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Editorial Introduction

The Journal of Bilingual Education Research and Instruction is committed to the exchange of educational data, studies, ideas, practices and information with researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in this public forum. It is published once a year and can be accessed at the TABE website homepage, TABE.org/Publications.

In this issue of the Journal, readers are invited to an in-depth examination of research, best practice, and advocacy topics that frame our work as bilingual educators. The first set of articles focus on literacy and biliteracy at school and at home! The lead article, Investigating the Simple View of Reading with Young Spanish-English Emergent Bilingual Children, authored by Dr. Audrey Lucero, is an exploratory study that investigates relations between Spanish and English listening comprehension and English decoding among first and second grade Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual children. The findings highlight the existence of significant relations among salient components of the simple view and confirm some research done with monolingual English speakers and bilingual children. Next, Dr. Maria E. Diaz utilizes a multiple methodology approach to document bilingualism and biliteracy in a South Texas colonia in her article, Pues aquí, en la casa, se aprende el español: Spanish Literacy Development in a Texas Border Colonia.

The next set of articles focus on a variety of interesting topics. Chaehyun Lee investigates how Korean immigrant children (born in Korea) and Korean-American children (born in the U. S.) respond to multicultural Korean children’s literature. The author reports a set of interesting findings. Next, using a qualitative case study approach, Katherine Talati Espinoza and Idalia Nuñez, both doctoral students at UT Austin, examine a cohort of bilingual preservice teacher in their teacher preparation program. They report their findings in their article, Bridging Identify and Practice: Enseñando para hacer justicia, under three thematic categories: defining identify, teacher preparation program, and social justice teaching practices. In Maestras de secundaria y preparatoria, maestros de lenguaje: la importancia de aprender la lengua a través del contenido, Drs. Fernando Rodriguez-Valls and Cristian R. Aquino-Sterling, propose a set of characteristics that teachers in two-way dual language school must possess. In the final manuscript, A Lifetime of Apprenticeship: The role of History and Lived Experiences on One Teacher’s Pathway to Bilingual Education, Dr. Leanne M. Evans shares a case study in which she analyzes the experiences of one teacher as he describes event throughout his life that eventually lead him to becoming a certified bilingual educator. She concludes that findings suggest that such personal stories, examined within a larger social and
political context, illuminate the importance of realizing teacher perspectives beyond the mainstream lens.

The presentation of articles in the *Journal of Bilingual Education Research and Instruction* would not be possible without the dedicated professionals involved with the journal. Special thanks are due to all the members of the Editorial Review Board for their assistance in reviewing submitted manuscripts in a timely manner. Thanks are also due to the Editorial Assistant, Dylan Richards and Jerry Urquiza, Technical Assistant. In addition, this issue would not be possible without the individuals who submitted manuscripts for publication consideration and those who were successful in having their manuscripts accepted for publication—a 31% acceptance rate for this issue. This issue reflects a broad depth of expertise in quantitative, qualitative, theoretical, and pedagogical methodology all focused on enhancing the quality of bilingual education for children in the classroom. Another TABE Journal issue on bilingual education research and practice will appear again in fall 2017 and a special issue on biliteracy is planned. We encourage readers to join the growing number of scholars and practitioners from around the nation who are conducting research on the effectiveness of innovative approaches to teaching and learning for English learners in a wide variety of contexts, documenting the processes and impacts and disseminating their findings with others in this public forum.

Finally, if you attended the 2016 Texas Association for Bilingual Education annual conference in Galveston, Texas, you may have attended the *Information Session on TABE’s Journal of Bilingual Education Research and Instruction* conducted by Editorial Board members. The next presentation will be in Edinburg, Texas. Please check the conference program for date/time and place. Members of the editorial team will be there to answer questions about the submission and review process. We would also like to invite interested scholars and educators to join our editorial advisory board. As part of our continued membership and emerging bilingual education professionals, doctoral students are especially welcome to conduct reviews and to also submit articles for review for publication consideration. We’re looking forward to seeing you at TABE 2017!

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Investigating the Simple View of Reading with Young Spanish-English Emergent Bilingual Children

Audrey Lucero, Ph.D.
University of Oregon
Abstract

In this exploratory study, the simple view of reading was drawn upon to investigate relations between Spanish and English listening comprehension and English decoding among first and second grade Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual children (N = 41). Children were assessed on Spanish and English oral narrative retell (a listening comprehension task) and English decoding (word and passage reading fluency). Two analyses were conducted: 1) correlations between the two components, and 2) hierarchical multiple regression to investigate listening comprehension elements as possible predictors of decoding. Findings suggest that English oral narrative retell performance was significantly correlated with – and significantly predicted – both types of English decoding. In contrast, Spanish retelling did not significantly relate to or predict English decoding. These findings highlight the existence of significant relations among salient components of the simple view and confirm some research done with monolingual English speakers and bilingual children.

Introduction

The simple view of reading (SVR) posits that decoding and listening comprehension work in concert to facilitate reading comprehension, and both are necessary (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Decoding and listening comprehension are nonetheless considered separate, and separable, components of reading, and poor comprehension can arise because of difficulties in either domain (Oakhill, Cain, & Bryant, 2003). A vast amount of research has supported the central claims of the SVR, and it is widely believed to be an adequate model for both English monolingual and emergent bilingual readers (Babayiğit, 2014; Cain, Catts, Hogan, & Lomax, 2015; Gottardo & Mueller, 2009; Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2012) – those learning two languages simultaneously.

It logically follows that instructional attention should be paid to both decoding and listening comprehension, and both should be systematically assessed (Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2012). However, in recent years, decoding has been the focus of much more research than listening comprehension (Hutchinson, Whiteley, Smith, & Connors, 2003; Lynch et al., 2008). This is problematic because listening comprehension may be “a truer measure of the linguistic comprehension skills that are crucial for successful reading comprehension” (Hutchinson et al., 2003, p. 22) than decoding, especially for emergent bilinguals (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003). The goal of the present study was to investigate relations between listening comprehension and decoding among young Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual children in order to better understand how the two sets of skills are related in this population.

Decoding

Decoding is widely assessed via tasks that count the number of words read correctly in a set period of time – typically one minute. These can be in list form (word reading fluency - WRF) or in grade-level passages (passage reading fluency - PRF). Decoding is considered a reliable predictor of reading comprehension for English-speaking monolingual children and is efficient to assess (Baker & Good, 1995; Reschly, Busch, Betts, Deno, & Long, 2009; Roberts, Good, & Corcoran, 2005). However, there are key differences in the underlying constructs of word and passage reading fluency. The reading of isolated words is more akin to recognition or, at most, comprehension of individual words. Passage reading fluency, in contrast, is thought to be a more robust indicator of comprehension because the reader can use context to construct meaning. As
such, fluent decoding of passages allows a reader to focus cognitive resources on comprehension rather than individual words (Shilling, Carlisle, Scott, & Zeng, 2007).

Decoding performance is commonly used as the basis for decisions about the placement of children into instructional interventions (Sandberg & Reschly, 2011; Solari et al., 2014), but this may be problematic when assessing emergent bilingual children, whose decoding skills often develop at a similar rate to monolingual English speakers (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Klein & Jimerson, 2005; Lesaux, Crosson, Kieffer, & Pierce, 2010; Lindsey, Manis, & Bailey, 2003; Quirk & Beem, 2012), even as their comprehension lags consistently behind (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Hutchinson et al., 2003; Lesaux, Geva, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2006; Quirk & Beem, 2012; Verhoeven, 2000). Therefore, assessing the listening comprehension of emergent bilinguals takes on increased importance (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003; Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2012), as does improving our understanding of how listening comprehension is related to decoding within and across languages.

**Listening Comprehension**

Within the simple view framework (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990), listening comprehension is imperative for the development of proficient reading, and it is widely considered to be an oral language skill (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010; Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002) worthy of assessment (Cain et al., 2015; Klein & Jimerson, 2005; Paris & Paris, 2003; Roberts et al., 2005). Multiple studies have shown that language proficiency is related to reading comprehension beyond decoding for emergent bilingual children, even though the same may not be true for monolingual English speakers (Babayiğit, 2014; Crosson & Lesaux, 2010; Grant, Gottardo, & Geva, 2012; Kim, 2012).

One listening comprehension assessment tool to show promise in indexing reading comprehension is the oral narrative retell (ONR) task, which has been used extensively with emergent bilingual children (Bedore, Peña, Gillam, & Tsung-Han, 2010; Fiestas & Peña, 2004; Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002). The comprehension and production demands of narratives require children to draw on a broad array of literacy-related knowledge and skills, so they are more cognitively and linguistically demanding than word or sentence-level tasks (Pearson, 2002). In particular, the use of decontextualized language needed to be successful in narrative retelling calls for the same higher-order thinking skills required for text comprehension (Barnes, Kim, & Phillips, 2014; Lynch et al., 2008). More than ten years ago, Cain (2003) argued that, “given … the proposed relation between reading ability and story knowledge, it is surprising that there has been so little work investigating the relation between narration skills and text-processing skills” (p. 336). Since then, there is a growing body of literature that highlights the role of narrative abilities in academic success (Boudreau, 2008; Peterson, Gillam, & Gillam, 2008).

Notably, the ONR is considered more authentic and culturally relevant than other common listening comprehension assessments because it is criterion-rather than norm-referenced and provides children with a familiar context in which to use language. Fictional stories are commonly told and read aloud both at home and in school, and children are generally proficient in retelling at an early age (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002; Scheele, Leseman, Mayo, & Elbers, 2012). Narrative tasks also allow for the concurrent assessment of multiple elements of oral language, such as breadth of vocabulary and understanding of story structure. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) noted that composite measures like the ONR demonstrated considerably stronger relationships to later reading achievement than those that measure individual skills separately.
Relations between components of the Simple View

Much of the research on the SVR has focused on relations between the components of reading (decoding and listening comprehension) and the outcome (reading comprehension), but recently researchers have also begun investigating relations between decoding and listening comprehension themselves (Kendeou, van den Broek, White, & Lynch, 2009; Lynch et al., 2008). Most of this work has been done with monolingual English speakers, and findings generally indicate that the two components are related at some points during development, but also exhibit some independence. For example, Lynch et al. (2008) found that among 6 year-old monolinguals, there were significant correlations between performance on one element of narrative listening comprehension and WRF, but a lack of correlation for other elements. Similarly, Reese, Suggate, Long, and Schaughency (2010) found significant correlations between narrative quality and PRF among 6 and 7 year-olds. In addition, they further explored the predictive role of listening comprehension in fluency, and found that narrative quality uniquely predicted PRF only among 7 and 8 year-olds, leading the authors to conclude that, “the degree to which oral language in general, and oral narrative specifically, relates to reading is strongly dependent upon the age of the children” (p. 640).

Studies employing structural equation modeling (SEM) and factor analysis have yielded similar findings. Using SEM, Kendeou, van den Broek, et al. (2009) found that among preschoolers, narrative listening comprehension significantly predicted decoding skills (including letter identification and phonemic awareness), but the same was not true at kindergarten and second grade. Therefore, they argued that listening comprehension and decoding form two distinct clusters, which are interrelated at the earliest stages of literacy, but which weaken as literacy develops. The same authors (Kendeou, Savage, & van den Broek, 2009) also used Principle Component Analysis to determine whether the two components of the SVR could be clearly differentiated. They found that listening comprehension and decoding loaded onto separate factors among 4 and 6 year-olds.

