Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1995; Ramírez, Chen & Pasquarella, 2013). For example, in a study of 90 Spanish-speaking English learners in grades four and seven, Ramírez et al. (2013) found both cognates and morphology to correlate to English reading comprehension.

However, students do not necessarily notice cognates without explicit instruction (August et al., 2005; Cummins, 2007; Goldenberg, 2008; Kelley & Kohnert, 2012; Nagy, 1995; Nagy, García, Durgunoglu, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993), especially younger children (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012). Lubliner and Hiebert (2011) explained that despite the large number of cognates, many children are unable to use cognates to access vocabulary in their other language for one of two reasons: either their Spanish and English vocabularies do not overlap as much as one might expect (i.e., household vocabulary is known in Spanish and Science vocabulary is known in English), or the child is unable to access the Spanish word meaning based on the English orthography and/or phonology. The first consideration should be less relevant in dual language programs, as children are learning content vocabulary in both languages. To overcome the second challenge, Lubliner and Hiebert suggest instruction that helps students to recognize orthographic and phonological patterns across languages. Finally, cognates may share semantic, orthographic or phonological similarities. The degree of overlap on each of those three criteria varies, making some cognate pairs more or less difficult for children to notice (Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011).

Students' ability to use morphology to determine word meanings was also shown to be a significant predictor of reading comprehension in English learners (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008; Montecillo Leider et al., 2013; Schiff & Calif, 2007) as well as monolingual English students (Nagy, Berninger & Abbot, 2006; Nagy, Berninger, Abbott, Vaughan & Vermeulen, 2003). Montecillo Leider et al. (2013) found a correlation between morphological awareness and reading comprehension in 123 third through fifth grade Spanish-English bilingual students. They concluded, “We must move beyond the idea that reading comprehension can be simply understood through the examination of bilingual students' ability on word reading tasks” (p. 1482). This is consistent with Kieffer's (2013) recent study of 82 sixth grade ELs and 56 native English speakers who were struggling to read. While large proportions of all struggling students exhibited weak

morphological awareness skills, ELs were particularly likely to struggle to use morphology in their reading. Both studies found morphological awareness, or a focus on meaning, to be central to reading comprehension.

Schmidt's (1990, 1994) noticing hypothesis states that calling attention to input supports language learning. One way to call attention to a second language feature is through contrastive analysis, or comparing it with corresponding L1 information. Lado (1957) proposed the contrastive analysis hypothesis, contending that differences between a learner's two languages are a source of difficulty, or negative transfer, while similarities are positive. The term "negative transfer" can be misleading, as both similarities and differences between languages can help students learn an L2. Comparing and contrasting two languages allows the learner to build upon the knowledge of an L1 to facilitate learning an L2 and assimilate new knowledge (Markham, 1985). Contrastive analysis was widely used in the 1970s to predict potential difficulties associated with learning a second language in the hopes of circumventing them (Markham, 1985). Despite the popularity of contrastive analysis, there is a dearth of recent research on the instructional use of contrastive analysis in bilingual classrooms (exceptions include Laufer & Girasi, 2008 and Laufer-Dvorkin, 2006). Pointing out distinctions between two languages helps students to notice the differences, which may be infrequent, unobtrusive and/or communicatively redundant, enabling them to go unnoticed easily (Schmidt, 2001).

## **Methods**

This comparative case study explored: (1) How two elementary DI teachers employed transfer practices to teach language, and (2) how the teachers' understandings of transfer impacted their instruction in a DI setting.

### **Setting and Sample**

East Golden Hills Elementary (EGHE), a Northern California school housing kindergarten through fifth grade, had a 90/10 Dual Immersion strand and an English only strand. A homogenous suburban school, 99 percent of EGHE students were students of color, 87 percent were Latino, 98 percent were low socioeconomic status (as measured by free and reduced lunch), 84 percent were classified as English language learners, and 87 percent of parents had no more than a high school degree.

The sampling criteria for this study included DI teachers who (1) had bilingual certification and at least five years of experience, (2) exhibited sophisticated levels of Spanish and English, and (3) successfully taught English to DI students as determined by state testing results in the prior two school years. The purposeful sample (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) of two Spanish-English dual immersion teachers spanned second through fourth grade. Both teachers had a relatively even distribution of students at the beginning, early intermediate and intermediate stages of language learning. All students were native Spanish speakers except two native English speakers in Lauren's class.

Lauren Sandía is Mexican-American and taught the fourth grade DI class at EGHE. At the time of the study she was 27 years old and had been teaching for five years. Although her father spoke Spanish, Lauren considered herself a second language learner in Spanish because an English-only rule was enforced at home. The difficult process of learning Spanish as a second language fueled her desire to teach Latino students to be bilingual and biliterate from a young age.

Claudia Ramos, age 44, taught a second and third grade combination DI class that year. Claudia is a Mexican national who moved to California through a program in search of bilingual teachers. She had been teaching 21 years, although this was her first year teaching a combination class. Claudia’s first language is Spanish. She is a language learner in English, German and French, and is proud of her language skills.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection included interviewing teachers, observing in classrooms, writing field notes and memos, and collecting bi-weekly student writing samples, pictures and other documents, over a three month period. I held formal, semi-structured interviews (Meriam, 2009) with participants approximately once per month and I audio-taped and transcribed all the interviews. I conducted hour-long classroom observations weekly, intentionally observing the teachers at different times of day and on different days of the week in order to get a holistic understanding of their instruction across various times, languages and subjects. Table One is an abbreviated version of the observation guide I used to focus my data collection.

Table 1

#### *Abbreviated Observation Guide Used for Data Collection*

Classroom Observation	Teacher Interview Questions	Other
<b>RQ1: How do teachers use the concept of transfer to facilitate students’ learning?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the teacher build on what students already know in their L1?</li> <li>• How does the teacher react to verbal or written “errors” (grammar, etc.) that may be a misapplication of transfer?</li> <li>• What scaffolds are in place for language?</li> <li>• Do students translate for each other? Does the teacher translate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you use students’ L1 to develop their L2? If so, how?</li> <li>• (If applicable) How do you help students to see that their knowledge of Spanish/English can help them learn the other language?</li> <li>• I noticed you did [X]. Tell me about that.</li> <li>• How do you scaffold English for your Spanish speakers (and vice-versa)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do T build on S strengths in one language to help them learn the other?</li> <li>• Is environmental print used to support language transfer?</li> <li>• Do students use translanguaging practices when speaking to each other? To the teacher?</li> </ul>
<b>RQ2: How does the teachers’ understanding of transfer impact their instruction in a DI setting?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do teachers’ actions represent their stated beliefs (from interviews)?</li> <li>• Is transfer addressed explicitly or implicitly? Do teachers use translanguaging? Or do they separate languages?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you develop academic language in English? Spanish?</li> <li>• How do you develop students’ academic language?</li> <li>• Tell me about the relationship between oral language and literacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do students use translanguaging practices when speaking to each other? To the teacher?</li> <li>• If so, how does the teacher respond?</li> </ul>

- What do you think about this DI program? DI programs in general? Why?

In this study transfer was operationalized as students' use of linguistic resources from any language to support their understanding or use of either Spanish or English, the two languages of instruction (Gort, 2006, 2008; Reyes, 2006). To that end, I looked for ways in which teachers facilitated students' use of their array of linguistic resources to support language or literacy learning. The goal of my observations was "thick, rich description" (Patton, 2002, p. 437). I used field notes and recording devices to help accurately capture data, increasing descriptive validity. I transcribed much of the classroom instruction based on the audio files within 24 hours of the observation. After developing a second observation guide from the data I had collected to that point, I realized I had reached a point of data saturation.

Following Charmaz (2006) and Merriam's (2009) suggestions, I began data analysis during the data collection phase, rereading data and writing memos. Once the data collection phase ended, I read through all the data various times and made notes on different themes that were emerging. I conducted discourse analysis on the transcribed classroom observations to examine teachers' language and classroom talk (Clarke, 2005). Using the concept of "data reduction," (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) I created a Microsoft Word table for each of the instructional strategies. I then returned to coding, which was an iterative process.

To ensure theoretical validity I triangulated the data from interviews, observations, and student output (written and oral) and performed member checks with the participants throughout the study, asking for feedback on the concepts in development (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). I also actively searched for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Finally, I closely monitored and carefully reported the data analysis procedures to ensure transparency (Merriam, 2009).

## **Classroom Profiles**

Both Lauren and Claudia were extremely respectful of their students and always showed they cared, albeit in different ways. They both employed mostly whole-class instruction, as was mandated in the district.

**Lauren's classroom profile.** Lauren's fourth grade class had a 60%/40% split between Spanish and English respectively, with language arts and math in Spanish, and science, social studies and English language development (ELD) in English. Lauren taught most of her whole-group instruction at the back of the classroom, in front of chart paper and an easel, with her 28 fourth graders sitting on the floor in front of her. Lauren used the chart paper for visual support during her lessons, and then posted the charts on the walls for students to use as references. Students were often asked to turn and talk to strategically-assigned partners while on the carpet. Soft-spoken herself, Lauren demanded and received absolute silence from her students when she was talking, but gave them plenty of opportunities to interact with each other for language development purposes. Twenty-six of Lauren's students were English learners, spread across the lower 3 levels according the California state English language assessment: beginning, early intermediate and intermediate. There were two native English speakers learning Spanish.

Lauren's classroom was immaculately organized. The front wall of the room resembled the other teachers' rooms, with the requirements (sound-spelling cards, standards, sentence stems, content and language objectives, concept-question board, and daily agenda) posted. The white board at the front was kept clean unless Lauren was using it, and there was a small classroom library in the front right corner. At the back of the classroom were a sink, closets, a kidney table where Lauren taught small groups after school, and Lauren's desk. One side wall displayed teacher-made anchor charts and posters that were visual representations of science concepts, such as the rock cycle. Below them were three computers for student use. The opposite wall, mostly windows, had student work posted.

**Claudia's classroom profile.** Claudia's second-third grade combination class had an 80%/20% split between Spanish and English respectively, with language arts, math and Science in Spanish, and Social Studies and the mandated English Language Development minutes in English. Students in Claudia's class were highly engaged and active learners. She did not require strict silence, but told students to work together and help each other. Student talk was generally on task and in the language of instruction. Claudia's students seemed to know that she cared about them even when she was scolding them, which she did freely. During whole-class instruction Claudia's students would sometimes raise their hands to participate and would sometimes jump in, but always respectfully and eagerly. There was a sense of respect and trust that allowed for rules to be relaxed and students to feel comfortable taking risks. All of Claudia's students were English learners in the beginning, early intermediate or intermediate categories; there were no native English speakers in her class.

Claudia's room was neat and well-organized. The walls were covered with standards, student work and teacher-made anchor charts. The back wall had cabinets that were decorated with students' writing next to their photos. The writing was compiled with the most recent work on top, so students' writing progress over time could be easily observed. Below the standards was a well-organized classroom library with books in both Spanish and English. At the front of the classroom were the mandated materials: the Open Court sound-spelling cards were placed directly over the whiteboard and the left side of the white board had a large Open Court Concept-Question board. The right side of the whiteboard contained the daily agenda, sentence stems, standards, language objectives and content objectives being addressed that day.

## Findings

This study explored how Spanish-English Dual Immersion teachers taught for transfer between languages and what factors might influence their use of transfer practices. Transfer between English and Spanish was observed in three ways: (1) through morphology (e.g., the English suffix "tion" and the Spanish suffix "*ción*"), (2) through cognates (e.g., *hospital/hospital*), and (3) by contrasting the two languages (e.g., days of the week are capitalized in English but not in Spanish). Teachers' beliefs about transfer influenced whether and how they taught for it.

## Morphology

Lauren used cross-language morphology to teach students new vocabulary words. In one instance she taught the English word “supernatural” by accessing students’ knowledge of the morpheme “super” in *superhéroe* (superhero). She said, “You know the word *superhéroe*; how does that help you understand supernatural?” (Field notes, April 17, 2012). That same day she taught “ancestors” by accessing students’ knowledge of the morphemes –an and –ante in the Spanish words *ancianos* and *antepasados*, respectively (Field notes, April 17, 2012). Similarly, during a pre-reading activity, she helped students define “infrasonic” using “*sonido*” (sound):

Lauren: Does “sonic” look like a word we know in English or Spanish?  
[No response from students.]  
Lauren: What if I cover the “c”? What Spanish word starts with “soni”?  
Students, chorally: *Sonido!* (Sound!, Field notes, May 15, 2012)

In this example Lauren prompted for the students to use morphology in either language. When the students did not respond, she provided more support, including identifying the language they should be thinking of (Spanish) and covering the final “c” in “sonic” to help them see the common word part.