Given that this research with monolingual children has investigated the predictive relation between listening comprehension and reading fluency, it is reasonable to wonder whether the same might be true among emergent bilingual children. This is especially true because less is known about relations between listening comprehension and decoding in this group. It is commonly accepted that the languages of a bilingual child share a common underlying proficiency, such that skills they develop in one language can also be drawn upon to learn in the second language (Cummins, 1981; Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007), and research has found cross-linguistic relations among some early literacy skills but not others (Bedore et al., 2010; Gutiérrez-Cleen, 2002; Lucero, 2015; Westerveld, 2014). However, only one large-scale study to date has specifically investigated the relation between decoding and listening comprehension using the ONR assessment. Miller et al. (2006) found that, among Spanish-speaking kindergarten through 3rd grade bilinguals (N = 1,531), ONR performance accounted for a significant amount of variance in WRF both within English and cross-linguistically from English to Spanish. The current study was designed to build upon this research by further investigating the relation between listening comprehension and passage reading fluency among children enrolled in dual language immersion education.

There is a second reason to examine the possible ability of listening comprehension to predict reading fluency, and its roots are both practical and theoretical in nature. Practically, word reading fluency is far more widely assessed in elementary schools than listening comprehension, so it is important to understand whether relying so heavily on fluency is justified – i.e. predicted
by oral language – in making instructional decisions. Theoretically, understanding how listening comprehension contributes to oral reading fluency helps further our understanding of the simple view as a major theory in the field of literacy education.

Current Study

This study investigated relations between decoding (WRF, PRF) and listening comprehension (ONR) performance among young Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals in order to better understand how the two sets of skills are related within and across languages. A key aim of the study was to expand what is known about the SVR and its components for emergent bilingual children specifically. The need for such research has been recognized in the literature (Babayiğit, 2014), as scholars have recently called for “more comprehensive measures of children’s oral language, and in particular the quality of children’s oral narratives” (Reese et al., 2010, p. 630) and the ability to assess “language beyond the comprehension of single words to capture critical predictors of discourse-level comprehension” (Silva & Cain, 2015, p. 329). The specific research questions guiding this study were:

1. **What are the relations between Spanish and English listening comprehension (oral narrative retelling) and English decoding (easyCBM WRF, PRF) for Spanish-speaking first and second grade emergent bilingual children?** There have been mixed findings with regard to this question based partly on the tools used to measure each of the components, as well as the age of participants. However, based on previous research, it was hypothesized that English ONR performance would be significantly correlated with English WRF and possibly PRF as well (Kendeou, Savage, et al., 2009; Reese et al., 2010). It was not known whether there would be cross-linguistic correlations because existing research with bilingual children is limited. The one study that has examined these relations did not report findings for passage reading fluency specifically (Miller et al., 2006).

2. **Is Spanish and English listening comprehension (ONR) predictive of English decoding (easyCBM WRF, PRF)?** There are mixed findings in the literature, but given the age of the participants – first and second grade – it was expected that ONR performance would significantly predict WRF and PRF. Within English, Reese et al. (2010) reported that by the second or third year of formal reading instruction, at least one element of narrative retelling uniquely predicted decoding, so this may be a point in development at which listening comprehension and decoding are closely related. Across languages, Miller et al. (2006) found cross-linguistic predictive validity from ONR to WRF, so such relations were expected in the present study as well.

Method

Data were collected in a Spanish-English dual language immersion school in a mid-sized urban area in the Pacific Northwest. The school enrolled approximately 300 students in grades K-5, 52% of whom were white and 40% of whom were Latino (Oregon, 2013). In addition, 71% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch and approximately 20% were eligible for ESL services. This school enrolled a considerably higher percentage of Latino students and economically disadvantaged children than district averages (14% and 43%, respectively). The school was located in a working class neighborhood, and most of the children lived nearby.
The dual language immersion program followed a 50:50 model, such that all children received 50% of their daily instruction in each of the target languages (Spanish and English) from one homeroom teacher. In participating classrooms, the student population was approximately evenly divided between heritage English and heritage Spanish speakers. Literacy instruction was conducted in both languages, following a core curriculum.

The school followed the district procedure for identifying those in need of ESL instruction: parents completed a home language survey indicating the primary language(s) spoken in the home. If Spanish was indicated, the child was assessed using the IPT I Oral Language Proficiency Test (Ballard & Tighe, 1999). Children who qualified for ESL services based on IPT results received daily push-in or pull-out English language development instruction with an ELD teacher or a bilingual instructional assistant.

Participants

Because of the small number of Spanish-speaking children in this community, data was collected in two waves (spring 2013, 2015) in order to reach the desired number of participants. Consent forms were sent home with all eligible first and second graders, and forty-two consent forms were returned. Participants were assessed at only one time-point and all of them were able to complete the ONR in at least one language. EasyCBM scores were missing for one student, so the final dataset consisted of 41 students: 21 first graders and 20 second graders (female n = 24). All children had been enrolled in the program since the beginning of the school year in which data was collected. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, with the accompanying issue of a small sample size, I have combined first and second graders for analysis. Future waves of data collection may allow me to analyze grade groups separately.

The vast majority of participants (n = 29) qualified for – and were receiving – ESL support in addition to learning to read in both Spanish and English. Nine students did not qualify for ESL services and data was missing for 3 students. Most participants were born in the United States to parents from Mexico or Central America.

Measures

Decoding. EasyCBM is a K-8 online assessment system that was developed as a benchmarking and progress-monitoring tool (Alonzo & Tindal, 2006). It is typically administered as a benchmark assessment in the fall, winter, and spring trimesters, and the specific skills assessed vary by grade. Word reading fluency (WRF) is first assessed in winter of kindergarten and continues through first grade. The WRF measure includes words from a variety of commonly used lists, such as the Dolch and Fry’s, and is designed to include both regular and irregular sound patterns. Passage reading fluency (PRF) is introduced in the winter of first grade and continues to be assessed throughout elementary school. The PRF measure includes three passages specifically designed to be used in benchmark testing for each grade level, with an additional seventeen alternate passages for use in progress-monitoring (Nese, Park, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2011).

Although easyCBM is currently available in Spanish from grades K-2, it was not used at the study site in 2013, so only English easyCBM scores were analyzed for this study. In addition, Wave 2 second graders did not take a WRF assessment as part of easyCBM in spring 2015, so WRF data was available for 34 children. Spring benchmark data was used because ONR assessments were conducted in April and May. First grade participants were therefore assessed on
three measures: LS, WRF, PRF. Second graders were assessed on WRF (2013 only), PRF, multiple-choice vocabulary (2015 only), and multiple-choice reading comprehension.

Listening Comprehension. Oral narrative retell assessments (ONRs) using two Mercer Mayer frog wordless picture books (Mayer, 1969, 1974) were conducted with children in two waves: spring 2013 and spring 2015. All assessments were administered either by the principal investigator (Spanish and English) or a trained doctoral student (English only). The principal investigator was a Latina highly fluent Spanish-English bilingual who has conducted previous research with Spanish-speaking elementary school populations. The doctoral student was not bilingual and only administered English assessments.

Children were assessed twice in a quiet space in the school; first in Spanish and approximately a week later in English. A counterbalanced design was employed, such that half of the children were randomly selected to hear *Frog goes to dinner* (Mayer, 1974) in Spanish and *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969) in English. The opposite was true for the other half of children. The scripts for the frog books are designed to be similar in terms of length, sentence complexity, and cohesion (Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Heilmann, Rojas, Iglesias, & Miller, 2015), and have been used across languages with Spanish speakers (Bedore et al., 2010; Miller, 2012; Simon-Cereijido & Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2009). Children were given a general overview of the story and instructions about when to turn pages (Strong, 1998). They were also told that they would be asked to retell the story without looking at the book while doing so. Children listened to the story using headphones while the assessor worked on a computer in another part of the room. This naïve listener condition is generally expected to lead to more detailed retelling because of the lack of shared knowledge between researcher and child (Strong, 1998).

After listening, each child was given the option to review the pictures in the book before the assessor put it away; about half the children did so. The assessor remained silent throughout, intervening only after pauses of more than three seconds. After three seconds, the assessor gave a general prompt such as “tell me more” (“*dime más*”) or “anything else?” (“¿*algo más*?”) (Miller, Andriacchi, & Nockerts, 2011). Once the child had retold most of the story or paused for longer than five seconds, the researcher asked, “is that all you remember?” (“¿*es todo lo que recuerdas*?”) (Justice et al., 2006). Each assessment session lasted approximately twenty minutes, and only the target language for that session was spoken for the entire session.

Coding and Analysis

All narratives were audiorecorded and transcribed either by the principal investigator or trained and experienced university students highly proficient in the target language. Retells were analyzed at the vocabulary and discourse levels, as both likely play a role in the development of reading proficiency (Bedore et al., 2010; Fiestas & Peña, 2004; Heilmann, Miller, Nockerts, & Dunaway, 2010; Muñoz, Gillam, Peña, & Gulley-Faehnle, 2003; Roth, Speece, Cooper, & De La Paz, 1996).

The Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) computer program and its accompanying conventions were used for coding (Miller, 2012; Miller et al., 2011). All measures were calculated using only complete and intelligible utterances. Maze behaviors such as repetitions and reformulations were omitted and did not count in any of the measures. Code-switching was also considered maze behavior and was not counted in final measures. Transcripts were segmented into C-units using Loban’s rules (1976); a C-unit includes a main clause and any subordinate clauses. Coding of C-units only differed in the case of coordinated clauses with omitted subjects
in the second main clause, as recommended in the literature on ONRs with Spanish-speaking children (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Hofstetter, 1994; Miller et al., 2006). Utterances that contained a succession of verbs without repeating the subject were segmented into separate C-units. For example, the frog jumped and landed in the water would be considered one utterance using standard C-unit coding conventions. However, using modified C-units, it would be coded as two utterances: the frog jumped/and landed in the water. This modified coding accounts for the pronoun-drop nature of Spanish; the subject pronoun is not necessary since it is encoded in the verb that follows. Modified C-unit coding results in a greater overall number of utterances than standard C-unit coding, but it protects against overinflating the grammatical complexity children are using. In order to maintain consistency and comparability across languages, modified C-unit coding was used to code transcripts in both languages.

Two elements of ONR were measured: 1) vocabulary was measured by number of different words (NDW) (Miller et al., 2006), a count of the unique, uninflected root words used in a child’s retell. NDW is a developmentally-sensitive and robust indicator of a child’s vocabulary and has been used in research with bilingual children (Heilmann et al., 2010). NDW is calculated automatically by the SALT program; 2) story structure was assessed with the Narrative Scoring Scheme (NSS) (Heilmann et al., 2010), a tool used to determine a child’s ability to produce a coherent, sequential, and detailed narrative. It consists of 7 qualitatively-scored criteria: introduction, character development, mental states, referencing, conflict resolution, cohesion, conclusion. Each is scored from 1 (minimal/immature) to 5 (proficient) for a possible 35 points total. NSS is not coded automatically, so transcripts were hand-coded (for specific criteria, see Heilmann et al. 2010b).

Reliability

To achieve inter-rater reliability, twenty percent of transcripts in each (n = 8 in each language) were randomly selected to be transcribed and coded by both the researcher and a student or SALT professional. In Spanish, word-to-word match transcription was 92%, point-to-point identification of modified C-units was 89%, and agreement on NSS was 92%. In English, word-to-word match transcription was 96%, point-to-point agreement on identification of modified C-units was 97%, and agreement on NSS was 94%. In all cases, inter-rater reliability was considered adequate.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for listening comprehension (ONR) and decoding (WRF and PRF) components are presented in Table 1. Among ONR elements, vocabulary (NDW) had the largest ranges (12 – 100 in Spanish, 13 – 127 in English) and standard deviations (23.09 in Spanish, 28.62 in English), which highlights the fact that in both languages some children used many different words in retells, while some used very few. A similarly wide range can be observed in WRF (6 – 84) and PRF (5 – 145), which is unsurprising given that children were in first and second grades and exhibited a variety of reading and language proficiency levels.

Table 1
Descriptives for All Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sp = Spanish; Eng = English; NDW = vocabulary; NSS = discourse; WRF = word reading fluency; PRF = passage reading fluency

Correlational Analyses

Pearson product moment correlations among all variables can be seen in Table 2. There were a number of significant intercorrelations within elements of listening comprehension (NDW, NSS) both within and across languages. Correlations between NDW and NSS were so high within each language (Spanish $r = .806$; English $r = .887$) that a decision was made to collapse the two elements in the regression analyses that followed. The two decoding measures (WRF and PRF) were also highly significantly intercorrelated. The relations of interest in this study, however, were those between listening comprehension and WRF and PRF. These correlations have been shaded in Table 2. English vocabulary was significantly correlated with word decoding (EngNDW – WRF, $r = .411, p < .05$) and passage decoding (EngNDW – PRF, $r = .514, p < .01$). The same was true of English discourse scores to word decoding (EngNSS – WRF, $r = .432, p < .05$) and passage decoding (EngNSS – PRF, $r = .498, p < .01$). Thus, children with higher English vocabulary and discourse scores on the ONR task read faster and with greater accuracy on decoding probes in English than children with lower English vocabulary and discourse scores. Notably, there were no cross-linguistic correlations between listening comprehension and decoding at all.
This finding confirmed the first hypothesis: the two elements of English listening comprehension were significantly correlated with both types of decoding. With regard to cross-linguistic correlations between listening comprehension and decoding, however, these findings suggest a lack of correlations, at least using these assessment tools. Given the dearth of research addressing the issue, this finding is a contribution to what is known about cross-linguistic relations between components of the simple view.

Regressions

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to investigate the predictive value of ONR elements on WRF and PRF CBM. It was hypothesized that English Spanish listening comprehension would predict decoding in this group of emergent bilinguals. Hierarchical regression was an appropriate method to test this hypothesis because it enables variables to be entered in a specific order. There is some evidence in the literature that elements of English oral narrative retelling predict English reading fluency (Reese et al., 2010), so English ONR skills were entered into the model first. Since less was known about whether Spanish ONR skills would predict reading fluency cross-linguistically, they were entered into the regression equation in the second model. This allowed for a testing of their contribution to English fluency above and beyond English ONR skills. Preliminary analyses were conducted on all regressions to ensure no violation of assumptions of normality or linearity. Because multicollinearity between NDW and NSS was a
possible concern, the two elements were combined within languages and entered simultaneously into regression equations. While it is possible that each element could make an independent contribution to word and passage decoding, recent research has also found highly significant correlations between the vocabulary and story structure among both monolinguals (Heilmann et al., 2010) and bilinguals (Lucero, 2015), leading to the possibility that there may exist a special relationship between the two skills in young children.

The first set of regression models assessed the ability of English and Spanish ONR discourse and vocabulary to predict concurrent WRF. EngNSS and EngNDW were entered at step 1, explaining 19% of the variance in WRF, \( F(2,30) = 3.517, p = .042 \). The entry of SpNSS and SpNDW at step 2 did not add significant variance to WRF. Therefore, listening comprehension significantly predicted decoding skills only within the same language. Findings from this regression also confirm the lack of significant predictive cross-linguistic relation between Spanish listening comprehension and English decoding.

Table 3

Regression Models Predicting WRF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Measure &amp; Variables</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient (( b \pm SE ))</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Overall ( r^2 )</th>
<th>p-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>7.99 (12.64)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EngNDW</td>
<td>.10 (.28)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EngNSS</td>
<td>1.09 (1.23)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.92 (14.68)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EngNDW</td>
<td>.16 (.28)</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EngNSS</td>
<td>.82 (1.31)</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SpNSS</td>
<td>1.14 (.99)</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SpNDW</td>
<td>-.25 (.29)</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sp = Spanish; Eng = English; NDW = vocabulary; NSS = discourse; WRF = word reading fluency; PRF = passage reading fluency

* \( p < .05 \) (two-tailed). ** \( p < .01 \) (two-tailed).
Regression was also used to assess the ability of Spanish and English ONR discourse and vocabulary to predict concurrent PRF. EngNSS and EngNDW were again entered at step 1, explaining 27% of the variance in PRF, \( F(2,36) = 6.755, \ p = .003 \). The entry of SpNSS and SpNDW at step 2 did not add significant variance to PRF. Thus, the same pattern was evident across both regressions – both English ONR elements contributed significantly to PRF, but Spanish ONR elements did not make a significant contribution. Taken together, these findings suggest that English listening comprehension skills do indeed predict English decoding skills, whereas Spanish listening comprehension skills do not seem to predict decoding skills cross-linguistically.

Table 4
*Regression Models Predicting PRF*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Measure &amp; Variables</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient ((b \pm SE))</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>Overall (r^2)</th>
<th>(p)-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td>.35 (19.65)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.27^{**})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.39 (19.65)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>EngNDW</td>
<td></td>
<td>.48 (.43)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>EngNDW</td>
<td></td>
<td>.54 (.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>EngNSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.23 (1.91)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>EngNSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.39 (2.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>SpNSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.46 (1.52)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>SpNSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.46 (1.52)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1:</td>
<td>SpNDW</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.58 (.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2:</td>
<td>SpNDW</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.58 (.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sp = Spanish; Eng = English; NDW = vocabulary; NSS = discourse; WRF = word reading fluency; PRF = passage reading fluency

* \(p < .05\) (two-tailed). ** \(p < .01\) (two-tailed).
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate relations between first and second grade Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual children’s performance on listening comprehension and decoding tasks. The two components are well-known to contribute to reading proficiency (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990), but little is known about relations between them within and across the languages of emergent bilingual children, a fast growing population in U.S. schools (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Miller et al., 2006). The following research questions were addressed in this article:

1. **What are the relations between Spanish and English listening comprehension (oral narrative retelling) and English decoding (easyCBM WRF, PRF) for Spanish-speaking first and second grade emergent bilingual children?**

As hypothesized, English vocabulary and discourse were significantly correlated with both decoding measures. However, neither of the Spanish ONR elements were significantly correlated with English decoding. This finding was not completely surprising given mixed findings in the literature with regards to cross-linguistic relations between listening comprehension and other early literacy skills among bilingual children (Bedore et al., 2010). It is notable, however, that all participating children were enrolled in dual language education and one might expect their two languages to be developing side by side. In other words, if there are significant relations between listening comprehension and decoding within a language, it is worth asking why those relations do not transfer across languages. This finding, therefore, raises additional questions about the ways in which listening comprehension and decoding may develop separately within the two languages of bilingual children. Further research is needed to address this issue.

2. **Is Spanish and English listening comprehension (ONR) predictive of English decoding (easyCBM WRF, PRF)?**

As expected, English listening comprehension was significantly predictive of WRF and PRF. This extends the results of other studies that have identified relations between narrative comprehension and decoding skills among monolingual children (Lynch et al., 2008; Oakhill et al., 2003; Paris & Paris, 2003), and adds to what is known about the simple view of reading as it relates to emergent bilinguals by providing evidence of within-language relations between listening comprehension and decoding. An unexpected finding was that listening comprehension was not predictive of decoding cross-linguistically. Miller et al. (2006) reported contradictory results – they found that Spanish ONR performance significantly predicted English WRF among kindergarten through third grade Spanish-English bilingual children. The age of children in the present study may have played a role in this discrepancy. While listening comprehension is undoubtedly relevant to the literacy learning of children at all points in their academic careers, there is evidence that the role of listening comprehension in proficient reading increases as children get older, while the role of decoding decreases (Cain et al., 2015; Geva & Farnia, 2012; Gough, Hoover, & Peterson, 1996; Roth et al., 1996; Snow, Tabors, Nicholson, & Kurland, 1995; Speece, Roth, Cooper, & De La Paz, 1999). Some have even suggested that oral language is most relevant to overall literacy in preschool and later elementary school, with its smallest influence in the first few years of formal instruction (Reese et al., 2010; Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2012). Therefore, the smaller age range (first and second grade) in this study compared to the larger range in Miller...
et al. (kindergarten through third grade) may provide a more nuanced picture of development at a certain point in time.

One other interesting finding was that English listening comprehension contributed a higher percentage of variance to PRF than it did to WRF (27%, \( p = .003 \) and 19%, \( p = .042 \), respectively). Although this was not specifically hypothesized, it confirms previous research highlighting the increased role of oral language in PRF beyond the simple decoding skills (Kim, 2012), and suggests possible directions for future research. The skills needed to be proficient in retelling at a holistic level – sequencing, coherence, identification of narrative elements – also likely contribute to fluent decoding of passages more so than to the reading of word lists (Bedore et al., 2010; Fiestas & Peña, 2004). However, the fact that the overall model for PRF still only accounted for only 31% of the variance suggests that much more of the variance was accounted for by something other than listening comprehension, regardless of language of assessment. Therefore, there is clearly more to successful fluency of connected text beyond just listening comprehension.

**Educational Implications**

Scholars have rightly noted the importance of attending to development in two languages for emergent bilingual children (Gottardo & Mueller, 2009; Manis, Lindsey, & Bailey, 2004; Sandberg & Reschly, 2011), and doing so has practical and theoretical benefits. Practically, this study has important instructional and assessment implications for those who work who work with emergent bilingual children in dual language immersion or other contexts. The simple view of reading suggests that instruction in either decoding or listening comprehension has the potential to promote reading comprehension (Hoover & Gough, 1990), but the fact that they are separable components means they should both be the focus of targeted instruction. In recent years, decoding has taken on increased importance as a focus of instruction and assessment; at the same time, “there has been a growing recognition that the development of decoding skills should be complemented by fostering language comprehension skills” (Kendeou, Savage, et al., 2009, p. 366). In addition, the two components might best be taught in different ways (Gough et al., 1996; Kendeou, van den Broek, et al., 2009; Oakhill et al., 2003). Further research is needed to determine whether there are specific instructional methods for improving listening comprehension, but it seems likely that systematic, explicit instruction in retelling can improve overall reading skills (Boudreau, 2008; Cain et al., 2015).

Proponents of the simple view also propose that both component skills – decoding and listening comprehension – should be assessed as part of a comprehensive literacy program (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). If only decoding is assessed, children with comprehension difficulties may not be identified (Hutchinson et al., 2003). In addition, emergent bilingual children may be overidentified for services based on low decoding scores, even if they have adequate listening comprehension to be proficient readers. Indeed, systematic and ongoing assessment of discourse-level listening comprehension can benefit children of all language backgrounds (Silva & Cain, 2015). Teachers can use tools like ONR as a complement to the data they collect from CBM decoding tools. Simplified protocols for retell assessment such as the Test of Narrative Retell (Peterson & Spencer, 2012) have been developed in recent years to enable teachers to conduct benchmark assessment using narrative retelling.
Limitations and Conclusion

The first limitation is that the study reported here was small and exploratory, and included only emergent bilingual children in dual language immersion classrooms. It may not be possible to generalize the findings to bilinguals learning in more traditional English only classrooms, since the language and literacy experiences of the two groups likely differ. Nonetheless, current findings extend those from studies done with English monolingual children, suggesting that the relations and development of SVR components are similar across language groups.