Lauren also helped students make links between languages using affixes they have in common:  
Lauren: What is the suffix, the ending, the suffix in ‘conversation’? The suffix is...  
Students, chorally: The suffix is ‘tion.’  
Lauren: ‘Tion.’ Thumbs up if we have spelling words with that suffix this week? Yes, we do. Almost every word in English that ends with ‘tion’ in Spanish ends with...  
Students, chorally: ‘*ción*’  
Lauren: So what’s conversation in Spanish?  
Lauren & Students, chorally: *Conversación* (Conversation, Field notes, May 15, 2012).

In this example, the teacher used a suffix the languages share (spelled ‘tion’ in English, and ‘*ción*’ in Spanish) to develop students’ vocabulary in both languages and help students see the connection between the languages. In this way, new words had familiar parts students could use to help determine word meanings based on morphology.

Lauren taught morphology as one of a variety of strategies students could use to better comprehend texts. When Lauren realized “glimpse” was difficult for many students who were silently reading from their anthology, she interrupted their reading and asked:

Lauren: Where do we look first for clues?  
Students, chorally: In the word.  
Lauren: Sadly, in “glimpse” there aren’t any parts that can help us. Where else must we look for clues?

Students, chorally: In the sentence. (Field notes, May 10, 2012)

Lauren had explicitly taught students different ways to understand unknown words while reading and she reinforced the need to use multiple strategies.

Students in Lauren's class exhibited evidence of learning to use morphology independently. When reading from the language arts anthology, one student explained that he had guessed that "finery" was related to the Spanish word "*fino*". Lauren then made this strategy explicit, saying, "Because in Spanish '*fino*' means very nice or fancy or elegant. So you can use Spanish ... when you're clarifying what words mean" (Field notes, May 10, 2012).

It is interesting to note that Claudia also used morphology, but within the Spanish language. She explained that *visor* (visor) may come from the word *ver* (see, Field notes, April 18, 2012) and *batidora* (mixer) came from the verb *batir* (mix, Field notes, March 6, 2012). She taught the students that the prefix "*ex*" in *exhalar* (exhale) means out (Field notes March 12, 2012), and she introduced a new vocabulary word, *islote* (islet), using a word students knew, *isla* (island, Field notes, May 10, 2012).

Claudia's students were also able to independently use morphology to define words, but within Spanish rather than across languages. When asked to define *contradicción* (contradiction), a student suggested "*Alguién que no habla bien?*" (Someone who doesn't speak well?, Field notes, April 13, 2012). The student knew *contra* (contra) meant against or not, and *dicción* (diction) meant speech. His guess, while incorrect, was an excellent use of Spanish morphology. I did not observe evidence of Claudia using morphology or cognates to explicitly support cross-linguistic transfer. Her reluctance to do so may have been a result of the strict separation of languages in DI, or the need to protect Spanish time from being "contaminated" by English (Interview May 3, 2012), or because she thought transfer between languages happens naturally (Interview, March 27, 2012).

## Cognates

Lauren occasionally used cognates to help students understand new vocabulary, such as teaching photograph using *fotografía* (Field notes, March 28, 2012). When asked for an example of using cognates, Lauren said that a student asked her to define the English word "vary," and she provided the Spanish cognate, *variar* (to vary, Interview, April 23, 2012). Lauren also taught her students to consider possible cognates when they came across an unknown word. She told them to ask themselves, "Do you know a word that looks like that? Or that sounds like that?" Lauren was aware that some cognates look the same or similar but may sound somewhat different in the other language, while other words sound similar in both language but may be spelled differently. Drawing students' attention to phonology and orthography in both languages is a sophisticated way to help them use transfer.

Sometimes a cognate was unknown to students in both languages. When a student asked Lauren what "cruel" meant in English, Lauren pronounced the word in Spanish and asked if the student knew it. As word was new to the student in both languages, Lauren provided synonyms in both languages in order for the student to learn the word in both languages (Field notes, March 28, 2012). Interestingly, the English word "cruel" again tricked a small group of students during a guided reading lesson just a few weeks later. This time, however, after Lauren pronounced the word in Spanish, all the students recognized it and were able to use their understanding of cognates

to understand the word in English (Interview, April 23, 2012). Lauren then showed the students that the words were the same orthographically, but pronounced differently.

### **Contrasting Languages**

When asked to describe how she supports students to use what they know in one language to support the other, Lauren described the idea of contrasting languages, saying, “In Spanish we do it this way but in English we do it this way” (Lauren, Interview, May 14, 2012). For example, when one of Lauren’s students wanted to put a question mark at the beginning of an English question, Lauren clarified, “only in Spanish, not in English, but good thinking” (Field notes, March 12, 2012). Similarly, Lauren confirmed that in English “I” always needs to be capitalized, but “yo,” in Spanish, does not, saying “that’s just how it is in English” (Field notes, April 10, 2012). She also contrasted the languages to remind students about the different punctuation required for interrogative sentences: *rayas de diálogo* (dialogue marks) in Spanish but quotation marks in English (Field notes, March 28, 2012). Claudia also contrasted the two languages to help students remember a key difference in writing, saying “*Acuérdate, en español los días de semana no se escriben con mayúscula*” (Remember, in Spanish you don’t write the days of the week with a capital letter, Field notes, April 18, 2012), and “*No necesita mayúscula en español para los meses*” (You don’t need a capital in Spanish for the months, Field notes, May 17, 2012).

In the above examples the teachers acknowledged what the students know and can do with one language and showed how the same concept differs slightly in the other language. Interestingly, there was evidence of transfer from both L1 to L2 (a student wanting to put a question mark at the beginning of an English sentence) and from L2 to L1 (a student wanting to capitalize “yo” because “I” is capitalized in English). More importantly, these examples are evidence that students were independently making their own links between languages, albeit sometimes trying to transfer a concept that was not applicable in the second language.

### **Teachers’ Understanding of Transfer and Dual Immersion**

While no patterns emerged regarding the types of transfer strategies (cognates, morphology, language contrasts) used in different subjects (language arts, science etc.), one pattern was very clear: Teachers’ understanding of transfer influenced their pedagogy. Claudia thought that transfer happened naturally as students were learning two languages, therefore her morphology instruction tended to be within a single language rather than cross-linguistic. When asked to share her understanding of how students learned to use one language to support the other, Claudia explained, “*Cuando hablan o cuando escriben y cuando leen en español más ... yo no les enseño a leer en inglés, ellos leen ya en inglés*” (When they speak or when they write and when they read in Spanish more ... I don’t teach them to read in English, they already read in English, Interview, March 27, 2012). She also commented, “*Ya ellos pueden hacer la transferencia,*” (Already they can make the transfer).

Believing that transfer would come naturally, Claudia tended not to explicitly teach for transfer, and there was little evidence of it in her classroom. It was, however, something that she thought about in her role as a DI teacher. She spoke about pushing students to use more sophisticated vocabulary and increasingly complex phrases because they will need to do so in English, saying, “*Hay que forzarlos a que usen el vocabulario en español porque a medida que*

*ellos usen el español y estén acostumbrados a agregar adjetivos, adverbios, pues lo van a poder hacer en inglés*” (You have to force them to use the vocabulary in Spanish because then they become accustomed to adding adjectives, adverbs, then they will be able to do so in English, Interview, March 27, 2012).

Lauren was less confident that students would independently transfer concepts from one language to the other without explicit instruction. When asked about the separation of languages in DI programs, she stated:

I think sometimes we assume that [transfer is] just going to happen, or that they’re going to see that connection, but sometimes they don’t ... I’m still learning about how much I have to make explicit. You may think that they saw a cognate, but they might not have ... I mean, I’m looking at compare and *comparar* (compare). They sound different. And what I find with going from Spanish to English, Spanish is so phonetic that my students rely a lot on the sounds of the words and not so much on the visual in comparing it to English. And so, *comparar* (compare) doesn’t really sound like compare, so some kids might totally not see that connection. So compare and contrast, in Spanish that’s *comparar y contrastar* (compare and contrast), sometimes that’s all you need, that tiny link ... It has to be made explicit, and I think then that helps them to become more linguistically aware.” (Interview, March 26, 2012)

Lauren’s instruction included contrasting the languages to show important differences, as well as teaching students how to use cognates and morphology to use one language to support the other. Since it was important to her that students learned to use transfer independently, she reminded them during English silent reading time, “So you can use your Spanish when clarifying what words mean” (Field notes, May 10, 2012).

Lauren built on what students already knew in Spanish to help them learn English vocabulary and morphology, saying:

So when there are roots and suffixes, which are already an academic standard in English, helping students connect that to what they know about Spanish, I think that’s liberating for them. Because these are really hard words. But then they realize, ‘I actually know half of these words already!’” (Lauren, Interview, May 14, 2012)

She also expressed that when students did not use what they knew in one language to help themselves with the other, then everything was brand new and had to be learned separately, “and that’s too much of a cognitive load,” she said, “you’re starting off from square one again” (Lauren, Interview, March 26, 2012).

Lauren also realized that the 90/10 DI program, as she understood it, inhibited the use of transfer practices. When asked about examples of students’ use of cognates, she spoke about her surprise when a small group of her students struggled to read “cruel” in English despite knowing its Spanish cognate, “*cruel*” (Interview, April 23, 2012). Noting that the teachers at her school purposefully “train” the students to keep the languages separate, she said, “I think that partly, maybe that’s one disadvantage to the way we divide the languages so strictly” (Lauren, Interview, April 23, 2012). She thought that the strict separation of languages during the school day

influenced the students to think about the two languages as entirely separate, and therefore made them less likely to use what they knew in one language to support acquisition of the other.

In contrast, Claudia wanted to ensure that Spanish time was protected and not encroached upon by English, the majority language. When asked about her goals for the strict separation of languages, her response was, “*Cuidando el español y evitando que se contamine con el inglés*” (Guarding Spanish and avoiding its contamination with English, Interview May 3, 2012). This concern is founded in some research on DI programs that found minority languages to be encroached upon by majority languages (Ballinger & Lyster, 2011; Potowski, 2004, 2007).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Despite the strict separation of languages required in a DI program, some teachers employ transfer practices while avoiding language encroachment. This study adds to the evidentiary base of the multilingual perspective, as teachers were fostering the use of cognates, morphology and language contrasts to help students build on what they knew in one language to support the other language. Furthermore, it deepens our understanding of the multilingual perspective by exploring some ways teachers capitalize on bilingual students’ linguistic strengths.

## **Instructional Implications**

**Reconsidering the separation of languages in Dual Immersion.** Without exception, Lauren and Claudia did not mix Spanish and English, as a 90/10 DI model dictates (Lindholm-Leary, 2001), corroborating Takahashi-Breines’s (2002) study in which the DI teacher kept the languages “strictly separate,” “never used translation,” and “insisted that students speak the designated language” (p. 226). The strict separation of languages observed in this study limited “leakage” (Potowski, 2004, p. 79) of the dominant language into Spanish time. Due to the social, political and economic dominance of English over Spanish in the U.S., it is imperative that teachers demonstrate respect for both languages and follow the time requirements in each language to limit language inequity.

This study also corroborates Cummins’ (2008) and Koki’s (2010) claim that the strict separation of languages in a DI program may hinder a teacher’s use of transfer. Cummins (2008) believed that monolingual instructional approaches are at fault as they consider the student’s L1 as a hindrance, rather than supporting L2 acquisition. A number of researchers recommend transfer practices. For example, Lucido, Ramirez Boatright, Attal, Gonzalez and Thompson (2009) advised the instructional use of cognates, as well as morphology and cognates together, to help students understand the deeper relationship between words and languages, to identify patterns among languages, and to use those patterns to better understand and produce academic language in both languages. Montelongo, Hernández and Herter (2011) support cognate instruction and students translating their own L1 writing to help them construct knowledge about aspects of their L1 that transfer to L2. Similarly, Danzak (2011) and Escamilla et al. (2014) recommended teachers employ metalinguistic strategies to help students transfer their knowledge from one language to the other.

**A focus on meaning.** The teachers’ use of cognates and morphology represented a meaning-based orientation to language and literacy learning. Meaning-based instructional

practices, such as how to use cognates and morphemes to comprehend while reading, may support students' reading comprehension (Cisco & Padrón, 2012; Cummins, 2008; Goldenberg, 2008; Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011; Lucido et al., 2009; Montelongo et al., 2011). While cognates and morphemes are often discussed separately in the literature, this distinction is somewhat misleading as cognates often share a root word or other morpheme. When students read or listen with knowledge of morphology, the meaning of the smallest units of language, and cognates, words that share a common linguistic derivation, they are focused on meaning. Other literacy skills, such as letter identification, decoding and knowledge of orthographic patterns are also likely used by students while reading. Such skills are often used as proxy measures of reading skills in bilingual students (e.g., Comeau, Cormier, Grandmaison & Lacroix, 1999; Durgunoglu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Gholamain & Geva, 1999; Verhoeven, 1994), but, if meaning is minimized, word calling may occur instead of text comprehension (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). In fact, meaning-based skills may be a more accurate way to assess students' ability to gain meaning from text (Kieffer, 2013; Montecillo Leider et al., 2013).