A second limitation is the fact that reading comprehension scores were not available for this sample of children. Therefore, it is not possible to conduct analyses that would elucidate the possible mediational role that listening comprehension plays in the relation between decoding and comprehension. Future research should be conducted to investigate this issue.

A final limitation is the lack of Spanish decoding measures available. The findings would undoubtedly be more robust if it were possible to investigate cross-linguistic predictive validity in both directions. However, at the time of data collection, Spanish easyCBM data was not available for participating children. In future research, such data should be collected and analyzed.

Even given these limitations, this study provides an important starting point for further investigations into the language and literacy development of young emergent bilingual children.
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“Pues aquí, en la casa, se aprende el español”: Spanish Literacy Development in a Texas Border Colonia

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Abstract

Bilingualism and biliteracy were documented in a South Texas *colonia* by utilizing a multiple methodology approach. Participants were six children, eight parents, and seven staff who worked in different settings of the *colonia*. The findings revealed that, despite the apparent growth of bilingualism in this community, efforts to cultivate Spanish literacy were less evident. Reading materials in Spanish were relatively scarce in the *colonia*, and Spanish literacy practices that occurred at home were less common once children began school. This study is significant because, despite growing interest in immigrant literacies, this phenomenon has not been extensively studied in border *colonias*.

Introduction

Although approximately three-quarters of emergent bilinguals in the United States report Spanish as their primary home language (Batalova & McHugh, 2010), few attend schools that provide extensive literacy support in their first language (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). By the 1980s, the focus of the federal Bilingual Education Act began to shift support to English-only programs (García, Kleifen, & Falchi, 2008). More recently, with passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 and its 2015 revision, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), biliteracy was negatively affected. Although it is still possible to obtain funding for bilingual education programs, NCLB and ESSA require mandatory high-stakes tests in English for all children (García & DeNicolo, 2016). With this change in instructional programs, a language shift into the language of power (Fishman, 2001), English, was evident in Texas classrooms (Palmer & Lynch, 2008) and nationwide (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

Reyes and Moll (2008) argue that bidirectional literacy practices should prevail between home and school. However, even when schools attempt to enlist parental participation, they often impose a normative framework for engagement that discounts family members’ approaches to learning instead of acknowledging the creative ways in which immigrant parents use intellectual and material resources to support their children’s learning (Gutiérrez & Arzubiaga, 2012). Despite these challenges, several researchers have demonstrated the crucial role that home and community have on maintaining a heritage language through social practices (e.g., Caldas, 2006). These authors reinforce the idea that parents, grandparents, siblings, and community members are as important as teachers in developing students’ biliteracy. While several researchers have explored bilingualism and biliteracy in U.S. Latino communities (e.g., Reese & Goldenberg, 2006; Reyes, 2006), studies on these phenomena have not been conducted with children who live in *colonias*, which are unincorporated areas located along the U.S.-Mexico border. This case study took place in a border *colonia*, pseudonym *El Palmar*, and sought to answer two questions: a) To what extent have bilingualism and biliteracy developed in El Palmar? and b) What Spanish literacy practices take place in the *colonia*?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical perspectives informing this study include New Literacy Studies (NLS) traditions (e.g., Barton, 2007; Gee, 2008; Street, 2005), the concept of funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), and language maintenance and shift (Fishman, 2001). Most of the NLS work focuses on everyday literacy practices outside of school in which families engage. These engagements not only include literacy events but also the cultural values, attitudes, and
feelings that shape and give meaning to those events (Street, 2005). As a NLS tradition scholar, I perceive literacy as contextualized social activities. I do not focus so much on acquisition of skills but rather on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice that varies from one context to another and from one culture to another (Barton, 2007).

Another important concept from sociocultural theory includes funds of knowledge within communities (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). This concept refers to culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills needed for a household or an individual to function effectively. In their study of economically disadvantaged U.S. Mexican households, Veléz-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) reinforce the idea that by understanding the household learning dynamics in which funds are used, schools can better serve recent immigrant children. In the context of English-only schooling and rapid language shift into English, minority language literacy may play a particularly important role in helping families maintain their language despite the power of English. Veléz-Ibañez and Greenberg argue that Spanish literacy is a bridge for inter-generational transmission of knowledge and that it cannot be conveyed through only oral language.

Finally, this study draws on Fishman’s (2001) framework of language maintenance and shift and that of language compartmentalization in which the heritage language is seen as the language to communicate and express feelings (Kelman, 1971), and English as the language of power to succeed (Fishman, 2001). The U.S.-Mexico border and, in particular, colonias, constitute special sites to study language maintenance and shift due to demographic characteristics and the constant mobility of border residents (Anderson & Gerber, 2007). These concepts involve a conscious effort to understand where children and their families are coming from and view their language(s) and culture(s) as resources for educators and researchers.

The Research Site

This study took place in El Palmar, one of the 2,300 colonias located on the Texas-Mexico border (Texas Secretary of State, 2010). Colonias are unincorporated settlements that spring up in non-developed areas and do not have their own governments. Although they likely have some county-provided services, they may be surrounded by state-incorporated cities. The Cranston-González National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 defines colonias as identifiable communities in Texas, Arizona, California, and New Mexico within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border which lack basic water and sewer systems, paved roads, and access to the bus route system, which limits their ability to reach social services (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). Colonias provide temporary and permanent housing not only for transnational residents crossing the U.S.-Mexico border but also for those who report having previously lived and worked as seasonal farmers in other states (Nuñez & Klammenger, 2010).

El Palmar, founded in 1962, is part of the Brownsville, Texas, Metropolitan Statistical Area and has a total area of 0.6 square miles (1.6 km²) and a population of almost 7,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). El Palmar residents share many of the same socioeconomic and environmental challenges of other border colonias, including lack of health care, high public education drop-out rates, poor basic services, and living in extreme poverty (Esparza & Donelson, 2009). Based on average per-capita income, El Palmar is one of the poorest of all U.S. communities; 56.4% of its population lives below the poverty line. Related to education, El Palmar residents have a high drop-out rate. Among those 25 years and over, 28.3% have a high-school diploma or equivalent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

There are no public libraries in El Palmar. The closest two public libraries are located at least ten miles from the colonia. The lack of transportation among El Palmar families makes the
access to libraries difficult; to take public transportation, residents have to walk several blocks since city buses do not enter the colonia. One book source easily available to El Palmar children is a small collection of books located at the tutorial center. This collection contains less than 500 books, but only a small number are in Spanish; the vast majority of the tutorial center books are in English only (Díaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013).

Despite these challenges, El Palmar, like other colonias, constitutes a unique site for case studies and offers a new perspective for the study of bilingualism and biliteracy. Colonias differ from other immigrant communities established in urban centers and non-border rural areas in their geographical proximity to their occupants’ homeland and families. More than 90 percent of the colonia residents are of Mexican origin, and almost 96% reported speaking Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010); also, the proximity to the border often makes a colonia the first home to many Mexican immigrants (Anderson & Gerber, 2007). Little published research has addressed the unique educational issues confronting colonia residents (e.g., Díaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013).

Methods

Researcher Position

As an immigrant from South America and a former bilingual teacher in U.S. public schools, I started this research with my own beliefs about the importance of being bilingual and biliterate. Despite the fact that I resided outside of the community under study, El Palmar was not a completely foreign environment for me. I had previously volunteered at the after-school tutorial center during two academic semesters and had participated as a researcher in several projects in which children and adults of El Palmar were involved. My prior engagement in the colonia made me more aware of the dynamics of the community and, at the same time, eager to understand how its residents maintain or marginalize their native language, Spanish. For instance, while working in the after-school program, I noticed the engagement that mothers, also volunteering at the center, had with their children’s literacy practices. These previous observations prompted me to further investigate how literacy practices occurred at home.

Settings and Participants

Participants consisted of six children, eight parents, and seven staff who worked at the church, the after-school tutorial center, or the cultural center (see Table 1 for more details). I collected data from children and parents in their homes and interviewed staff participants at their respective work places. Participating children were attending the tutorial center where I recruited them and their parents. Eleven participants were female, and 10 were male; 20 were Mexican or Mexican-American; and one was European-American. Participating children were all second-immigrant generation, born in the U.S. of one or two immigrant parents, ages seven to 16 and in grades one through 11 at the time of the study. Seven out of eight parents were first-immigrant generation immigrants themselves and had studied in Mexico. Six parents completed high-school, and two had only attended elementary school. Children and their parents had frequent contact with their family members residing in Mexico. They usually visited them on weekends and during their children’s vacations. Participating staff members consisted of two church leaders, three after-school tutorial teachers, and two English teachers who worked at the cultural center. Three staff members were El Palmar residents, all first-immigrant generation, and four worked in the colonia.
but resided in the surrounding communities. I recruited staff members either through the local church or through the cultural center.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

For data collection, I used a multiple methodology approach (Smith, 2006), which included the following sources: U.S. census analysis, linguistic landscape analysis of the neighborhood, language-use surveys, participant observations, language logs, and interviews. All collected data and the multiple methodology approach provided insight to the two research questions but from different yet inter-related perspectives. These multiple vantage points helped to establish the trustworthiness of the findings (Schwandt, 2001). A detailed description of data collection over a two-year period, from 2009–2011, and analysis procedures is provided in Table 2.

**U.S. census analysis.** A comparative analysis of the demographic data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 versions of the census gave information on the changes of English-speaking ability over a 20-year period in *El Palmar*. The self-report questions asked in all census versions were: a) Does this person speak a language other than English at home?; b) What is the language?; and c) How well does this person speak English? The census provides the following options: very well, well, not well, not at all.

**Linguistic landscape analysis.** The study of biliteracy at the community level was based on the concept of *linguistic landscape*, defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) as the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory region” (p. 23). It was also centered on Barton’s and Hamilton’s idea of social practices related to literacy (2012). Barton and Hamilton contend that one way the community influences literacy activities is through access to varied printed materials. With the purpose of analyzing biliteracy in the community, I documented 1) the linguistic landscape, including signs, banners, ads, posters, and notes, and 2) other literacy materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, flyers, and bulletins. I walked and drove each block throughout the *colonia*, and I photographed examples of signs related to commercial activities (e.g., food stores and small home businesses and posters advertising local events, entertainment, and political campaigning). I also stopped at places likely to have reading resources and documented them. For purpose of analysis, I categorized the collected materials into English-only, Spanish-only, and bilingual.

**Language-use surveys.** I analyzed bilingualism and biliteracy at an individual level by conducting self-rating scale language-use surveys. This instrument was intended to measure participants’ ability to speak, listen, read, and write in English and Spanish. Even though I surveyed all participants (21), I selected only the surveys from those who resided in the *colonia* (17) for further analysis. To analyze data, I grouped surveyed participants according to their age, immigrant generation, and the number of years they attended a U.S. school. The established limit of years in U.S. schools was three, as research suggests that this is the minimum number of years needed to acquire informal communication skills in a second language (Cummins, 1981). The resulting groups were: 1) participating children (n=6), all second-immigrant generation; 2) participating young adults (n=5), ages ranging between 20 and 30 and either first- or second-immigrant generation; and 3) adults older than 31 (n=6), all first-immigrant generation. I analyzed the four language abilities for each group. Means and standard deviations were obtained by using Microsoft Office Excel. Graphs were made by employing OriginLab software.