**Contrasting languages.** The two teachers in this study used differences between languages to help bilingual students acquire language and literacy in both Spanish and English. In addition, this study evidenced contrastive analysis from the L1 to the L2 as well as from the L2 to the L1, as teachers built on students' strengths in both languages to support learning. Moreover, contrastive analysis was generally used once the teacher had observed a confusion stemming from the differences in the languages. The teachers used observation as formative assessment and employed contrastive analysis to correct mistakes at point of error to prevent the mistake from being habituated. This is a critical difference in implementation of contrastive analysis that supports its use in DI classrooms. In the past contrastive analysis was critiqued based on its goal of predicting possible difficulties second language learners might have given the wide variance in learners and their background knowledge (Markham, 1985; Wardhaugh, 1970). Contrastive analysis between the L1 and the L2 should not necessarily be the primary means of instruction, as it could take away from time in the target language (Markham, 1985) or it could be too focused on items rather than meaningful communication (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). However, carefully planned comparisons would increase the level of student attention on a specific item and support an improved understanding of the L2 (Markham, 1985).

### **Implications for Teacher Educators**

If transfer is to be utilized well in DI programs, pre-service bilingual teachers must be taught how, when and why to teach for it. Santos, Darling-Hammond and Cheuk (2012) stated, "Pre-service teachers should learn about approaches to language learning that can build bridges between students' native language knowledge and their evolving acquisition of a new language in an academic context" (p. 6). If, like Claudia, teachers believe transfer between languages will happen automatically, they will be less likely to explicitly employ transfer practices in their classrooms. In contrast, if they are taught to strategically teach for transfer, it could become part of their normal instruction.

## **Implications for Future Research**

This study provides examples of two teachers' practices and beliefs related to language transfer and was never intended to be generalized to a larger population. Future research could explore if and how larger numbers of DI teachers employ transfer strategies and analyze the resulting student outcomes. Additionally, future research could determine the types of transfer strategies that might be most useful in different subject areas. For example, due to the abundance of cognates and Latin-based word in science (Bravo, Hiebert & Pearson, 2007), one hypothesis would be that cognates and morphology would be particularly useful in that content area. Since teachers' beliefs about language and transfer significantly impacted their instruction, additional research could focus on how to help teachers understand the benefits of empowering students to use what they know in one language to support the other, and developing DI models that intentionally teach for transfer, such as Escamilla et al.'s (2014) Literacy Squared program.

## **Conclusion**

The use of cognates, morphology and contrastive analysis in DI programs, in limited amounts, could support acquisition of both languages, as all three practices build on students' linguistic strengths. In addition, these three practices lead to language-supportive, "intentional, explicit conversations about language," (Briceño, 2014, p. 86) as teachers and students engage in learning conversations around language. Incorporating cognates, morphology and contrastive analysis would require a different way of thinking about the separation of languages in DI programs: Teachers would need to be provided with the knowledge to make strategic decisions about when, why and how, to use students' knowledge of one language to support the other in a generative, meaning-based manner.

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**Mothers' Intimate, Imaginative Literacy Practices as Pushback**

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## Abstract

This qualitative study explores literacy practices in homes of Latino families in a low-socioeconomic Rio Grande Valley city. Participants included 14 recent immigrant Latina mothers whose children attended lower primary grades. For the first data set from 2013 to 2015, we collected data through semi-structured interviews. For the 2016 data set and in a different neighborhood of the city, we conducted open-ended survey questionnaires. Both data sets involved participant observation. We drew from a sociocultural framework, specifically New Literacy Studies and Funds of Knowledge. Results showed that mothers were imaginative, intentional, resistant, and resourceful in teaching their children to read and write in Spanish. They shared different resources and strategies routinely implemented at home to maintain their children's heritage language. Additionally, the mothers recognized the importance of maintaining their children's heritage language and they felt powerful as they compensated for inadequate Spanish instruction in local schools. We discuss implications for empowering Latina mothers' in teaching first language literacy to their children.

*Keywords:* Literacy, Sociocultural, Funds of Knowledge, Spanish Instruction, Pushback

## Introduction

Because of Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 and its 2015 revision, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), most U.S. schools promote English-only instruction and abandon emergent bilinguals' mother tongues (García & DeNicolò, 2016). It does not appear that these acts have helped this group. For instance, foreign-born students have significantly higher dropout rates than their English speaking peers. Specifically, the dropout rate among Latinos/as nationwide remains relatively high at 12%, compared to 5% for Whites and 7% for Blacks (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2015). The Latino/a dropout rate is worse along the Texas-Mexico border. In the border city where this study occurred, 64% of residents 25 years and over have a high-school degree or higher, and only 16% have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27% in Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Next, out of six possible levels, U.S. Latinos/as scored at level two, lower than the overall U.S. and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) averages on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Fleishman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). The NCES and OECD may relate literacy to reading, mathematics, and science scores, but we define literacy as socially-situated, ideological practices (Gee, 2012). Thus, storytelling (Cline & Necochea, 2003; White-Kaulaity, 2007) and sharing resources (Moll, 1992) can be literacies. In addition, we perceive reading and writing as sense-making processes around print, non-print, and electronic texts (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Broadening literacy, reading, and writing definitions invite non-dominant people to the feast (Smith, 1987).

Indeed, the literacy challenges of emergent bilinguals represent a critical issue requiring resolution. Using emergent bilinguals terminology highlights other languages people may have, instead of focusing on a second language (L2), English language learner (ELL), or deficits, e.g., limited English proficient (LEP) (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Yet many policymakers do not understand how one's first language (L1) and culture influence academic learning (Reyes, 2011). Since emergent bilinguals receive little L1 instruction in schools, out-of-school literacy practices

can help minority-language children's biliteracy development (e.g., Bauer & Gort, 2012; Reyes, 2006). Because literacy learning takes place within social and cultural contexts (Barton, 2007), it is important to determine how literacy develops within the family (Rodríguez-Brown, 2004).

The discourse about minority families' lack of involvement is a weapon that can maim non-dominant families who feel unaccepted in schools (Murillo, 2012). Contrary to myths, Latino parents are passionate about their children's education (Zalaquett & López, 2006) and many want their children to maintain their L1 (Reyes, 2011). In particular, Latina mothers immerse themselves in numerous academic and social practices, supporting literacy and their children's school achievement (Durand, 2010). However, few scholars have examined Latina mothers' resource allocation and strategies to support L1 development (Reese & Goldenberg, 2006; Reyes, 2006). Thus, our research questions for the present study were: (1) What are the family literacy practices of recent immigrant Latina mothers? and (2) What strategies and resources do mothers utilize to support their children's L1 development? We investigated these questions among Latina mothers in two low-income neighborhoods of a Texas city along the U.S./Mexico border.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Theoretical frameworks were New Literacy Studies (NLS) traditions and Funds of Knowledge (FOK). Both fall under the umbrella of sociocultural theory, which focuses on social learning and interaction to develop cognitive skills (Vygotsky, 1978). NLS and FOK involve a conscious effort to understand family and neighborhood situated practices and contexts and to view their languages and cultures as resources.

#### **New Literacy Studies**

We draw on NLS traditions, which refer to ideological, socially situated practices (Barton 2007; Luke, 2005) or "patterns of activity around literacy" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, p. 155). Within this definition, storytelling and creating art are literacies. Proponents of NLS traditions believe literacy practices relate to social, cultural, historical, economic, and political contexts. Most of NLS work focuses on people's everyday literacy practices. We define practices as activity patterns (Pahl & Rowsell). These family engagements also include literacy events, or moments of reading and writing print (Heath, 1983) and the cultural values, attitudes, and feelings that shape and give meaning to those events (Street, 2005). Semiotic resources, such as drama and art, connect to these literacy events and practices.

We do not focus so much on skill acquisition, but rather on literacy as a social practice that varies from one context to another (Barton, 2007). When we move discussions of literacy from neutral skills to situated, ideological practices and events in out-of-school settings, we draw attention to the content, motivation, purposes, resources, and contexts of non-dominant actors (Street, 2005). These actors have been ignored in family literacy research (Edwards, Paratore, & Roser, 2009).

#### **Funds of Knowledge**

Another important concept from sociocultural theory, FOK, relates to culturally developed knowledge and skills for households or individuals to function effectively (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1988). These funds involve resource exchanges as strategies to compensate for limited material goods,

e.g., books (Moll, 1992). Since our study focuses on Spanish language use, we also refer the concept of linguistic FOK to address language resources and practices (Smith, 2002).

Although Hinton (2015) has questioned using a capital metaphor to discuss culture, we believe a FOK framework can talk back to deficit perspectives of non-dominant people. In this sense, FOK raise the ante to demonstrate not all funds relate to financial capital. Many Latinos/as in poverty have home resources, invisible to those focused on finances or blinded by racism (Moll, 2015) and linguisticism (Anzaldúa, 2007).

### **Methodology**

These NLS and FOK frameworks, under sociocultural theory, were fundamental in our research methodology because we highlight non-dominant participants in everyday settings and we attempted to respect participants' time and contexts. Our ontologies, or connection to others, and our epistemologies, or what we count as knowledge, guided our inquiries (McGregor & Murnane, 2010) and informed our research settings, participants, procedures, our positionality, data sources, and data gathering.

### **Our Positionality**

Our sociocultural beliefs and bilingual, bicultural natures enabled cross-cultural understanding (Street, 1994). María, educated in South America from kindergarten to college (K-16) schools, immigrated to the USA as an adult. Additionally, she was a bilingual educator for eight years in the same school district that participants' children attended. Kathy, a native English speaker but fluent in Spanish, has volunteered and conducted research in a local tutorial agency since 2006. Additionally, she taught and lived in a Spanish-speaking Honduran village for two years as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer and taught in Spain for a year. As with María's context in the same school district, Kathy served as a remedial reading teacher for three years and has continued to volunteer in the district. Because we had personal experience with local schools' English and testing emphases, we connected with the mothers and understood schooling and language contexts.

### **Settings and Participants**

This study took place in a low socio-economic Rio Grande Valley (RGV) city along the U.S.-Mexico border, with about 175,000 inhabitants and 93.2% Hispanics. The high school graduation rate for adults over 24 years of age in this city was 63% and the per capita income was \$14,000; 36% of residents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Participants were 14 mothers, ages 25 to 40. We selected mothers whose L1 was Spanish, who were recent immigrants, and whose children attended early grade levels (kindergarten and first grade). However, some mothers also had older elementary and secondary school children as well. The mothers, from Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala, were economically disadvantaged and they lived in the two poorest neighborhoods of this RGV city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). María gathered data in *Este* [East] neighborhood homes for data set one, involving eight mothers. Kathy gathered data in an *Oeste* [West] neighborhood after-school tutorial agency for data set two, involving six mothers. We attempted to build *confianza* [trust] and did not want to embarrass the mothers by asking about their educational levels. One mother worked outside of the home; she had a service job. All reported attending non-U.S. schools before arriving in the USA.

Most mothers were married. Although fathers helped their children with homework in English, we focused on mothers because we were primarily interested in Spanish practices. Children of the mothers attended public elementary schools in a school district providing free and reduced breakfast and lunch to all children; over 90% of the district's enrollment was Latino/a (The Texas Tribune, 2010).

María chose to interview mothers in their homes versus in public settings because of her sociocultural framework. At home parents could show print resources. For example, participants often walked to other parts of their homes to retrieve children's writing samples and reading materials. Kathy chose to conduct research in *Oeste's* neighborhood setting versus a school because of this sociocultural framework, also. She observed the mothers interact with their children at the after-school tutorial agency, where neighborhood children, their mothers, pre-service teachers, and tutorial staff participated in a service-learning project.

### **Procedures**

For the first data set between 2013 and 2015, María approached a kindergarten teacher to ask her which children were strongest in Spanish literacy in her *Este* neighborhood classroom. The teacher recommended a few children. This essential selection criterion demonstrated the children's literacy abilities in Spanish. Next, María asked the teacher to mention the study to these children's mothers informally before or after school, when the mothers dropped off or picked up their children. If the mothers expressed interest in being interviewed, the teacher said María would contact the mothers. María called the mothers, explained the study, and invited them to participate before visiting their homes.

To respect their time, María asked the mothers when she could come to their homes. All preferred to be interviewed when their school-age- children were away so they could concentrate on the interviews. Thus, she could not observe interactions between mothers and their school-age children. María interviewed each mother once and questions focused on Spanish literacy practices and resources. She used a digital audio recorder and transcribed the interviews. Since participants were L1 Spanish speakers, she interviewed them in Spanish.

For the second data set in 2016, Kathy gathered data at an after-school tutorial agency in the *Oeste* neighborhood of the same city. The purpose of the non-profit tutorial agency, ran by Mexican-heritage staff members, is to assist *Oeste* school-aged children with homework. Mothers and pre-service teachers help the children with homework, read and write with them, and engage them in literacy lessons. Tutorial staff and mothers prepare meals and serve meals to the children. Kathy, a researcher and tutorial assistant for many years, invited the mothers to participate in a survey.

### **Data Sources**

Data sources consisted of interviews, surveys, and participant observation. Data were collected during two phases and each phase occurred in a different neighborhood. Interviews took place during 2013-2015 in the *Este* neighborhood. Surveys were conducted during 2016 in the *Oeste* neighborhood. Participant observations occurred during both phases.

**Interviews.** María gathered the first data set through one- to two-hour semi-structured interviews. She began with general questions, such as, "How many children do you have in school? What grades are they in? Which language do you use mainly at home? Who speaks which

language?” As the conversation progressed, María asked language and literacy questions, such as, “Which language do you use to help your children with school-work? Do you teach your children to read and write in Spanish? If so, how do you teach them to read and write in Spanish? Where do you get Spanish materials to teach your children? How often do these literacy practices take place?”

**Surveys.** Kathy surveyed parents for the second data set. The survey consisted of demographic questions and open-ended questions that pertained to this study. Kathy provided hard copies of surveys in Spanish and English; all participants completed the forms in Spanish at home. The questions pertaining to this study were, “How have you taught your child/children to read in Spanish?” and “How have you taught your child/children to write in Spanish?”

**Participant Observation.** The next data source involved participant observation, which Spradley (2016) defined as inferences from people’s cultural behaviors, what they do, and their cultural artifacts, and what they make and use. Different levels of participant observation are passive, moderate, and active. According to Spradley’s criteria, our form was moderate because we kept careful field notes, with dates, locations, participant names, and what occurred, and we attempted to strike a balance between outsider and insider perspectives. As insiders, we were volunteers, parents, and former teachers in the school district and neighborhoods. As outsiders, we were university researchers.

In the present study, María worked with parents and their children at the school where participants’ children attended. As a university volunteer in this program, she trained parents how to read to their three-year-old children in Spanish and English; program participants were different from research participants. She also substituted-taught kindergarten in that same school. María engaged in participant observation in the mothers’ home. The mothers would often show her examples from their children’s writing at home.

Participant observation also occurred during Kathy’s 2016 data gathering at the after-school tutorial center. She observed three mother participants speaking in Spanish with their children and working with them for schoolwork and reading Spanish trade books to their children from the agency’s library. Kathy watched the mothers asking the tutorial staff to translate certain words from the children’s English homework into Spanish, and then the mothers would explain the homework to their children in Spanish. Like María, Kathy served as a volunteer. Kathy has been involved with the after-school tutorial program for over 10 years and has promoted Spanish literacy teaching and Spanish children’s books in the program.

### **Data Analysis**

We based data analysis on grounded theory and looked for patterns across interviews and surveys (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We color-coded relevant information and identified themes by making comparisons and looking for similarities and dissimilarities across data vis-à-vis the research questions and NLS and FOK frameworks under sociocultural theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Initially, themes focused on speaking and listening, reading, and writing, but we realized major themes focused on mothers’ reported actions regarding their language and literacy practices.

## Results and Discussion

The following themes emerged from data analysis: creative resource usage; feeding L1 oral language and reading – intimately and passionately; imaginative reading practices; teaching writing in Spanish; and brokering practices.

### Creative Resource Usage

**U.S. Print Resources.** Mothers described imaginative resource gathering and usage to develop their children’s L1 literacy. Since participants could not afford to buy books, they checked them out from public libraries and the schools their children attended, borrowed from others, found materials in their churches, and used tutorial center materials. Sofía (all names are pseudonyms) said, “*Cuando íbamos a la iglesia ahí también nos daban libros en español*” [When we would go to church, there they would also give us books in Spanish]. Also, once their children became advanced in their Spanish reading skills, mothers read with their children magazines, newspapers, and the Bible to maintain and grow the children’s L1. Thus, they were creative in what they considered to be a text. According to Fernández (2001), a text is anything a human creates. It does not necessarily need to be a book or even print. As we will explore later in this paper, we can create meaning from oral and artistic texts.

**Print Resources from the Diaspora.** Additionally, the mothers convinced friends and family to bring books from Mexico. Sofía continued, “*Mandaba traer los libros de México*” [I asked them to bring books from Mexico]. In addition, Rosa used her social knowledge to tap into another resource: a migrant woman who had more material resources, “*Tengo una amiga migrante que le regalan muchas cosas. Y pues como sus hijos crecieron, ella se los regala a los míos*” [I have a migrant friend who receives many things. As her children have grown up, she gives their things to my children]. This resource sharing is important in the FOK framework. “The less access to formal sectors, the greater the reliance of households on reciprocal networks for survival” (Moll, 1992, p. 228). Thus, knowing other migrant women who had more resources and who were Spanish speakers facilitated resource exchange for Rosa and her children.

Additionally, Rosa’s resource sharing demonstrated an important literacy process in the diaspora: relationship-building. Diaspora is when people leave their homeland and settle in other places. They often maintain diasporic processes and practices, such as building and maintaining personal connections (Rolón-Dow & Irizarry, 2014). Our participants used these diasporic practices to help their children to learn to read in Spanish and to maintain Latin American ties (Ember, Ember, & Skoggard, 2005). Also, resource sharing, which can range from exchanges clothes to books, is a literacy (Gee, 2012).

### Feeding L1 Oral Language and Reading, Intimately and Passionately

**Taking Charge in Developing Biliteracy.** Mothers proclaimed to be in charge of teaching their children informal and formal oral Spanish. Their efforts to teach their children Spanish literacy were intentional, rich, and resistant. Eliza knew her children would learn only English in school, so she envisioned herself as their Spanish teacher: “*Yo me encargo de la educación en español, en la escuela es en inglés*” [I’m in charge of Spanish education, and the school is in charge of English education.] Similarly, Natalia narrated her experience teaching her son and daughter to speak Spanish,

*Y empezamos a hablarle (a su hijo) español, español, y entonces cuando el entró a la escuela, el inglés lo aprendió rápido. Entonces con mi hija hicimos lo mismo, puro español de chiquita* [We talked to my son in Spanish, Spanish. Thus, when he entered school, he learned English fast. Then we did the same with my daughter. Everything was in Spanish since she was little].

Natalia appeared to understand L1 development helps L2 acquisition (Cummins, 2003). In a Canadian study, principals, teachers and parents realized children's culture and L1 would help them to learn English literacy (Peterson & Heywood, 2007). Indeed, L1 reading ability predicts L2 reading ability (Chuang, Joshi, & Dixon, 2012). Vygotsky explained, "The acquisition of a foreign language differs from the acquisition of the native one precisely because it uses the semantics of the native language as its foundation" (Kozulin, 1986, p. 150-151). Many policy makers believe eliminating emergent bilinguals' L1 will help the youth's academic English. However, according to Vygotsky, children need time to become advanced in their L1: "While learning a foreign language, we use word meanings that are already well developed in the native language, and only translate them; the advanced knowledge of one's own language also plays an important role in the ... foreign one ..." (Kozulin, p. 159).

**Seeing Themselves as Educated and Powerful.** The mothers perceived themselves as knowledgeable and powerful, an important NLS concept related to equity and ideology (Luke, 2005). For instance, Clara felt authoritative in teaching her children a formal Spanish, or the Spanish that they would see in the books and newspapers:

*Traté de enseñarles lo más que pude mi idioma para que lo entendieran bien pero también traté de enseñarles un lenguaje más desarrollado para que no se estancaran en el lenguaje común...un lenguaje callejero que usa mucha gente que no tiene estudios. Por ejemplo, mucha gente utiliza la palabra "los biles" entonces cuando mi hija me dijo: "oh, escuché esa palabra" y yo le dije "pues esa no es una palabra y pienso que no es correcto que la uses". Quise que ellas aprendieran un lenguaje más correcto, pero es difícil pues la mayoría del tiempo ellos están en la escuela y ellos llegan conmigo sólo para hacer tarea.* [I tried to teach my children the Spanish language, so they could move beyond mere understanding. I tried to teach them a more developed language, to prevent their use of a "current" language, or what they hear in the street. For instance, many people use the word "los biles" and when my daughter told me "Oh, I heard that word," I told her "this is not a word and I think it is not correct that you use it." Yet this is difficult because they spend most of their time in school and they are with me only to do their homework].

"Biles" is Spanglish for bills and is commonly used in the border; the correct translation in Spanish for "bills" is *cuentas*. This is a frequent phenomenon along most international borders where different languages are spoken, but perhaps Clara's avoidance of slang was an attempt to sound educated.

The mothers told María they did not believe their children would not learn Spanish in school. Similarly, a parent in Murillo (2012) said RGV schools' attempted "to eradicate the culture and practice of speaking Spanish" (p. 23). Eradication of Spanish goes far beyond RGV schools. After all, the Office of Bilingual Education changed to the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011).

The mothers in the present study also believed they played important roles in scaffolding academic L1 language. In a study of 56 Latino/a kindergarten children and their 56 mothers, 67% of mothers stated they provided their children academic practice and 75% reported speaking

mostly Spanish with their children (Durand, 2010). Thus, children can learn much with parental scaffolding. Vygotsky stated, “The discrepancy between a child’s actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance indicates the zone of his proximal development [ZPD]” (Kozulin, 1986, p. 187).

**Telling Stories to Reinforce Spanish.** Participants described daily L1 oral language practices with their children through storytelling, drama, explicit literacy instruction, and bedtime reading. In NLS traditions, these are literate practices because they are socially situated and meaningful to participants. These practices also served as oral texts (Fernández, 2001). Like the *Gallinita Roja* (Little Red Hen) Susana mentioned reading to her children, the mothers gathered their children under their wings to feed them their heritage language. Susana had a routine when her children returned from school. She would push Spanish back into them through storytelling, “*Al momento que llegan de la escuela, les digo, ‘Les voy a contar un cuentito’ y se sientan en el sofá y quedan atentos ... luego lo quieren actuar*” [When they get home I tell them, ‘I’m going to tell you a story,’ and they sit on the couch and listen ... and then they want to act it out].

Susana’s children dramatized her stories. These storytelling and dramatization practices may assist children in developing emotional and cognitive functions, such as empathy, reflection, imagination, prediction, and visualization (Braxton, 2006). For example, Vygotsky’s research with Russian children demonstrated that youth can function at higher levels when they interact with adults (Kozulin, 1986). Furthermore, participating in family stories helps to build oral language development and reading skills in children (Cline & Necochea, 2003). The intimacy of children sitting close to family members during literacy events can help children to become life-long readers (White-Kaulaity, 2007). Like our participants who created stories in Spanish from incomprehensible English books, White-Kaulaity discussed a similar Native American practice:

An Apache graduate student ... got his passion for books from his grandfather, who could not read but often took Henry on his knee and turned the pages of a book, making up his own stories to go with the pictures. Later Henry learned this technique, and his mother thought Henry was reading (p. 567).

In addition, mother-child interaction while reading books at home has a positive effect on Spanish vocabulary development among bilingual preschool children (Quiroz, Snow, & Zhao, 2010). Parents’ reading storybooks to their young children promoted vocabulary development (Roberts, 2008). Caspe (2009) discovered Latino/a four-year-olds made statistically significant gains in reading if their Latina mothers had a storytelling style of book sharing, e.g., narrating a detailed story instead of asking labelling questions or providing scant details.

**Continuing Diasporic Practices.** When asked how they taught their children to read, the mothers discussed continuing intimate family literacy traditions from their home countries in the diaspora. This intimacy is essential in helping youth to internalize and appreciate their L1 (Reyes, 2011). Laura related her own childhood experience of extended family members teaching her to read in Mexico, “*Yo también aprendí con mi mamá, y mis tíos. Tuve mucha convivencia familiar, y esa fue la manera que a mí me enseñaron. ... y así yo le enseñé a mi niño*” [I also learned from my mother and my uncles and aunts. I had a lot of family closeness and this was how they taught me. And this how I taught my child]. Second generation L1 maintenance in the diaspora is more likely through L1 reading and writing (Bartolomé, 2011). Also, the extended family members’ close-knit practices were socially situated, and thus were literacies. Having family members teach

her to read was so heart-warming for Laura that she continued the tradition by teaching her children to read.

**Finding Time.** One mother, Eliza, worked outside of the home and struggled to find time to teach her children L1 reading. For instance, because Eliza was working full-time, she had to teach Spanish during her children's vacations, on weekends, and in the evenings:

*Pues lo hago en las vacaciones, y cuando me queda un poco de tiempo, pues mi horario es de 8-6 que trabajo, y ya me pongo un rato en la cama a ayudarlos. Me enfoqué muchísimo y en las vacaciones también a que aprendieran a leer en español [I do it, teach my children, during vacations and when I have time, because my work schedule is from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. I help them when we are in bed. I intensively focused during the vacations to teach them how to read in Spanish].*

It was obvious Eliza was impassioned to teach her children L1 reading because she did so almost in every free moment. Also, bringing the mother tongue and reading to bed demonstrates the intimate role both had in Eliza's mind, heart, and lips.