**Participant observations, language logs, and interviews.** To further understand biliteracy in *El Palmar*, I focused on literacy practices that occurred in different contexts of the *colonia*. I documented these practices by using participant observations, language logs, and
interviews. Most field observations took place at the after-school tutorial center during two academic semesters for two hours a week. In addition, to have a general understanding of everyday literacy practices, I conducted informal observations in the households when I visited participants to conduct interviews. Participating children completed 24-hour language logs. In these logs, children indicated the language that they used in different domains (e.g., church, home, and after-school tutorial center), during varied activities (e.g., doing homework, using technology), and, if applicable, with whom. For log analysis, I compared all the children’s responses and grouped them in categories (Table 4).

I conducted interviews with 21 participants. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. In certain cases, I conducted follow-up interviews through phone or e-mail conversations. I carried out interviews in English or Spanish, at the preference indicated by the interviewee. I audio-recorded and then transcribed all interviews. For the identification of emerging categories I analyzed data from participant observations, 24-hours language logs, and interviews. This analysis consisted of looking for patterns and was based on grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I read the transcripts repeatedly, wrote my notes and impressions on the side margins, and color-coded relevant information. Next, I identified categories by making comparisons and looking for similarities across data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Within each original category, I selected and labeled those data that responded to the main questions of this study. In this phase of analysis, by cycling back and forth with my theoretical framework (e.g., Barton, 2007; Fishman, 2001; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) I identified more specific themes or subcategories (Table 5).

Results

Bilingualism and Biliteracy Development in El Palmar

Bilingualism in the community. Comparative analysis of the demographic data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 versions of the U.S. census (see Table 3) provided information on the English-speaking abilities in El Palmar. This analysis shows that, while the total population of El Palmar has increased 83.1% from 1990 to 2010, the number of persons who “speak English less than very well” has decreased by 47.7% (persons five to 17 years) and by 16.7% (persons 18 years and over). These data demonstrate that more people in El Palmar, mostly youth, have reported speaking English well in 2000 and 2010 than in 1990. Still, the percentage of people who speak only English in 2010 is low (3.4%, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It can be inferred from these data that, even though the population of English speakers has grown, Spanish is still spoken in the colonia. The census survey does not have any question regarding the nature of respondents’ Spanish language abilities. The maintenance of Spanish and the increase in the number of people speaking English are indexes of a development of bilingualism in El Palmar.

Biliteracy in the community. Biliteracy in the community was understood by analyzing El Palmar linguistic landscape and other literacy resources. The linguistic landscape in the colonia provided evidence of a range of literacies (see Figure 1). English-only signs mainly corresponded to official concerns such as traffic signs and political campaigning signs. Most commercial businesses were also advertised in English. Examples of Spanish-only were printed announcements made by the church, which included services and entertainment events, and signs for small businesses housed at residences. Bilingual signs, both English and Spanish in the same text, were mainly displayed outside commercial businesses and in health service announcements.

Other literacy resources were collected from various settings and included pamphlets, flyers, and bulletins. These resources generally announced health programs, English and computer
classes for adults, and social events in the community. They were almost exclusively written in Spanish, with a few exceptions that offered the same information in both languages. The business advertisements that generally appeared on the back of the bulletins (e.g., the church bulletin) were mostly in English.

In *El Palmar*, there were no bookstores, kiosks, or newsstands that sell newspapers, popular magazines, or books. However, mini-markets or local stores which usually sell groceries offered a small selection of daily newspapers, most in Spanish and edited in Mexico. This greater representation of newspapers in Spanish suggested the language in which adult residents choose to read. The only book source available to *El Palmar* children is a small collection located at the tutorial center, but only a small number are in Spanish. The books in Spanish also were underrepresented in the local public elementary school. These books were about 10% of the total collection (local school librarian, personal communication, February 17, 2011). This estimation includes the bilingual books, those written in English and Spanish.

**Bilingualism and biliteracy at an individual level.** Language-use survey analysis (see Figure 2) suggested differences in the language ability among different groups of participants. Group 1: Children, ages ranging from seven to 16 and all second-immigrant generation reported feeling fluent in listening and speaking in both English and Spanish; however, in reading and writing, most young participants reported being stronger in English than in Spanish. Group 2: Adults, ages ranging from 20 to 30 and composed of first- and second-immigrant generations felt equally confident in both languages, whereas they still considered their reading and writing skills slightly better in English. Group 3: Adults older than 31 and all first-immigrant generation reported feeling stronger in Spanish in the four language skills.

Survey analysis confirmed the data derived from census analysis. Bilingualism is present among children and young adults because they have developed their speaking abilities in English and Spanish, but their biliteracy has been barely developed. Only few participants from Group 2 self-reported biliterate. These participants stated that they had developed their literacy skills in Spanish while they attended elementary school in Mexico.

Spanish is the predominant language that parents and children used to communicate orally among family members. Communication in Spanish was mostly reported and observed between children and adults and among adults, while communication among siblings was in both languages. Children also expressed their need to maintain Spanish in order to communicate with their family members living in Mexico. For instance, one participating child told: “Yo necesito saber español para escribirles cartas a mis abuelitos”, [I need to know Spanish to write letters to my grandparents]. The presence of grandparents and other adult relatives who speak only Spanish may represent a vital link for *El Palmar* children to maintain their heritage language (Veléz-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992).

Language logs also provided data on language use at an individualized level. Children used both languages in most of the activities (see Table 4). However, they mostly used Spanish at home and English during school-related activities in which teachers were involved. The other person(s) intervening in the activity seemed to be important in the language children used. For instance, the presence of family members at home or in Mexico triggered children to use their heritage language; however, in the presence of staff involved in curricular activities, such as teachers and tutorial staff, children used more English.

It is important to notice how the presence of Spanish-dominant mothers, even in contexts where English is the predominant language, led children to use Spanish. An example would be the “snack time” in the after-school program. Snacks at the center were usually served by staff and mothers. The presence of friends also played a role in the language used by participating children.
Even in more structured domains where English was the dominant language, such as school and the tutorial center, children used Spanish with their friends during lunch and sports. In activities during which children were alone playing computer games or doing homework at home, the language used was mainly English. In these latter cases, children did not have the choice of using a language since both the assigned homework and computer games were in English. One tutorial staff member supported this idea. She observed that when students attending the after-school program left the center (instructional environment) and went outside to play sports (informal environment) the children changed their language of communication from English into Spanish. An alternative interpretation was that the children were not around the tutorial director, who tended to enforce an English-only environment.

**Literacy Practices in El Palmar**

This study demonstrated a distinct compartmentalization of languages in various settings in which only English, or only Spanish, was used – not a combination of the two languages in the same setting. While Spanish was observed to be confined to home and community cultural and social events, English was mostly used at school and other school-related settings such as the after-school tutorial center. This language compartmentalization was evident in one of the adult’s comments, “El español debe ser en la casa, y el inglés, la educación, eso lo vas a agarrar en la escuela”, [Spanish should be at home; English, the education, will be acquired in school]. A mother from a different family reinforced this idea by saying, “En este país uno tiene las opciones, habla inglés donde trabajas, donde lo necesitas, pero en tu casa habla español”, [In this country, you have options. Speak English at work where you need it, but at home you speak Spanish].

Despite this language compartmentalization, I have observed bilingual residents, in particular youth, to translanguage for their parents and younger siblings. Translanguaging signifies a dynamic, purposeful, sense-making practice, using two languages interchangeably across domains and contexts (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Participating bilingual children translanguage in different settings in and out of home. At home, children helped their parents to translate letters and other school documents, medical forms or bills, and forms or documents from court or other governmental offices. At home also, they translated for their parents and younger siblings while they watched television or for their homework.

**Literacy practices at home.** Adult and children participants reported that at home they spoke almost exclusively Spanish. As a result, the home language and family context influenced the language used during their literacy practices. One bilingual adolescent reported that he instinctively texted in English and Spanish, but if he was at home, he preferred to text in Spanish. He commented, “Hago texting desde mi casa, y como en casa hablo más español, entonces me siento más cómodo con el español”, [I text mainly from home and, as at home, I speak more Spanish, I feel more comfortable to text in Spanish]. The last quote shows the influence that home had on the language a bilingual child chose. This influence at home is very strong if we consider that first, as reported in the surveys, bilingual children have better writing skills in English than in Spanish; second, texting, as with other types of technology, usually takes place in English (Warschauer, 2002).

Within the home domain, mothers played an important role in maintaining their children’s heritage language. Mothers not only stated that it was important to continue speaking in Spanish, but they also fostered literacy in this language. Four out of the six mothers that I interviewed had received at least a high school diploma in Mexico. Those mothers with more years of formal education in Mexico were the ones who reported having different literacy practices in Spanish with
their young children (e.g., teaching the alphabet and the concept of syllables, and reading aloud). When a mother said, “Pues aquí, en la casa, se aprende el español”, [Here, at home, we learn Spanish], she meant that her children learn to read and write in Spanish at home. She further explained this idea as follows, “Desde que mi hija era chiquita yo le enseñé las letras, y a juntar las sílabas; así aprendió a leer en español”, [When my daughter was little, I taught her the letters and how to put syllables together; this is how she learned to read in Spanish]. Mothers used the linguistic funds of knowledge (Smith, 2002) they brought from Mexico to develop these literacy practices with their children. For instance, another mother said that to teach her children the alphabet, she used the same songs she had learned during her school years in Mexico.

Participating mothers commented that these activities in Spanish practiced at home generally ended when their children entered school. However, most parents, reflecting the importance of the English emphasis as advocated by No Child Left Behind, expressed their desire that, once in school, their children needed to learn English quickly so that they could have a successful economic future. One father said, “No quisiera que a mis hijos les pasara lo que a mí, … que por falta de inglés no agarro buenos trabajos”, [I would not like for my children to face what I do…that, due to my lack of English, I cannot find a good job]. Participating children confirmed that, once in school, they mainly read in English. A child said, “I can read only in English because in school they taught me to read in English.” Even though children had mostly Spanish reading materials at home (e.g., magazines), most reported they did not read them because of their difficulties in reading Spanish.

Although the lack of English skills could be a barrier, parents were resourceful in helping their children with their homework in English. Parents either send their children to the after-school tutorial center or ask their older children to assist their younger ones. Two mothers said that when their children were in the lower grades, they brought books in English from school to be read at home. As neither parents nor their children were able to read in English, mothers made up the stories based on the books’ pictures or drawings. One mother said, “Cuando mis hijos eran chiquitos, y no sabían leer, entonces me basaba en los dibujos del cuento y les inventaba la historia”, [When my children were little and they did not know how to read, I invented the story, just centering on the drawings of the book]. The act of “reading” a book to their children in a language that these mothers did not know emphasized the importance of using other linguistic resources in order to “socialize” (Gee, 2008) and give meaning to this event (Ferreiro, 2007). Another mother reported that to be involved with their children’s reading practices, she chose bilingual texts. By first reading the story in Spanish, she was able to understand what her children were saying as they read the same story in English.

**Literacy practices at the after-school tutorial center.** Literacy practices usually took place in English at the tutorial center, which was not a part of traditional school bilingual transition programs. At the tutorial center, both the academic and behavioral instructions and the environmental print (Barton & Hamilton, 2012) demonstrated a strong tendency toward an English-only instruction. A small proportion of the tutorial center’s book collection, less than 10%, was written in Spanish, and computer games were only in English. This observation was supported by what one staff member said: “The instruction here is in English…we help children in Spanish only if they bring homework in Spanish.”

These data demonstrate a school language practice extended to the tutorial center. Participants made clear the strong influence that teachers have on children’s language choices. A first grader participant attending a bilingual program reported, “Mi maestra me dijo que me tenía que olvidar del español, que todo iba a ser en inglés”, [My teacher told me that I had to forget
Spanish, that everything had to be in English]. A fifth grader stated, “My teachers said that we need to read only in English because the classes are in English.”