Other examples of how mothers devoted time to their children's literacy and education were through Kathy's participant observation in *Oeste's* tutorial program. Three of the six participating mothers helped their children with homework almost daily. Although the homework was in English, Kathy observed that the mothers used their schemata to determine the tasks. One mother said she looked at lines and spaces between questions to provide answers on worksheets and that she used page numbers on her child's assignment description from the teacher to ensure her child completed all tasks. Tutorial staff confirmed this practice, which was amazing because the participating mothers said they could not read in English. Additionally, all six mothers attended a college and financial aid information session in Spanish as part of the program, even though their children were not close to graduating college, which demonstrated their support of their children's education. Last, Kathy observed three of the mother participants reading the tutorial agency's books in Spanish to their children; these books were in Spanish.

These examples demonstrated that the parents were intimately and passionately involved in their children's literacy and educational development. According to Durand and Perez (2013), many myths surround Latino/a parental involvement in their children's education. However, from their interviews with Latino/a parents (10 mothers and two fathers), the Latino/a parents believed that spending time with their children and teaching them was central to their roles. "... These parents cast themselves as the most central figures in their child's lives; put another way, they considered themselves as the true purveyors of the *educación* values ..." (p. 62).

Durand and Perez (2013) posited that parent participants in their study, with little or no formal education, might appear more comfortable helping their children academically because the early-grade schoolwork was more manageable and because teachers provided explicit instructions and training on how to help the children. However, no participant in our study mentioned receiving direct instruction or training from teachers.

### **Imaginative Reading Practices**

**Inventing Stories from English Print.** The children's English books helped the mothers learn L2 reading. Silvia said, "*Llevaban varios libros [en inglés]. De hecho aproveche para practicar mi inglés entonces yo se los leía*" [They were bringing various books. In fact, I took advantage to practice my English]. Also, we learn to read by reading connected text (Smith, 2006).

Some mothers reported reading books written in English to their children. Susana explained how she used imagination and illustrations to create stories in Spanish,

*Los libros que están en inglés yo se los explico en español. Solamente explico las imágenes ... Y entiendo sólo algunas palabras. Yo empezaba a decir algo que yo creía, les inventaba. Y ellos se lo creían, aunque estuviera en inglés [I explain in Spanish based on English books. I only discuss the images...I understand only few words. I began uttering what I believed. I invented. And they believed it, even if the texts were in English].*

Eliza shared a similar practice, but felt she was being dishonest, as if she could not embellish:

*Ellos a veces me dicen, “Léelo, mamá,” y yo les digo, “No, yo no te lo puedo leer (en inglés)... Es que yo no puedo decirte una cosa que no dice allí ... Yo puedo decirte una historia guiándome en los dibujos” [Sometimes my children insist, “Mom, read!” I tell them, “No, I cannot read (in English)...I cannot tell you something that it does not say...I can tell you a story based on the pictures”].*

In other sign or communication systems, dancers, musicians, and actors embellish to add their signature touches. This practice appears unacceptable to some in reading because they may not believe reading involves interpretation (Harste, 2013). According to Rosenblatt (1978), “The reader has tended to remain in shadow, taken for granted, to all intents and purposes invisible” (p. 1). Making up stories based on pictures demonstrated our mother participants’ resourceful and literate practice related to linguistic FOK (Smith, 2002) and NLS (Barton, 2007).

The syntactic (grammar), grapho-phonetic (letter-sound), semantic (meaning), and pragmatic (context and schemata) cueing systems guide reading as a sense-making process (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005), but semantic and pragmatic cues may allow for imaginative storytelling. As such, when participants create stories based on illustrations, they use internal clues (the pictures and their sequence in a story) and external clues (background knowledge and story grammar/structure) to recreate a meaningful text. After all, reading involves a triadic meaning-making process between the reader, text, and poem or evocation (Rosenblatt, 1978). These images are just as important in a picture-story book as are the words; if not, the Caldecott book award would not exist.

Pretending to read based on illustrations, pragmatics, and story-order does not mean art and language are the same; even three-year-olds know the difference between writing and drawing (Harste, 2013). However, pretending to read does mean people attempt to make sense of books, in whatever language. Thus, as NLS scholars, we question a limited view of reading and we open the aperture to include pretending to read as a literate, imaginative practice. For instance, reading and pretending to read were skills to measure kindergarten readiness (Zill & West, 2001). Furthermore, we posit that making up a story based on illustrations requires more complex thinking processes than merely reading verbatim words on a page. This is because language and art are “representational” (Kozulin, 1986, p. 73) and texts can be drawings (Fernández, 2001). In addition, “thought must pass through meanings and only then through words” (Kozulin, p. 252).

### **Teaching Writing in Spanish**

**Scaffolding Instruction.** Mothers made clear they were in charge of teaching their children how to write in Spanish and they appeared to have effective writing pedagogy in Spanish. As

various authors have demonstrated, informal instruction and guidance from parents on how to write in Spanish helps in maintaining the L1 and developing biliteracy (e.g., Reyes, 2011). One of our participating mothers, Natalia, taught her son how to write by providing support tailored to a child's needs. Natalia started with a few words, so her son would not be overwhelmed. This scaffolded teaching is an important aspect of sociocultural pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978). Natalia explained the way she taught her son to write in Spanish:

*Y al niño estuve tratando de que aprenda a rayar [sic] el español. No más le digo, "Ponme esto o lo otro" no más así. No más así, unas tres o cuatro palabritas. Para que él vaya entendiendo, pues muchas cosas él no sabe rayarlas [sic] en español [When my son was learning to write in Spanish, I was only telling him, "Write this, or write that." Nothing more than three or four words, so he could understand. This is because he does not know much writing in Spanish].*

Natalia continued, "*Fui yo la que le enseñé a escribir en español*" [It was I who taught him how to write in Spanish]. As with the inadequate L1 reading instruction in school, mothers compensated for inadequate L1 writing instruction. Clara said, "*Lo están perdiendo (al español), pues en la escuela solo lo rayan [sic] en inglés, entonces el español casi no lo rayan [sic]*" [They are losing it because in school they write only in English. Thus, they are losing their Spanish].

Participants started by sounding out the alphabet and they scaffolded instruction until their children were able to write words. One mother explained how she taught her son, "*Desde chiquito mi hijo puede escribir. Yo le digo, 'Escribe mamá, pon la /m/, /a/'... Deletreando, si lo puede escribir ... porque yo le enseñé primero las cinco vocales y luego todo el abecedario en español y hasta que escriben las palabras*" [My son could write since he was little. I told him to write "mother" and I sounded it out... He can now write because I taught him the five vowels first, then the entire Spanish alphabet, and now he is able to write words]. This subskills approach focuses on the grapho-phonetic cueing system, which may work better in Spanish than in English because many English words are not spelled the way they sound (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). Also, knowledge of the five vowels in Spanish and how to teach them demonstrates the mother knew an important Spanish literacy concept.

**Using Multiple Modalities to Teach Writing.** Natalia understood that reading books in Spanish with her daughter helped her daughter's writing skills, "*Ella ya reconoce las letras, pues cuando era mas chica y le leía se las iba mostrando*" [She knows the letters because when she was little I was pointing them to her]. Like Natalia, another mother (Luisa) connected oral language, letters, and writing. When asked how she taught her children to write in Spanish, Luisa said, "*Escuchando como se pronuncian las palabras y escribiendo palabras y hablándolas*" [Listening how to pronounce the words and writing words and saying them]. Luisa reinforced the importance of Spanish, as a phonetic language, in literacy acquisition and was using language skills, modalities, and oral and written language.

The mothers' intuitive ways to teach Spanish writing using multiple modalities help Latino/a English language learners to make meaning of a particular topic, in particular those striving readers. This array of modalities may include a combination of visual, verbal, and print cues (Rubinstein-Ávila, 2006).

**Writing for Authentic Purposes and Audiences.** Mothers also had their children write letters in Spanish to family members or school teachers. For instance, Clara used the following

strategy, “Yo les digo que se pongan a escribir y se ponen a hacer cartitas para mí. Y dicen “Mami, te quiero mucho” y luego escriben y escriben. Y lo hacen en español” [I tell my children to write and they write short letters to me; they write: “Mommy, I love you very much,” and then they write and write]. Another mother, Natalia, walked from the living room couch to the kitchen refrigerator and returned to show María a note on lined notebook paper with drawings. Natalia said it was a love letter in Spanish that her child wrote to her. Similarly, Eliza shared with María a binder with a collection of her daughter’s work, in Spanish, that she did at home since she was in kindergarten. (Eliza’s daughter was in second grade during data gathering.) Eliza’s collection included short stories with drawings in the form of booklets. Parents’ authentic L1 writing with their children and saving their children’s L1 writing samples can build youth’s positive attitudes towards their heritage language and can promote positive ethnic identity (Martínez-Roldán & Malave, 2004).

**The Push-pull of Supporting Older Children’s Spanish.** Efforts to teach Spanish at home continued even when participants’ children advanced in grade levels. Mothers with older children persisted helping the latter who took Spanish as an academic course in middle or high school. For example, Rosa narrated the following,

*Me han llegado con tarea que por ejemplo quieren diez palabras con la letra “h” (en español), o así, y entonces yo les digo las palabras. Pero el que está en sexto grado me trae una tarea en español y cuando les digo las palabras a veces no las entiende y ahí se las explico que quiere decir. Por ejemplo “higo” y no sabe lo que es. Y se confunde con “hielo” y yo le explico que no, que es una fruta. Y otro día tenía que hacer oraciones con las palabras, pero se confunde y por ejemplo yo le digo “el niño juega con la pelota” pero en vez de “jugar” pone “play” [My children bring homework for their Spanish class. For instance, they have to write 10 words with the letter “h” and I tell them those words. However, my son, who is in sixth grade, sometimes does not understand the words, and I have to explain the meaning. For example, he confuses *higo* [fig] with *hielo* [ice] and I explain that fig is a fruit. The other day he had to make sentences with the vocabulary words, but he was confused. When I said, “The boy plays with the ball.” Instead of *jugar* (for his Spanish course), he wrote “play”].*

The Spanish difficulties of Rosa’s sixth grade son might give one the impression Rosa was inconsistent in her efforts to teach her son Spanish. However, this is an example of the push-pull of parent efforts and school pressures. The mothers were sincere and diligent in trying to teach their young children Spanish, but the children may forget much of what their mothers taught them because local public schools focus so much on high-stakes testing (Bussert-Webb, 2009) and English (Díaz, 2011). Parents may not continue to emphasize Spanish when the youth get older because the children try to succeed in school and assimilate into the U.S. culture (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Also, some local students have bought into the myth of English acquisition as their savior. In fact, one youth said his peer was dumb because the latter read books in Spanish (Díaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013).

State and U.S. curricular and language policies baffle us. We do not understand the logic of stripping children of their L1 in primary schools, but then requiring foreign language classes for older children. However, middle-school children, such as Rosa’s son, are required to take a foreign language in many U.S. schools. It is as if the foreign language requirements in secondary schools

are superficial. Instead, we should integrate language instruction (e.g., Spanish and other languages) back into language arts classes (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner, 1997).

### **Brokering Practices**

When participants' children knew enough English, they used their L1 and L2 FOK to translate English books into Spanish for their mothers. Silvia discussed how her children taught her L2 reading, "*Cuando mis hijos crecieron me leían a mí (en inglés) y luego me explicaban lo que yo no entendía (en español)*" [When my children got older they read to me (in English) and explained what I did not understand (in Spanish)]. Similarly, Ana tapped into her Spanish knowledge and her older bilingual son's English to teach numeracy and literacy. When asked how she taught her children to read and write in Spanish, she stated that since she knew little English she would ask her older son for assistance when she was providing instruction to her younger child. She reinforced the numbers and letters in Spanish and once her younger son understood, her older child would teach the same concepts in English to his younger brother.

Often times, we think of literacy resources as print and non-print materials. However, children offer important literacy resources in brokering, or children translating into a second language for parents (Orellana, 2009). Mothers learning from their children relates to sociocultural theory because teaching is two-way; children learn from each other and their parents and vice-versa. This language brokering can help the youth's self-esteem and to construct meaning during literacy practices (Baird, Kibler, & Palacios, 2015).

### **Limitations**

Data collection presented several limitations. For example, we did not observe the mothers-children interactions during literacy practices, which may have yielded richer data. Next, we conducted only one interview per participant in the *Este* neighborhood and we did not ask mothers' educational level. Knowing mothers' educational level might have strengthened the study by providing a deeper context. Furthermore, the interviews and surveys were self-reports and mothers may have said or written things because they wanted to please us because we introduced ourselves as education professors. At the same time, participants may have withheld information because we did not build enough rapport with some of them.

Another limitation was the small number of participants who completed the surveys (six). More participation in the surveys could have provided additional data to confirm or disconfirm the literacy practices trends observed in the surveyed sample. Due to the small size of the sample, we do not intend to generalize our findings to all recent-immigrant Latino families. Including a comment section at the end of the surveys and having participants write language experience essays could have provided richer data. Finally, although all 14 participating mothers were recent-immigrant Latinas and had a low-income status, we did not interview participants from the *Este* neighborhood and we did not survey those from the *Oeste* neighborhood.

### **Conclusions**

Several researchers have documented inadequate L1 school resources and subtractive language education policies for linguistically and culturally diverse children (García & DeNicolo, 2016; Valenzuela, 2010). Despite obstacles such as these, many of our Latina participants taught their

children how to read and write in Spanish. Other Latino/a parents taught Spanish reading to their children, despite school pressure to learn English only (Reyes, 2011). Mothers in the present study used their linguistic FOK (Smith, 2002) and created quality engagements to teach their children Spanish. These experiences are essential for children, who realize literacy support from their mothers (Klauda & Wigfield, 2012). From a Vygotskian perspective (Kozulin, 1986) the mothers expressed openness to learn from their children. They realized their children could be language brokers who could teach the mothers and family members L2 reading (Orellana, 2009).

Authentic print, electronic texts, visuals, and storytelling can also teach people how to read and to love reading (Smith, 2006). This is because we use all of the cueing systems, e.g., semantic, grapho-phonetic, syntactic, and pragmatic to make meaning (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005). As NLS scholars, we recognize these types of resources can help children to read and write (Heath, 1983). The teachers in Heath's study could not reach and teach low-income students until they realized the non-traditional texts their pupils used were important to the children's literacy development. After this, Heath's participants began to incorporate these texts into their classroom literacy events and practices.

Latino parents have high expectations for their children and make huge efforts to help them succeed academically (Murillo, 2012). Their parenting strategies include teaching children to get along with others and to be respectful (Bussert-Webb, Díaz, & Yanez, 2017). These socialization skills are essential in school and life (Janus & Offord, 2007). Based on her literacy study of low-income Latino families, Caspe (2009) argued, "families are foundational for their young children's development, regardless of their culture, economic status, or education levels" (p. 321).

Arzubiaga, Rueda and Monzo (2002) critiqued a deficit perspective related to parents' "inability to provide a home socialization process" (p. 232). Latino parents reported that some educators devalued the parents' experiences and cultural beliefs (Hill & Torres, 2010), particularly parents who struggled with English (Murillo, 2012). Thus, teachers who assign English homework with little success may believe foreign-born Latino/a parents are uninvolved academically (Hill, 2009). This erroneous belief exists among some RGV Latino/a teachers. In a RGV study, Hernández (2003) found most teachers believed low-income Latino/a parents of their students were disinterested academically, but most parents believed the opposite. Some teachers may not realize the rich literacy practices and events that take place in homes, perhaps due to assumptions about culturally diverse families of poverty (Heath, 1983; Moll, 2015). Durand and Perez (2013) found the opposite of uninvolved parents. Every parent "provided direct instructional support with homework and engaged in school-based activities with children that involved reading, writing, crafts, games, and counting" (p. 62).

Considering mothers' roles in their children's L1 literacy skills, teachers should incorporate resource-based pedagogy (Moll, 2015), which values to prevent school and home dichotomies. Non-dominant students make progress in school when teachers incorporate their home and community literacy practices (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005), including storytelling. This is preferred to imposing "question-and-answer test-like items" (Caspe, 2009, p. 321), which may present a stumbling block to Spanish-dominant Latino children. Thus, we recommend programs that empower Latino parents to teach their children their mother tongue, instead of family literacy programs that focus on parents' L2 development (Peterson & Heywood, 2007). These programs should consider minority families' challenges in navigating the dominant "culture of power"

(Delpit, 2006, p. 24). Our recommendations relate to the cultural mismatch between schools and non-dominant learners and families (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Last, we have much to learn from the mothers' imaginative strategies. Albert Einstein (1931) stated, "Imagination is more important than knowledge" (p. 97). Imagination, like language and literacy, may be a tool to resist some policymakers' hegemonic (controlling) language and education policies (White-Kaulaity, 2007). Heath (1983) and González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) led NLS and FOK researchers to reexamine home contexts in which literacy practices were vastly different from those valued and rewarded at school. After all, realizing differences as strengths takes imagination and affirmation of non-dominant perspectives. Highlighting the language and literacy practices of Latino/a parents can help us to imagine a brighter future in the Latino education crisis (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

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**Más allá de poly, multi, trans, pluri, bi:  
¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos deltranslingüismo<sup>5</sup>?**

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<sup>5</sup> Este artículo está escrito utilizando las prácticas lingüísticas de los autores especialmente tomando en cuenta que hay una desproporción de textos académicos en inglés que irónicamente disertan sobre prácticas translingüísticas. Paraphrasing Flores & Garcia (2013), “it’s one thing for a monolingual writer to encourage other authors to take risks, and quite another for an writer to model what taking these risks might look like”. <sup>2</sup> Término usado por Garcia (2012) en español.

## Resumen

El término translingüismo se ha convertido en el objeto de estudio de boga dentro del campo de la educación bilingüe. Una exploración profunda muestra que este término ha sido conceptualizado de manera parecida, pero bajo diferentes nombres dentro de los campos de educación, sociolingüística, lingüística aplicada, entre otros. El propósito de este artículo es de examinar y yuxtaponer estas conceptualizaciones, describir aportes directos para el aprendizaje y enseñanza dentro del campo de la educación y finalmente discutir la necesidad de un cambio ideológico que abarque la complejidad de las prácticas lingüísticas tradicionales e históricamente marginalizadas en los Estados Unidos.

*Keywords:* Latinos, multilingualism, teacher education

## Introducción

Desde su acuñación en galés (Williams, 1996) y especialmente desde la extensión de su uso en Gran Bretaña (Baker, 2001) y los Estados Unidos (García, 2009), el término translanguaging o translingüismo<sup>2</sup> se ha convertido en el objeto de estudio de boga dentro del campo de la educación bilingüe. Sin embargo, una exploración profunda de la vasta literatura sobre el bilingüismo/multilingüismo, incluyendo el estudio de alternancia de códigos y préstamos muestra ampliamente que el translanguaging ha sido conceptualizado de manera parecida, pero bajo diferentes nombres dentro de los campos de educación, sociolingüística, lingüística aplicada, entre otros. Términos como metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), polylinguaging (Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen & Møller 2011), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008), codemeshing (Canagarajah, 2006; 2011), translingual practices (Liu, 1995), transidiomatic practices (Jacquemet, 2005) (multilanguaging (Nguyen, 2012), prácticas de alfabetismo híbridas (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999), transglossia (García, 2013; 2014), continua of biliteracy (Hornberger, 2003), language sharing (Paris, 2009), and dynamic bilingualism (García, & Kleifgen, 2010) han sido utilizados para describir y examinar las múltiples prácticas de lenguaje como identificación cultural-lingüística. Estos términos tienen como objetivo desafiar la existencia de una norma de monolingüismo que predomina en la mayoría de la literatura anterior, la cual conceptualiza al bilingüismo como dos idiomas individuales y separados. El propósito de este artículo es de examinar y yuxtaponer estas conceptualizaciones, describir aportes directos para el aprendizaje y enseñanza dentro del campo de la educación y finalmente discutir la necesidad de un cambio ideológico que abarque la complejidad de las prácticas lingüísticas tradicionales e históricamente marginalizadas en los Estados Unidos más allá de un simple cambio de término. En otras palabras, lo que deseamos es tener una discusión franca sobre el significado de translanguaging tanto para los educadores de docentes como para los/las maestro/as que trabajan en programas bilingües, ya sea doble inmersión o programas más tradicionales como educación bilingüe transicional o de mantenimiento.

## Sobre el origen de educación bilingüe estadounidense

Con el establecimiento del Acta de Educación Bilingüe en 1968 y los subsecuentes casos judiciales tales como Lau versus Nichols y Castañeda versus Pickard—los cuales buscaban procurar servicios especiales para los niños bilingües—se propuso una educación bilingüe desde un enfoque compensatorio hacia el educando. Por su procedencia inmigrante y con experiencias culturales, étnicas y lingüísticas ajenas al contexto estadounidense, los estudiantes bilingües fueron parte de una especie de proyecto neocolonial centrado en métodos asimilacionistas, sustractivos y monoglósicos al considerarlos perennemente deficientes, hasta el extremo de la sobrerrepresentación de estudiantes bilingües de procedencia México-americana en programas de educación especial. Al fondo de este movimiento estuvo la idea prejuiciosa de que los niños etiquetados como LEP o de “dominio limitado de inglés” sufrían de una baja capacidad intelectual, no solamente debido a su falta de dominio del lenguaje, sino también por pertenecer a una raza de color vinculado a culturas indígenas. Este enfoque de deficiencia sigue siendo perpetuado dentro de programas bilingües de naturaleza transicional, en las cuales se utilizan las prácticas lingüísticas de los estudiantes en la clase exclusivamente como puentes para alcanzar el objetivo de la adquisición del inglés como idioma dominante. Este modelo de educación bilingüe está presente dentro de los programas ESL pull-out, sheltered instruction y los programas de mantenimiento de la lengua materna con salida temprana.

Con el advenimiento de una perspectiva aditiva concerniente a la educación bilingüe (Ruiz, 1984) se crearon nuevos modelos que ofrecen un crecimiento simétrico de la lengua materna y el idioma inglés. Dentro de este modelo aditivo podemos encontrar los programas duales, programas de una vía y los programas de doble inmersión. Sin embargo, estos programas podrían seguir mostrando patrones compatibles con un discurso monoglósico, es decir, un discurso en donde la norma de monolingüismo predomina. Dentro de los tres programas mencionados anteriormente, se plantean políticas lingüísticas enfocadas al desarrollo de un monolingüismo doble (Flores & Schissel, 2014) con el fin de desarrollar competencia de dos idiomas por separado para alcanzar un bilingüismo balanceado. La separación de los idiomas a desarrollar—ya sea por materias, por porcentaje de tiempo y/o por cohorte—no considera las prácticas lingüísticas flexibles y dinámicas que no se adhieren a los cánones lingüísticos del español o el inglés, sino que convergen de manera natural y espontánea dentro de contextos sociales. Lamentablemente, estas prácticas—llamadas popularmente Spanglish, Pocho, Tex-Mex (Chappell & Faltis, 2007; Sayer, 2013)—son marginalizadas y rechazadas acentuando una discriminación raciolingüista (Flores & Rosa, 2015) hacia sus hablantes. Para muchos hispanohablantes, el Spanglish se percibe como una forma bastardizada del español puro, como una olla podrida llena de frases y palabras que no pertenecen al verdadero español. Verlo así resulta de la suposición que existe solo un español verdadero, cuyos parámetros no permiten que las personas bilingües mezclen elementos (palabras, sonidos, y gramática) para producir expresiones consideradas ‘ilegítimas,’ tales como “Mamá, púshame en el columpio” y “Por qué no me llamas pa’ tras” ni mezclas idiomáticas como “Creo que she’s not going to la fiesta”. La idea de que bilingües Latinxs alternan rápidamente entre el inglés y el español se ha retratado como abominable (Stravans, 2004). Para nosotros, lo que es abominable es la idea de que la capacidad dinámica de alternar entre dos lenguas para interactuar, interpretar, y mostrar conocimiento sigue siendo mal interpretada en la literatura sobre la educación bilingüe.

Precisamente son estas prácticas estigmatizadas utilizadas por poblaciones minorizadas han sido el foco de estudio de muchos investigadores que los examinan tanto desde un punto de vista pedagógico como desde su análisis como producción cultural. Este enfoque contrastante al

alcance monoglósico ha sido llamado de diferentes maneras, aunque el término con más auge en los últimos años ha sido el translingüismo o translanguaging.

### **El translingüismo**

El translanguaging, como lo conceptualiza Williams (1996) desde el punto pedagógico, se refiere a la capacidad de fluidez multilingüe del estudiante para una construcción de significados efectiva y su desarrollo cognitivo y lingüístico. Williams desarrolló un sistema de enseñanza en donde la el/la maestro/a y los estudiantes usan dos lenguas para tener acceso y a participar en la construcción de conocimiento escolar. El sistema de translanguaging que propuso Williams refleja el enfoque creado por Jacobson llamado el New Concurrent Approach (Faltis 1989).