**Literacy practices and religion.** As in previous studies in other Latino communities (e.g., Baquedano-López, 2004; Burrows-Goodwill, 2009), Spanish is regarded by *El Palmar* residents as the language of their religious and cultural legacy. Children and parents demonstrated having a strong connection between Spanish and religion, which was evident not only in those participants who were dominant in Spanish but also in those who were bilingual or even more skilled in English. For example, an adult interviewee who considered herself bilingual stated, “I always address the priest in Spanish; perhaps this is because I have learned all the church rules in Spanish.” One church leader confirmed the dominance of Spanish in the religious domain of *El Palmar*. He said, “All of the youth speak English, but Spanish remains the language in which they pray.”

Literacy practices at home related to religion were predominantly in Spanish. Parents and children usually had a Spanish version of the Bible, and they prayed in Spanish. One adolescent said, “I was taught to pray in Spanish, so it is easy for me to pray in Spanish.” Participants reported that they usually were taught to pray in Spanish by their parents or grandparents as an oral tradition. One child commented, “Mi mamá me enseñó a decir los rezos en español y me los sé de memoria”, [My mother taught me how to pray in Spanish, and I learned the prayers by memorization].

The language pattern was different, however, during religious practices in contexts other than home. Catechism (*doctrina*) classes took place at the local church twice a week and included literacy practices such as reading and discussing the Bible. One participant, a founder of *El Palmar* and a former catechism teacher, reported that several years ago, those classes were taught only in Spanish. Yet, because of parent requests, the catechism classes were then offered either in English or Spanish. Another catechism teacher said she did not understand why parents sometimes wanted their children in English classes if they had already learned how to pray in Spanish. Having more English during religious practices was favored by church leaders who believed that *El Palmar* youth would have a successful future if they master the English language. This idea was portrayed by a community leader as follows, “[In *El Palmar*], English will be used for business, school, commercial, state-related affairs …. while Spanish will be a barrier in terms of being able to fully integrate into the U.S. system.”

In summary, the findings revealed that, despite the apparent growth of Spanish/English bilingualism in this community, efforts to cultivate Spanish literacy were less evident. Analysis of the linguistic landscape demonstrated a widespread biliteracy at the community level. Signs, advertisements and other texts were written and displayed publicly in English and Spanish. In contrast, books and other reading materials in Spanish were scarce in participating households and local libraries. Spanish literacy practices that took place at home were much less common once children began school. During school-related activities at the tutorial center, English was the dominant language. Religious literacy practices occurred mainly in Spanish at home and in English at church.

**Data Limitations**

*El Palmar*, as other border *colonias*, offered obstacles to data collection. Unpaved streets, fences around houses, no door bells, and poorly marked street addresses were some of the barriers faced while trying to contact participants. Another frequent difficulty was the high mobility of residents who returned to Mexico or moved to other parts of the U.S. in search of better job opportunities. To avoid losing participants, I selected established families in the *colonia*. The
stability of these families made possible perspectives that more mobile participants could not provide. Díaz, García and Smith (2009) reported positive aspects of living in colonias such as productive social interactions, a shared culture among colonia residents and the advantages of interviewing families that have lived in the colonia for multiple years and know it well.

The limited U.S. Census data for El Palmar constituted another obstacle. Although this colonia was founded in 1962, census data on language ability were available only from 1990, 2000, and 2010. Census information previous to 1990 could have provided a more complete picture of the changes in bilingualism over a longer period of time. Moreover, data on participants’ perceived speaking abilities in other languages, including Spanish, were not collected by the Census Bureau.

Because of the small number of participants who completed the language-use surveys, the findings that reported bilingualism and biliteracy at an individual level were not intended to be generalized to the entire colonia. This study also is limited because of the self-reporting nature of the survey. Ensuring the credibility of data obtained with surveys was by employing more deliberate and in-depth instruments such as observation of participants’ language skills and interviews. Finally, because of their obligations at school and extra-curricular activities, participating children were difficult to schedule for interviews. Most interviews with children were conducted during their summer vacations and holidays.

Discussion

This study documents the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in El Palmar colonia. A growth of bilingualism was mainly observed among youth residents who were generally second-immigrant generation. This growth followed the same trend observed in nationwide studies in the Latino population. For example, surveys conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center showed a dramatic increase in English-language ability from one generation of Latinos to the next; 23% of Latino immigrants versus 88% of their U.S.-born adult children reported that they speak English very well (Hakimzadeh & Cohn, 2007).

Even though there were no census data on the Spanish abilities for El Palmar, the findings of this study indicate that the colonia residents of all ages continued speaking their heritage language. As in other Latino communities (Dávila, Mora, & Villa, 2005), older members of El Palmar demonstrated passing the Spanish language to younger generations. However, the language transmission from one generation to the next was not the only factor that promoted the maintenance of Spanish in El Palmar. The colonia’s characteristics and its surroundings helped to maintain residents’ heritage language (Martínez, 2003). El Palmar is within the limits of a city where 93.2% are of Latino origin (U.S. Census, 2010) and a continuous immigration from Mexico and the contact with monolingual Spanish speakers are predictors of Spanish maintenance (e.g., Dávila, Mora, & Villa, 2005). Considering that most adults in El Palmar speak only Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), and this is the language most spoken at home, it appears that the bilingual youth population start speaking English once they enter school (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008).

Biliteracy was present in different contexts of El Palmar. It was observed in the linguistic landscape, the language used in signs present in public places (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) of the colonia. According to Landry and Bourhis, the linguistic landscape in a community represents the language vitality of a group and influences its informal communication and attitude toward the minority language. Taking into account Landry’s and Bourhis’ relationship between community signs and language vitality, both English and Spanish had vitality in the community of El Palmar. Even though the representation of Spanish was evident, it was surprising how much of the
linguistic landscape was in English, if we consider that most of *El Palmar* residents spoke Spanish and a great number were not proficient in English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The fact that most of the English-only signs were mainly related to businesses, the high-power sphere (Fishman, 2001), could indicate that English was perceived as the language of power in the *colonia*. Biliteracy was also observed in the analysis of other printed literacy resources (Barton & Hamilton, 2012) that mainly address an adult population (e.g., newspapers, and bulletins).

According to Hornberger (2003), the more children have the opportunity to draw from the continua of biliteracy, the greater their chances of full biliterate development. However, the access that the *colonia* children have to books written in Spanish was limited (Díaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013). The lack of access to books in Spanish is not restricted to *El Palmar* since it has also been reported in other poor communities (Reese & Goldenberg, 2006). This gap highlights another way in which immigrants, particularly immigrants of a low socio-economic status, are disadvantaged and could demonstrate which literacy is dominant and which is marginalized (Gee, 2008).

Despite these challenges, participating mothers demonstrated that they play an active role during literacy practices in Spanish at home. Similarly, other studies with emergent bilinguals from Latino communities revealed the positive influence that out-of-school literacy practices had on children’s biliteracy development. Studying the influence of school-parent relationships on bilingualism, Zentella’s (1997) observations of Puerto Rican family language practices in New York provided evidence that parents are involved in their children’s education in a variety of ways, including rich linguistic exposure to storytelling and print experiences in the native language at home. Focusing on Mexican-American children living in Arizona, Reyes (2006) explored the ways in which three-to-five-year-old emergent bilinguals began to develop literacy in Spanish and English with the support of their communities through parents, community members, and institutional settings such as pre-school. Focusing on the influence of out-of-school practices on Latino children, Burrows-Goodwill (2009) described the impact that out-of-school literacy practices had on Mexican-heritage English learners who were high-academic achieving second graders whose families’ dominant language was Spanish and who were involved in church or Bible study community activities that required literacy in Spanish.

Different from what was reported in other Latino communities (e.g., Burrows-Goodwill, 2009; Reyes, 2006), it was evident in this study that a language and literacy discontinuity existed between home and school. Generally, literacy activities in Spanish that took place in participants’ homes ended when children entered school. This discontinuity was clear in what one participating mother stated in Spanish – “Here at home, we learn Spanish; English is learned at school.”. This quote also could be showing the parents’ necessity to safeguard their children against the loss of Spanish language at home. This lack of language fluidity between home and school was also explained by Martínez (2009) who reported that, in Texas, Spanish speaker parents are sometimes the most obvious opponents to bilingual education because they want their children to focus on English at school. However, this study shows that parents want to be in charge of keeping their children’s appreciation of their native language alive at home.

This discontinuity of linguistic practices between home and school could lead to the idea of language compartmentalization. Indeed, this study has unveiled a separation of languages in the *colonia*. Although bilingualism and biliteracy can be a key to academic and economic success in the U.S. (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), *El Palmar* residents, may perceive Spanish with a sentimental function (Kelman, 1971) restricted to non-power spheres (e.g., home and religious practices) and English as the language for success, dominant in high-power spheres (e.g., business, and formal education) (Fishman, 2001).
One could argue that a practice in which Spanish is relegated only to oral use while English receives the official status of appearing in print highlights the prestige of English and exemplifies Spanish’s marginality. Differences in bilingualism and biliteracy can be explained by the socio-economic status of the colonia. Most El Palmar residents live in extreme poverty (U.S. Census, 2010). While Spanish is characterized as the language of immigrants and as a language of poverty (García & Mason, 2009), English is considered a language of power (Fishman, 2001). Participants made clear the importance of keeping oral communication with their family members and friends in Spanish. Conversely, in regard to literacy, participants demonstrated being more interested in developing their reading and writing skills in English. Achieving proficiency in Spanish literacy was not a goal for most participants. Also, they did not manifest an awareness that the ability to speak and write two or more languages would result in more opportunities in a globalized world (García & Mason, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Literacy practices in English were also compartmentalized at El Palmar after-school tutorial center. These activities extended the subtractive practices (Nieto & Bode, 2008) that are prevalent throughout the nation in schools. Proponents who emphasize English-only instruction (Rong & Preissle, 2009) are, consequently, “subtracting” children’s heritage language. Similarly, to the situation described in the colonia tutorial center, Baquedano-López (2004) reveals how the use of Spanish was seen as problematic in a parish located in Los Angeles Latino community. Baquedano-López examined a new policy that eliminated Spanish-based religious classes (doctrina) for Mexican immigrant children in favor of English-only instruction despite the disagreement of parents. One supporter of the shift was the director of the program, who described doctrina children as having to struggle with the “burden of bilingual education and also as having to receive religious education in ways that replicate their experiences in public schools” (p. 223).

As discussed by Batibo (2009) in his study of poor communities in Africa, the dominant language facilitates access to material resources and power for people. The situation described by Batibo in African communities is similar to El Palmar in that there is a high need to improve their economic situation. For El Palmar residents and, as stated by a participating community leader, English constitutes a gateway for economic success while “Spanish would be a barrier in terms of being able to fully integrate into the U.S. system.”

**Implications**

The findings of this study reveal that El Palmar community makes an effort to maintain Spanish in different contexts of the colonia. This effort is more evident among participating mothers, who demonstrated a clear interest in helping their children in academics; in particular, these mothers implemented Spanish literacy practices with their bilingual children before they entered school. However, I also observed a children’s language discontinuity between home and school, a trend that is seen nationwide (García, Kleifen, & Falchi, 2008). Participating parents demonstrated being aware of this language discontinuity and claimed the need of having educators and researchers who could inform the colonia residents about the benefits of maintaining the Spanish language in the community. For instance, a mother clearly stated: “Más gente de afuera, gente como usted, debe venir a fomentar el español”, [More people from outside, people like you, should come here to foster the Spanish language].