Así como argumentó Jacobson en su modelo NCA que fue desarrollado en Texas, Baker (2001) expandió la conceptualización de Williams al precisar que el translanguaging extiende un puente que enlaza la ecología lingüística del hogar facilitando así la integración e identificación con la cultura escolar. Por otro lado, García (2009, 2012, 2014) tiene como partida al individuo multilingüe y sus prácticas lingüísticas para poder examinar su proceso de auto-construcción y co-construcción dentro de su comunidad lingüística y cultural. García teoriza el lenguaje como un sistema unitario, lejos de los parámetros convencionales que conocemos como idiomas y que no pueden ser contenidas por medio de políticas lingüísticas compartimentalizadoras. A diferencia de Jacobson, Williams y Baker, García sostiene que el translanguaging va más allá que la alternancia de códigos, o codeswitching, el andamiaje lingüístico/cognoscitivo y/o la traducción, aunque admite que estas prácticas se ubican bajo el marco del translanguaging (véase Goenaga Ruíz de Zuazu, 2016).

Como se ha mencionado con anterioridad, aunque el translanguaging se ha convertido en una suerte de buzzword dentro del estudio del multi(bi)lingüismo; este término ha tenido varios predecesores que, de alguna manera u otra, han explicado este fenómeno. Liu (1995) utiliza el neologismo ‘translingual practice’ para no solo describir el contacto/choque entre nuevas palabras, significados, discursos y modos de representación sino que estas nuevas creaciones que resultan de esta colisión tienen como objetivo reclamar legitimidad. De la misma manera, el uso del translanguaging, especialmente en contextos pedagógicos, tiene como objetivos legitimar tanto a estas prácticas históricamente estigmatizadas como a sus hablantes (Duran & Palmer, 2014; Velazco & Garcia, 2014; Palmer, Martinez, Mateus & Henderson, 2014); Garcia, Flores & Woodley, 2012, Sayer, 2013).

### **Otros términos para el bilingüismo dinámico**

Otro ejemplo es el de Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejeda (1999), quienes acuñaron el término ‘prácticas lingüísticas híbridas.’ Este, al igual que el translanguaging, se extiende más allá de la alternación de dos o más lenguajes, sino que es un “systematic, strategic, affiliative, and sense-making process among those who share the code, as they strive to achieve mutual understanding” (Gutiérrez, et al p. 88). Como se puede observar, las semejanzas no se detienen en la simple mezcla de idiomas, sino que es un signo de afiliación e identificación dentro de una comunidad con similares dotes lingüísticas para una construcción de significados mutua. Asimismo, Hornberger (2003; 2004) describe las prácticas lingüísticas de individuos multilingües

dentro de una diversa línea continua de doble alfabetización. Hornberger se aleja de dicotomización entre inglés y español para dar paso a una examinación de los diversos recursos lingüísticos del individuo bi-alfabeto, cuyo desarrollo depende de distintos factores, tales como niveles de desarrollo, contenidos, contextos y medios de aprendizaje. Tal como el *translanguaging*, el modelo del continuo de doble alfabetización de Hornberger concibe el bilingüismo fuera del discurso doble monolingüe y reclama estas prácticas como un derecho cultural y lingüístico para las poblaciones minorizadas (2014). Garcia, Bartlett & Kleifman (2007) expande el modelo de Hornberger sosteniendo que el término ‘pluri-alfabetismo’ abarca más precisamente la naturaleza híbrida de las prácticas lingüísticas de los individuos multilingües. Sin embargo, críticos como Zuberi (2001), insisten que el sobre uso del vocablo “híbrido” para describir estas prácticas lingüísticas rigidiza su complejidad y desarrolla una nueva forma de esencialismo.

Por otro lado, *code-meshing* (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011a, 2011b) se asemeja al *translanguaging* al abarcar las estrategias y saberes del individuo multilingüe y la mezcla del inglés mundial (WE en sus siglas en inglés) y el metropolitano (ME) para la construcción de significados en la escritura. Canagarajah cita la literatura hecha por Anzaldúa (1987) como ejemplo de esta práctica en la escritura que se distingue de lo que llama “elite bilingualism” (2006, p. 598) apartándose así del paradigma monoglósico para centrarse en el multidialectismo. *Codemeshing* entonces descentra al inglés como lengua oficial de la educación superior para dar cabida no solo a las variantes vernaculares, sino que también “accommodates the possibility of mixing communicative modes and diverse symbol systems” (2011a, p. 612) con el fin de incluir a otros tipos de textos como medios de comunicación. Por esta razón, Canagarajah advierte que aunque el *codemeshing* y el *translanguaging* coinciden en un sistema lingüístico unitario, el primero además acoge otros medios de comunicación y significación—símbolos, imágenes, íconos, elementos paralingüísticos—como parte del repertorio lingüístico del individuo multilingüe. El autor incluso crea una distinción del uso del *translanguaging* como “the general communicative competence of multilinguals” (p. 403) y *codemeshing* para describir “the realization of *translanguaging* in texts.” (p. 403). Cabe resaltar que a pesar de esta última distinción, Velasco y García (2014) y García, et al (2012) han explorado las prácticas *translingüistas* en la producción escrita de estudiantes de nivel tanto elemental como con estudiantes en preparatoria.

Otros neologismos semejantes al *translanguaging* son ‘*polylingual languaging*’ (Jørgensen, 2008) o ‘*polylanguaging*’ (Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen & Møller, 2011). Al igual que Garcia (2009), Jørgensen reconoce que los idiomas son construcciones sociales y que las prácticas multilingües no son simplemente estrategias, sino que se extienden fuera del salón de clase para la auto-construcción del individuo multilingüe. No obstante, según Oysuji & Pennycook (2010) sostienen que Jørgensen aún mantiene un punto de vista monoglósico al argüir que los ‘*polylingual languagers*’ (Jørgensen, 2008, p. 174) logran alcanzar competencia lingüística mediante el desarrollo separado de idiomas. De esta manera Oysuji & Pennycook (2010) mantienen que *polylanguaging* no encapsula, por ejemplo, la necesidad de “transgress and reconstitute cultural and linguistic borders” (p. 244) y ofrecen el término ‘*metrolingualism*’ para describir cómo el individuo usa prácticas lingüísticas—no idiomas—para negociar significados y construir identidades salientes y sus mundos. Asimismo, Oysuji & Pennycook rechazan términos que no encapsulan la fluidez, diversidad y contradicciones de estas prácticas lingüísticas, tales como *multilingualism* y *multiculturalism*. En contraste, Nguyen (2012) reclama el prefijo ‘multi’ para denotar pluralidad y rechaza el ‘*lingualism*,’ que, en su opinión refleja un estado de finalidad y perfección en vez sugerir un proceso en construcción. Para este efecto, Nguyen introduce el término ‘*multilanguaging*’ para iluminar el dinamismo del uso del lenguaje. Por otro lado, Paris

(2009) simplemente utiliza el término ‘language sharing’ y lo define como el lenguaje de pertenencia e invitación como parte de su legitimidad entre estudiantes hablantes del vernacular afro-americano. Además, Paris resalta la flexibilidad de los hablantes resaltando la destreza lingüística que poseen para acomodar sus identidades y lenguaje de acuerdo al contexto en que se encuentran. Sin embargo, Paris es pronto a enfatizar que a pesar que el language sharing unifica de cierta manera a sus hablantes se deben tomar en cuenta cuestiones de apropiación cultural, cambios demográficos y acceso a recursos que afectan a las comunidades de diferentes identidades étnicas que comparten prácticas lingüísticas comunes. Cabe resaltar que a la par de translanguaging, García en conjunto con otros intelectuales crearon neologismos contemporáneos al translingüismo. Un ejemplo de ello es la acuñación del término transglossia (2013; 2014) definido como “the fluid, yet stable, language practices of bilingual and multilingual societies that question traditional descriptions built on national ideologies” (2014, p. 108) desde un punto de vista decolonial. En otras palabras, transglossia explora la noción del lenguaje concebida desde la subalternidad, rechazando construcciones impuestas sistemáticamente desde la oficialidad. Finalmente, ‘dynamic bilingualism’ (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Flores & Schissel, 2014) se introduce como una forma alternativa para describir el desarrollo de las prácticas lingüísticas características de determinada comunidad multilingüe; definición semejante a las expuestas con anterioridad.

El estudio del translanguaging, como se puede observar, responde a la necesidad de explorar las prácticas lingüísticas desde un enfoque que escapa a las tradicionales categorías fijas e inflexibles y que se encuentran desconectadas de los procesos socioculturales de formación de identidad tanto en instituciones educativas como dentro de círculos sociales (García & Leiva, 2014). Esa búsqueda es compartida por los varios intelectuales mencionados anteriormente, quienes intentaron—y posiblemente seguirán intentando—abarcar en un solo término este concepto intrincado de la manera más precisa. Como es de esperarse, los términos explorados en este artículo se superponen en la mayoría de los casos, y en algunas oportunidades se proponen nuevos términos como respuesta a la insuficiencia de un término anterior para extenderse a diferentes terrenos y/o marcar diferencias contextuales.

Es importante aclarar que los autores de este artículo no pretenden presentar un neologismo más preciso sino cuestionar el objetivo del uso de nuevos términos sin una examinación de las implicaciones del cambio de paradigma conlleva, especialmente en el campo de la educación de estudiantes cuyas prácticas lingüísticas se han marginalizado históricamente en el contexto estadounidense. Por ejemplo, si estas prácticas lingüísticas son transgresoras y en busca de legitimidad desde los márgenes, entonces el derecho de nombrarlas recae en sus propios hablantes, como el uso del término ‘Spanglish’ dentro del grupo de estudiantes en un estudio de Martínez (2010), o Chicano language (Anzaldúa, 1987). De la misma manera, el rechazo al paradigma de lenguajes discretos para dar paso a un paradigma donde las prácticas lingüísticas que los individuos multilingües (re)crean diariamente son la norma y no la excepción. Esto implicaría análisis de marcadez lingüística (ej. el uso del ‘so’) o la clasificación de funciones específicas (ej. revoicing, crutching) ya no tendrían cabida en un nuevo paradigma, especialmente cuando la participación en estas prácticas carece de uniformidad ya que “there is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 40).

Otra implicación de este cambio de paradigma está directamente relacionada con el rol del/la maestro/a en el salón multilingüe. La bienvenida de las prácticas lingüísticas diversas en el salón supone el entendimiento de que estas son ya parte del repertorio del estudiante y que el rol del educador/a recae en no solo sacar ventaja de estos recursos para el aprendizaje sino también

resaltarlos explícitamente para su legitimación. Palmer, et al (2014) lista algunas estrategias que los/las maestro/as pueden usar para el desarrollo de la consciencia metalingüística de estudiante.

Entre estas prácticas se encuentran el reconocimiento de cognados, raíces griegas o latinas y momentos de sobreposición de lenguajes, y el modelamiento de estas prácticas por parte del educador como muestra contundente de la legitimidad de dichas prácticas. Sin embargo, algunas de estas estrategias nos recuerdan que las demandas de desarrollar el alfabetismo oficial en inglés a nivel local y global hace difícil el cambio paradigmático. El aceptar y resaltar estos repertorios no deben convertirse en solamente herramientas para desarrollar el alfabetismo oficial y alcanzar éxito académico para competir en mercados globales que requieren competencia oral y escrita en diversos idiomas.

Un nuevo paradigma exige una lucha constante por el respeto a los derechos lingüísticos del educando y del educador multilingüe mediante el desarrollo de una agenda activista del/la maestro/a bilingüe y a la vez proporcionar a los estudiantes bilingües emergentes las herramientas necesarias para acceder y a participar con recursos históricamente negados. El/la maestro/a bilingüe camina sobre una línea muy fina entre legitimizar el repertorio lingüístico del estudiante bilingüe como parte de su identidad cultural y desarrollar un sentido de resistencia y contestación a los mensajes diarios recibidos sobre la hegemonía del inglés whitestream (Urrieta, 2009). Es este cambio paradigmático—lejos de la precisión de los neologismos—lo que debe primar. Es menester que los estudiantes bilingües emergentes tengan oportunidades de usar su lenguaje y todos los repertorios comunicativos correspondientes. También se debe de fomentar el desarrollo de repertorios y discursos lingüísticos flexibles no solo para el éxito académico sino también como afirmación cultural y lingüística basada en la justicia social. Negar esto equivaldría negar la historia de lucha y las trayectorias vividas por mayoría de bilingües emergentes en los Estados Unidos. Tal como lo dice Anzaldúa,

Because, I, am mestiza,  
continually walk out of one culture  
and into another,  
because I am all cultures at the same time,  
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro, me zumba la  
cabeza con lo contradictorio.  
Estoy norteadada por todas las voces que me hablan  
simultáneamente (1987, p. 99)

El vivir en mundos múltiples significa vivir sin fronteras en un mundo lleno de fronteras, ya sean reales, imaginarias, socialmente construidas y/o lingüísticas. Es de suma importancia participar en la lucha de los derechos lingüísticos de los bilingües emergentes Latinxs y hacer hincapié que sus prácticas cultural-lingüísticas deben ser aprovechadas y legitimadas dentro del aprendizaje y

enseñanza en las escuelas y en los centros de preparación de los maestros que los servirán en el futuro.