Considering the potential role that mothers have in maintaining their children’s Spanish literacy skills, educators and researchers working in colonias could put into practice programs that involve parents in out-of-school Spanish literacy activities with their children. Examples could be those implemented in other Latino recent-immigrant communities (e.g., Rodríguez-Brown, 2010).
This kind of program includes workshops that develop parents’ literacy skills in their first language. Also, the development of biliteracy among *El Palmar* children could be benefited by facilitating the access to books in the community. Providing new bus routes between public libraries and El Palmar and a year-round lending library at the agency tutorial center are important changes that could help to develop biliteracy in the *colonia*.

To create a literacy continuum between home and school, an awareness of these out-of-school literacy practices should influence educators in classrooms and school-wide decisions, such as planning instructional activities for emergent bilinguals (Reyes & Moll, 2008). At this time in the U.S., English-only laws restrict teachers’ options for providing optimal teaching to emergent bilinguals (e.g., Palmer & Lynch, 2008). Consequently, educators must make a constant effort to create those opportunities outside the classrooms. In the particular case of *El Palmar*, an important resource of information would be the community leaders (e.g., priests, director of the after-school tutorial program). During field observations and conversations with community leaders, I recognized the potential for educators gaining insights into how *El Palmar* children use their bilingual and biliteracy abilities outside school. I would recommend inviting some of these community leaders to meet with teachers and administrators to enter into a constructive dialogue that would support Spanish among the *colonia* children.
Bibliografía


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Table 1

_Brief Profiles of Participants_

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<th>Age</th>
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<th>Occupation</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18*</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Tutorial Center</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 **</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Church leader</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20**</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Church leader</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21*</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>English teacher (Cultural Center)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Participants marked with an asterisk (*) never lived in El Palmar but have worked in different settings of the colonia; with two asterisks (**) were born and raised outside El Palmar, but have worked and lived in El Palmar for several years; and with (***) have been raised in El Palmar but at the moment of the interview were living outside the colonia.
Table 2

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census analysis</td>
<td>Data from 1990, 2000 and 2010 censuses</td>
<td>Comparative analysis of census data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic landscape photographs and printed samples</td>
<td>Community literacy landscaping and printed materials</td>
<td>Digital photography of signs. Collection of bulletins, flyers, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use surveys</td>
<td>Child (n=6) and adult (n=11) participants</td>
<td>Participants self-reported their language abilities in English and Spanish Data analysis using descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language logs</td>
<td>Child participants (n=6)</td>
<td>Children completed a log describing the language use during day’s activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field observations</td>
<td>Observations in different settings of the community (the after-school tutorial center, church, health clinic, cultural center, and participant family homes)</td>
<td>Field notes during and after observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Child (n=6), parent (n=8), staff member (n=7) participants</td>
<td>Participants were interviewed in their houses or workplaces Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Comparative Analysis of English-Speaking Ability in El Palmar According to 1990, 2000 and 2010 Versions of the Census*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change % (1990-2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>3,802</td>
<td>5,961</td>
<td>6,963</td>
<td>(+)83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 5 to 17 years Total</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>1,697</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>(+)49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 18 years and over Total</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>3,217</td>
<td>4,397</td>
<td>(+)151.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 5 to 17 years “percent who speak English less than very well”</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>(-)47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 18 years and over “percent who speak English less than very well”</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>(-)16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Language Used During Different Activities Throughout a Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Language used</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At home</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play on the computer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do homework</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Parents/siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have dinner</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Parents/siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Coach/classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Teacher/classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Teacher/classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Friends/Cafeteria staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the school bus</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Friends/bus driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the after-school tutorial center</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do homework</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports outside</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Staff/friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips/summer</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Staff/friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack time</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Staff/mothers/friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social events</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Staff/parents/friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting messages</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Friends/siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Facebook/MySpace</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play games on the computer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other activities or places</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Cashiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s office</td>
<td>English/Spanish</td>
<td>Doctors/nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Family members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Categories of Literacy Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At home</th>
<th>At the after-school tutorial center</th>
<th>During religious activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy events (e.g., reading, texting)</td>
<td>Literacy events (e.g., doing homework)</td>
<td>Literacy events (e.g., praying, reading the bible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language used during these practices</td>
<td>Language used during these practices</td>
<td>Language used during these practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role played by mothers during these practices</td>
<td>Role played by staff during these practices</td>
<td>Literacy practices at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role played by siblings during these practices</td>
<td>Role played by mothers who volunteered in the program</td>
<td>Literacy practices during catechism classes/church activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources used during these practices (e.g., books, magazines)</td>
<td>Resources used during these practices (e.g., books, computers)</td>
<td>Resources used during these practices (e.g., bible, church newsletters, songs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linguistic Landscape in El Palmar

Figure 1. (A) English-only signs in different commercial businesses; (B) Spanish-only signs in small businesses at home and church announcements; (C) Bilingual signs in small businesses at home.
Language Skill Abilities of Surveyed Groups

**Figure 2.** Graph that represents English and Spanish language skill abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for three groups of participants. This graph depicts mean and standard deviation. Means were calculated in a scale from 1 to 4, since the survey was on a 4-point scale.
Responsividad Materna: Estudio Mono-Casuístico de una Madre Latina y su Hija con Retrasos de Desarrollo

Nancy Stockall, Ph.D.; Corinna Villar Cole, Ph.D.; and Alma Contreras-Vanegas, Ph.D.
Sam Houston State University
Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo investigó la comunicación temprana entre una madre latina y su hija de dos años y medio de edad con retrasos de desarrollo. Las autoras realizaron cinco observaciones grabadas en video, en el hogar de las participantes, a lo largo de cinco meses. Adicionalmente, las autoras realizaron entrevistas a la madre y contaron con su colaboración para analizar las observaciones, utilizando técnicas de educación de video. Este caso preliminar fue el primero de un estudio multicasuístico más amplio, utilizando una lógica de diseño de replicación. Las conclusiones del estudio incluyeron cinco resultados. El primero reveló la naturaleza de la responsividad comunicativa entre madre e hija. El segundo describió la generación de signos prelingüísticos que se desarrollaron a partir de la interacción entre madre e hija. Por último, las autoras lograron poner al descubierto un sistema de signos idiosincráticos utilizado por miembros de la familia, en el entorno del hogar. Estos hallazgos preliminares darán luces a estudios casuísticos adicionales, relacionados con patrones de comunicación prelingüística de madres latinas y sus hijos con retrasos de desarrollo.

Introducción

Los retrasos de desarrollo (RD) afectan a uno de cada seis niños en los Estados Unidos. Según el Center for Disease Control and Prevention [Centro para el Control y Prevención de Enfermedades] (CDCP, 2016), el término retraso de desarrollo abarca un conjunto de condiciones diversas debidas a discapacidades en las áreas física, de aprendizaje, lingüística y de comportamiento. Un tipo particular de RD tiene que ver con niños con retrasos lingüísticos. Los retrasos en la adquisición del lenguaje son uno de los indicadores más tempranos de déficits de desarrollo que pueden afectar los resultados académicos y sociales de los individuos a lo largo de toda la vida (Kaiser y Roberts, 2011). Por otra parte, el incremento en el número de Aprendices del Idioma Inglés (AII) en los Estados Unidos se ha elevado exponencialmente durante la última década (Collins, O’Conner, Suárez-Orozco, Nieto-Castañón y Toppelberg, 2012) pero aún hay preguntas sobre cómo determinar cuál es el desarrollo lingüístico dual de los AII típicos y de aquellos con retraso, dadas las diferencias en cómo estos niños pequeños adquieren dos idiomas (Genesee, 2008, 2010).

La tarea de diferenciar entre el retraso lingüístico y el desarrollo típico de los AII recae en los evaluadores de educación especial cuando estos niños ingresan al sistema escolar. Uno de los aspectos más difíciles en la evaluación de jóvenes AII de quienes se sospecha que tienen RD en el área de lenguaje y comunicación, tiene que ver con el uso de mediciones estandarizadas y los problemas inherentes a la validez de estos instrumentos. Con mucha frecuencia, los resultados de las pruebas no diferencian claramente las discapacidades lingüísticas, los factores de adquisición del segundo idioma y las limitaciones en las oportunidades de aprendizaje del inglés como segundo idioma, o la falta de una exposición a modelos adecuados del idioma materno. En consecuencia, dada la atención nacional prestada a la mejoria del desempeño académico de niños latinos en las escuelas, resulta lógico y necesario investigar la naturaleza de la adquisición del lenguaje por parte de niños bilingües emergentes de quienes se sospecha que tienen RD. Además, para determinar plenamente si un niño bilingüe emergente está experimentando una diferencia o una discapacidad lingüística, debemos examinar la adquisición temprana del lenguaje por parte de los AII, mucho antes de que ingresen a la escuela y en el entorno hogareño.

Este documento presenta los resultados de un estudio cualitativo piloto del caso de una madre latina y su niña, quien presenta retraso lingüístico. Con el tiempo, los resultados...
preliminares de este caso servirán de guía a un estudio multicasuístico más amplio de cinco madres latinas y sus niños con retrasos lingüísticos. Este primer estudio casuístico examina la pregunta de investigación: ¿Cuál es la naturaleza de las interacciones comunicativas entre este primer caso de una cuidadora latina principal y su niñita en el ambiente del hogar?

En las secciones siguientes, describimos la literatura existente y los antecedentes teóricos del estudio. Después, describimos la metodología, las consideraciones éticas, el proceso de recolección y análisis de la información. Finalmente, presentamos nuestros resultados y conclusiones.

**Revisión de la Literatura**

La American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [Asociación Americana del Habla, Lenguaje y Audición] (ASHA, 2016) señala que muchos niños con RD tienen problemas de comunicación que se hacen evidentes en un limitado interés en la interacción social con otros, el fracaso en responder al habla, el uso limitado de gestos comunicativos, el balbuceo reducido o atípico y/o el crecimiento lento en vocabulario. Los niños pequeños que hablan principalmente un idioma distinto al inglés también pueden mostrar estas características. Es más, los niños que están siendo criados en hogares donde se habla un idioma distinto al inglés constituyen el 16% de la población general; sin embargo, solamente el 8% de estos niños reciben servicios de intervención temprana (IT) (Boyle, Boulet, Schieve, Cohen, Blumberg, Yeargin-Allsopp, y Kogan, 2011). Los servicios IT han prevenido o mitigado eficazmente el impacto de retrasos comunicativos tempranos (Thelin y Fussner, 2005); sin embargo, los estudios diseñados para predecir el desarrollo lingüístico posterior en niños con retrasos lingüísticos son más bien escasos. Se sabe aún menos acerca de la naturaleza de la interacción comunicativa entre cuidadoras latinas y sus niños que están en riesgo o han sido identificados como niños con retraso lingüístico. Con pocos estudios que predigan su desempeño lingüístico posterior, las posibilidades de que estos niños reciban IT son pocas. Típicamente, los médicos y terapistas del habla/lenguaje asumen un enfoque de “esperemos a ver,” para evitar que un niño sea etiquetado prematuramente como niño con una discapacidad. Sin embargo, este enfoque puede posponer la necesidad de IT en niños menores en riesgo.