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**Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs): Actionable Practices**

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## Abstract

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are underrepresented in the professional literature. The purpose of this research brief is to contribute to an emerging line of research by documenting the variable of existing programs which were created specifically to meet the unique needs of the growing SIFE population. The delivery models and actionable practices for SIFEs reported in this paper are a result of a year-long study conducted in three diverse, near-urban school districts. An analysis of the programs and recognition of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their documented impact, benefit, and success for learning were considered. Findings indicated that with strong teacher involvement, district-wide planning, access to quality materials, and a keen understanding of the cultural and economic circumstances of the SIFE population, academic success is achievable. This study adds significantly to the emerging scholarly dialogue noting which factors support successful SIFE programs, while acknowledging the unique cultural and academic needs of SIFEs (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013).

*Keywords:* Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), high-needs population, English Language Learners (ELLs), Mutual Adaptive Learning Paradigm: Teacher Planning Checklist (MALP), service delivery model

## **Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs): Actionable Practices**

In a recent report issued by the Advocates for Children of New York (2010), there is clear recognition that in order to increase overall English language learner (ELL) graduation rates, schools must specifically address the needs of the subpopulations of ELLs such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs). In addition, this report calls for extended graduation timelines for SIFEs. With such distinct demands for policy reform, researchers need to investigate effective interventions and educators must come together to discuss innovative initiatives and research-based practices to improve education for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs) or Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFEs) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). These students are considered a subgroup of English language learners (ELLs) with a unique set of academic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic challenges as newcomers to the United States. The purpose of the research study is to synthesize features of effective instructional approaches, and service delivery models for SIFEs, which may help them to succeed academically. In turn, such effective practices may place them on the track for graduation and bolster their future employment opportunities.

In response to the overarching concern for the increasing number of SIFE students in a large metropolitan area, this study examined three diverse, near-urban school districts with growing SIFE populations. The primary objective of this study was to document diverse existing actionable practices—designed and implemented in response to the growing SIFE population at the secondary level in select school districts—that may be transferable to other contexts and, as such, may significantly impact school districts around the nation. The three focus areas were to (a) recognize program designs which meet the needs of SIFEs, (b) document successful SIFE programs that may be reproduced in comparable educational settings, and (c) make researchbased, actionable recommendations for educational policy.

### **Theoretical Foundations and Background**

According to the United States population progression for 2005-2050, close to one in five Americans will be immigrant in 2050; the Latino population will triple in size reaching close to 30% of the U.S. population (Passell & Cohn, 2008). According to the Census Brief 2009: Language Use and English-Speaking Ability, with a record number of 43%, California had the largest percentage non-English speakers. Next listed were New Mexico (35.8%), Texas (34.3%), New York (29%), Nevada and New Jersey in a tie (28.5%), finally Arizona (27.7%) and Florida (26.6%). These statistics translate to an increasing number of school-aged children who are recognized as English Language Learners (ELLs).

Within the ELL population, there are several subgroups including immigrants who are new arrivals to this country, often referred to as newcomers (Constantino & Lavadenz, 1993). Many of these children are placed in schools based on their school transcripts, or lack thereof, and considered students with interrupted formal education or SIFEs (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). The SIFE population can be found in urban, suburban, and rural districts (Marshall, DeCapua, & Antolini, 2010). SIFEs or SLIFES may have never participated in any type of schooling before coming to the United States or experienced an interruption in education due to “war, civil unrest, migration, or other factors” (Marshall et al., 2010, p. 50).

Although the literature on ELLs is well established and contains sound recommendations, a variety of service delivery models, and comprehensive instructional designs for teaching and

learning (Collier & Thomas, 2002; Cummins, 2001; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), the same research and recommendations are not currently available for SIFEs. Most state departments of education do not officially recognize or have a category for the learning backgrounds of these children. Additionally, there is limited information about how to best educate these students, facilitate their transition to the U.S. school system, design educational programs to meet their unique needs, and enhance their future employment opportunities.

## **Methodology**

This research study had a dual focus to explore (a) service delivery models, and (b) instructional practices designed by selected secondary schools with diverse student populations in response to the needs of students with interrupted formal education (SIFE).

The project focused on teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators who work directly with the SIFEs. The on-site research was conducted by two researchers and included classroom observations as well as in-depth interviews of teachers and administrators working with the SIFE populations. An adapted version of the Mutual Adaptive Learning Paradigm: Teacher Planning Checklist (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011) was used as an observational tool. Classroom materials such as student work samples and lesson plans were collected for a documentary analysis. Additionally, participants were asked to share any pertinent documents, such as meeting minutes, letters to teachers or parents about the program, the school's mission statement, curriculum maps or curriculum guides, or other artifacts that document the district's response to the local educational service delivery models for SIFEs. The two research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What English as a second language service delivery model(s) have been designed and implemented to address the unique needs of SIFE students in select suburban districts?
2. What types of instructional practices are being implemented to support SIFEs' language acquisition, literacy development, academic content attainment, meaningful school participation, and active engagement?

The analysis was conducted at both macro- (institutional) and a micro- (individual) levels. Thus, the research investigation as well as the outcomes of the study were considered from both the broader institutional (school and district) and the narrower, individual perspectives. This dual approach to the research study led to a more robust set of data and more comprehensive conclusions.

## **Data Sources**

The data sources for this study were comprised of (a) surveys, (b) observations, (c) in-depth interviews and, (d) authentic documents subjected to systematic qualitative analysis. In the first phase of the project, the surveys were completed on-line anonymously by both administrators and teaching staff who had previously agreed to participate in the study. The survey contained both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The responses from the 9 administrators represented a 90% participation rate and the response rate from the 12 teachers and 2 teaching assistants was 100%.

In the second stage of the project, the two researchers visited each teacher and conducted on-site observations of the SIFE program in each of the three districts and collected authentic artifacts that were made available for research purposes. The interviews were conducted in middle

school or high school settings with a 100% participation rate. The in-depth interviews were conducted in person or, if needed due to time constraints, by telephone. The questions for the interview were similar to those of the survey in an effort to gain as much empirical data as possible and to triangulate the data sources. Prior to data collection, a pilot study analysis (Babbie, 1973) was used in an effort to fill in “the empirical blanks, noting unexpected developments, and elaborating on them” (p. 213). The questions were piloted and revised based on the critique received from select educators considered experts in working with SIFE populations.

All interviews were digitally or manually recorded, transcribed, and coded using a thematic analysis. The researchers applied a priori coding to the data, according to which “the categories are established prior to the analysis based upon some theory” (Stemler, 2001, para 13). The data coding was accomplished by two researchers and a research assistant to achieve triangulation. The findings were considered from both a macro (institutional) and micro (individual) level. All participants completed release forms and an IRB was granted by the authors’ institution of higher education. No students were directly involved in the study.

## Results

The overall findings indicated that with strong teacher involvement, district-wide planning, access to quality materials, and a keen understanding of the cultural and economic circumstances of the SIFE population, academic success is achievable. There were eight themes that emerged from the analysis of the data in response to the two key research questions (four themes for each question): What English as a second language service delivery model(s) have been designed and implemented to address the unique needs of SIFE students in select suburban districts?

- The SIFE service delivery was most successful when it was implemented district-wide with support from the teachers and administration. The strongest programs observed by the researchers brought the SIFE population to a central location which served as the “hub” of learning. This was a plan that supported newcomers and was flexible enough to respond to the transient nature of the adolescent student with interrupted formal education.
- Teachers benefited from “time” and “space” allocated for collaboration and planning.
- The most effective programs had administrators that took both an interest and an active role in program design, including after-school activities. In these SIFE programs, the students flourished. Similarly, guidance counselors, social workers, bus drivers, psychologists and nurses were seen as direct supporters of these students and met in large group meetings to discuss and plan for students of concern.
- The most effective educational practices considered the students’ abilities upon arriving in the United States. Programs with built-in English support—prior to placing students in classes with standardized testing—kept the SIFEs enrolled without unfair assessment/evaluation practices or pressure. Students were given recognition for attendance and participation without earning failing grades.

What types of instructional practices are being implemented to support SIFEs’ language acquisition, literacy development, academic content attainment, meaningful school participation and active engagement?

- Effective use of teacher-created, differentiated instructional materials led to enhanced academic language development and content attainment (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavin, 2014). These strategies were most meaningful as they helped the students master the array of academic language demands necessary to be a successful student.

- Bilingual support classes with teaching assistants that spoke the native language and worked in small groups showed exceptional success. In fact, the teaching assistants often were found to be the best advocates for the students academically and socially. These relationships often extended to support in terms of balancing work and school. It was in this context that students were able to have extended discussions with turn-and-talk strategies which supported their content learning.
- Scaffolding techniques were systematically integrated; they included (a) visuals (pictures, photos, realia (objects from real life used in classroom instruction), video-clips); (b) graphic supports (graphic organizers, timelines, diagrams, reducing text density); and (c) interaction in English and the L1 (to activate prior knowledge, and to bridge home-, work-, and school-cultures) (Gottlieb, 2006).
- Students' funds of knowledge were valued (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In these instances, SIFEs were recognized as contributors to the school community as documented by the artifacts.

## **Discussion and Scholarly Significance**

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are underrepresented in the professional literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the knowledgebase on program design and organization and best instructional practices that specifically target SIFEs. By triangulating our data sources (surveys, observations, interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis) as well as gathering information from multiple research sites, we collected qualitative and quantitative data related to existing programs in a near-urban region.

Each of the three SIFE programs included in the study was created within the local school districts to meet the unique needs of their growing SIFE population. While State Education guidelines were available and were adhered to, variations of program designs and implementation practices indicated local decision making and direct response to district concerns. Here we will discuss the instructional implications of the eight major themes that emerged from our data analysis (See Table 1).

## **Program Organization and Service Models**

At the institutional (or macro-level), administrators determine how to address the needs of all students, especially those who will not be mainstreamed upon entry. When the school and district leadership agree that SIFEs—as a subgroup of ELLs—are uniquely different from all other at-risk student populations, program design and organization decisions will be based on the set of cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, and academic characteristics of these youngsters (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2013). Existing ESL and other support services can and should be utilized to serve as the foundation of SIFE programs. Yet, recognizing these learners' lack of, or very limited, basic academic experiences coupled with their need for an accelerated, attainable course of study must lead to a most careful placement of these students and purposeful design of their required credit-bearing content courses. Highly qualified teachers who volunteer to teach these youngsters—or are invited to do so based on their track-record with at-risks students—and who receive on-going professional development, peer as well as administrative support are the cornerstone of a SIFE initiative.

Table 1

Major Themes

Macro-Level Findings	Micro-Level Findings
Use of existing ESL and other support services as foundation for SIFE programs	Importance of teacher competence and professional skill set
Careful student placement	Highly individualized, differentiated approach to instruction
On-going professional development for teachers of SIFEs	Comprehensive and consistent assessment practices
Collaborative instructional and leadership practices	Curricular adaptations and accommodations

The involvement of all stakeholders in creating a SIFE program and specifying the service models is beneficial for successful program outcomes. To nurture such high levels of engagement from instructional and non-instructional staff members, administrators, and parents is best achieved through collaborative practices. Collaborative decision-making—rather than top down assignments or lack of specific direction—about program choices and locally determined service delivery options, as well as about the overall curricular goals contribute to the success of the program. The team approach—bringing teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, administrators, and school psychologists together on a regular basis—is strengthened through intentional time allotments for communication about individual students. Additionally, administrative support for teacher collaboration in all phases of the instructional cycle— planning, lesson delivery, assessment, and reflection (Friend & Cook, 2007)—has also been found instrumental in effectively monitoring student progress and meeting program goals.

**Instructional Practices**

When examining classroom practices specially designed for SIFEs, we noted several micro-level factors that were critical to the success of the program. Since the teacher is responsible for implementing the planned curriculum and for creating the most appropriate sequence of instructional tasks, his or her competence and professional skill set regarding working with SIFEs

makes a considerable difference. Effective teachers of SIFEs recognize that they need to take a highly individualized approach to instruction. They need to establish baseline data to be able to build on students' prior knowledge and skills and then provide on-going formative assessments in order to monitor student progress both in the target language and in the content area. They continuously adjust the taught curriculum to make it age-appropriate and relevant to students' life experiences as well as to the demands of the mainstream content curriculum. They engage their students in personally meaningful, highly motivating, scaffolded and differentiated learning activities that contribute not only to students' progression of learning English and academic content, but ultimately, to their desire to stay in school, graduate, enter the workforce successfully, and leave poverty behind.

## **Conclusion**

The program organization, service delivery models, and best practices for SIFEs reported in this paper are a result of a year-long study conducted in three diverse school districts. An analysis of the programs and recognition of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their documented impact, benefit, and success for learning were considered. To this end, this study contributes to the scholarly dialogue as to what macro- and micro-level factors contribute to a successful SIFE program, including program organization and service delivery choices and successful instructional practices.

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