La investigación también ha mostrado que uno de los factores más importantes en el desarrollo lingüístico temprano de los niños es la responsividad del cuidador a sus intentos comunicativos (Baumwell, Tamis-LeMonda y Bomstein, 1997; Masur, 1997). La responsividad maternal es considerada como la receptividad del cuidador para proporcionar comunicación contingente cuando el niño está totalmente orientado a recibir y procesar la comunicación. Baumwell et al. (1997) siguió el desarrollo vocal y exploratorio de infantes de 9 meses de edad y encontró que los infantes con madres con mayor responsividad obtenían puntajes mayores en lenguaje receptivo a los 13 meses. La autora sugirió que las madres con gran responsividad tienden a igualar su contribución lingüística con el foco atencional de los infantes, mejor que las madres con menor responsividad. Adicionalmente, las madres que proporcionan una contribución verbal contingente al comportamiento de sus niños, pueden ayudar a que los niños logren un mayor control sobre su entorno. Otros investigadores han encontrado que la capacidad de las madres para igualar su interacción con los cambios en el comportamiento de los niños, se correlacionaba con los resultados lingüísticos posteriores (Saxon, Colombo, Robinson y Frick, 2000). Se encontró que los estilos de interacción que incorporan una proporción alta de atención conjunta, mejoran significativamente la comprensión y producción de vocabulario del niño. A pesar de ser más bien escasas, las investigaciones sobre la responsividad materna con niños que tienen RD han ganado
alguna atención (Warren y Brady, 2007) pero la mayoría de estas investigaciones se centra en niños con autismo (Adamson, Deckner y Bakeman, 2010; Baker, Messinger, Lyons y Grantz, 2010).

Curiosamente, durante las últimas tres décadas, gran parte de la investigación se ha centrado en las diferencias en la responsividad materna en menores ingresos, lo que ha llevado a los investigadores a concluir que estos grupos no proporcionan a sus niños las experiencias de aprendizaje tempranas necesarias para tener éxito en la escuela (Beegle, 2003; Heath, 1983; Moreno, 1991, 1997, 2000).

Otros investigadores sostienen que las respuestas de los cuidadores a los intentos comunicativos de los niños pequeños dependen en gran medida del trasfondo cultural de la familia (Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, Mosier, Chavajay, y Heath, 1993). Es más, algunos eruditos han enfatizado el uso de actividades y tareas culturalmente relevantes en contextos de interacción cotidianas, para lograr una descripción objetiva de la responsividad materna (Rogoff et al., 1993). Además, Fey, Warren, Fairchild, Sokol y Yoder (2006) han sugerido que concentrarse en la intervención temprana del infante en la comunicación social, en la etapa prelingüística de su desarrollo, resultaría prometedor para el éxito lingüístico posterior de los niños menores.

Las destrezas prelingüísticas están compuestas por gestos y vocalizaciones primitivos y, posteriormente, palabras (Gullberg, de Bot y Volterra, 2008). Las primeras señas de comunicación gestual aparecen antes del final del primer año y son invitaciones intencionales para atraer la atención del oyente hacia algo en el entorno. Estos gestos incluyen *pedir* (extender el brazo hacia algo y abrir y cerrar la mano repetidamente), *mostrar* (sostener un objeto en la línea visual del oyente), *dar* (transferir el objeto a otro) y *señalar* (extender el dedo índice o la mano hacia un objeto, lugar o evento). Estos signos indiciales solamente pueden ser comprendidos dentro del contexto inmediato de la situación.

Mientras la contribución cultural y adulta puede tener influencia sobre el tipo y frecuencia de los gestos, todos los niños usan gestos, independientemente del insumo lingüístico primario (Gullberg et al., 2008). Los niños con impedimentos intelectuales y aquellos con discapacidades lingüísticas tienden a compensar los retrasos lingüísticos expresivos a través de una mayor producción de gestos (Chapman y Hesketh, 2000; Evans, Alibali, y McNeil, 2001). También hay indicios de que parlantes nativos de distintos idiomas pueden gesticular de forma diferente, en términos de forma y tiempo. Sin embargo, la investigación sobre patrones idiomáticos específicos, en términos de frecuencia, forma, ritmo o expresión semántica es particularmente escasa. Es más, no pudimos encontrar estudios del comportamiento gestual temprano en bilingües simultáneos. Al no contar con esa investigación, nos quedamos con la suposición común de que los gestos que transmiten un significado relacionado con el habla deben mejorar la comprensión de los aprendices de un idioma y su aprendizaje lingüístico pero no podemos saberlo con certeza.

**Marco Teórico**

Esta investigación cualitativa recibió luces de la teoría semiótica de Peirce la cual se centra en el desarrollo de signos y sistemas de signos. Esta perspectiva teórica resultó particularmente indicada para el propósito de nuestro primer estudio casuístico: dejar al descubierto la interacción comunicativa temprana entre una madre latina y su niña con retrasos lingüísticos. La teoría de la semiótica de Peirce ilumina la generación de signos, a medida que ganan significado dentro de la interacción de los participantes, y, en este caso, de una madre latina y su niña con retrasos lingüísticos. Debido a que la expresión de la niña de este estudio fue, en la mayor parte, no-verbal, las investigadoras se centraron en los signos prelingüísticos tempranos que evolucionaron entre la
madre y la niña. Esto incluyó una observación aguda de los movimientos corporales, la mirada y las vocalizaciones de la diada, tanto de la niña como de la madre. Los signos no-verbales de la niña resultaron ser particularmente interesantes, debido a su posible conexión con el lenguaje posterior.

Peirce consideró los significados que surgen de los signos que están interrelacionados y que evolucionan continuamente. Para Peirce, el signo suponen tres componentes que entran en una relación de interrelación e interdependencia (Merrill, 2001). Adicionalmente, Peirce desarrolló su teoría de los signos para incluir una tipología de los signos. En el nivel primario, los signos son considerados icónicos, indiciales y/o simbólicos. Los signos icónicos son aquellos que comparten una calidad del objeto semiótico. Esto es, el signo toma las características del objeto. Por ejemplo, los espacios de estacionamiento destinados a personas con discapacidades, a menudo son señalados con la imagen de una silla de ruedas; en consecuencia, esta imagen es icónica pues se parece al objeto real. Un signo indicial es aquel que tiene una relación o conexión real con su objeto semiótico. El humo es un signo indicial del fuego. Un signo indicial dirige nuestra atención hacia algo. Y, finalmente, el símbolo es un signo que connota algo a alguien. Así, las rosas son consideradas un símbolo del amor y evocan un significado particular. Todos estos tres signos trabajan conjuntamente para crear significados culturales. Estos signos elementales evolucionan continuamente y pueden superponerse para generar nuevos signos.

En nuestro estudio, la aparición de signos dentro de la interacción de una madre latina y su niña fue particularmente informativa. Al documentar cuidadosamente los movimientos de la niña con relación a la responsividad de la madre, dejamos al descubierto algunas de las formas más tempranas de su comunicación prelingüística. Mientras muchos movimientos generan signos nuevos, aquellos producidos por Kiwi (pseudónimo), la niña de nuestro estudio, no eran los típicos de niños de su edad. Aún así, estos signos corporales dieron paso a una comunicación plena de significado entre Kiwi y su madre, Alma.

Metodología

Diseñamos un estudio casuístico piloto que dará luces a un estudio más amplio sobre la responsividad de cuidadoras latinas y sus niños pequeños con RD. Este es el primer caso de una muestra mayor de diadas participantes que se ofrecieron como voluntarias para nuestro estudio. Diseñamos el estudio más amplio utilizando una lógica de replicación de un diseño de estudio multicasuístico. La Figura 1 ilustra el diseño del estudio más amplio y muestra cómo se usa cada caso para dar luces a los estudios casuísticos subsiguientes. El propósito específico de este proyecto piloto fue dejar al descubierto la naturaleza de los signos comunicativos entre una cuidadora latina, Alma, y su hija, Kiwi, quien mostraba retrasos lingüísticos. Alma, la tercera autora de este estudio, se ofreció voluntariamente para participar junto a Kiwi en este proyecto piloto. Mientras los estudios cuantitativos buscan que el investigador conserve su independencia frente a lo que se está estudiando, el paradigma cualitativo frecuentemente incluye a alguien en el papel de participante/observador, con el fin de recabar valiosa información proveniente de aquel que es parte del objeto de estudio (Spradley, 2016).

Como tal, este estudio casuístico es el primero de seis casos individuales. La primera autora recopiló información a través de entrevistas e hizo videograbaciones de interacciones entre Alma y su hija, Kiwi, y tomó abundantes notas de campo. Alma estuvo especialmente interesada en participar en el estudio y ella y su esposo autorizaron formalmente su participación. El University’s Internal Review Board [Junta de Revisión Interna de la Universidad] (IRB) revisó la propuesta y concedió permiso para el estudio investigativo.
Descripción de las Participantes

Alma es una joven, vivaz, inteligente y muy aplicada mujer latina. Actualmente, está comenzando lo que promete ser una brillante carrera en educación superior, trabajando como Profesora Auxiliar de Educación Bilingüe en el Programa de Preparación de Maestros de una universidad de tamaño medio en Texas. Alma es hija de inmigrantes mexicanos, quienes inculcaron en ella el valor del trabajo duro y el amor por la educación a una edad temprana. Los padres de Alma personifican la ética de trabajo impecable que ella pone sobre la mesa en todo lo que hace. Aunque los padres de Alma no tuvieron la oportunidad de cursar carreras educativas, inculcaron en ella el amor por la educación y la han apoyado en todas las formas posibles para garantizar que los sueños de ella se hagan realidad. Ella es la primera persona de su familia en lograr un título de Doctorado y este esfuerzo descansa no solo en sus propias capacidades sino también en el apoyo incansable de su familia. Alma está casada con el amor de su vida, un hombre valiente y joven con raíces en Centro América. Él es un bombero de tiempo completo, amoroso esposo y acucioso padre de Kiwi.

La historia de Kiwi comienza durante el primer año de Alma como Profesora Auxiliar. Alma y su familia estaban emocionadas con el embarazo de Alma. Ella siguió dictando sus clases asignadas en la universidad mientras el embarazo avanzaba. Como muchas jóvenes mujeres profesionales de nuestro tiempo, ella logró hacer malabares con su trabajo y responsabilidades personales con facilidad. El plan de Alma era continuar con su trabajo durante el embarazo y el nacimiento de su nuevo bebé, todo esto facilitado por una plataforma educativa en línea que le permitió dictar sus clases y atender sus nuevas obligaciones de madre en el hogar. Además, el horario flexible del marido de Alma le permitió a él compartir las responsabilidades de brindar cuidado y del hogar.
Así como la dura realidad rompe los sueños, el embarazo de Alma tuvo una interrupción. De repente, Kiwi estuvo lista para conocer a sus amorosos padres; sin embargo, esto ocurrió en un momento demasiado temprano del embarazo. El riesgo era muy grande y las posibilidades de sobrevivencia terriblemente bajas. A pesar de todo, Kiwi, con la misma determinación que su madre pone en todo lo que hace, tenía otros planes. Nació a las 25 semanas de gestación, con las probabilidades apiladas en contra de su supervivencia. Kiwi no solamente sobrevivió a aquella dura etapa inicial, sino que, desde su nacimiento, le ha demostrado a sus padres y al mundo que su tenacidad y resolución no tienen límites. Es una amorosa, encantadora y preciosa niña de 2 años y medio, quien tiene que trabajar con mucho más esfuerzo por cosas que otros niños y madres dan por sentadas. Kiwi tiene limitaciones en el movimiento de su brazo y mano derechos y se le diagnosticó una parálisis cerebral. Kiwi, aunque es funcionalmente no-verbal, tiene algunas protopalabras en su vocabulario. Entre ellas, “go,” “co,” y “mu.” Aunque no puede caminar sin ayuda, el progreso de Kiwi le permite sentarse independientemente y estar de pie con una ayuda mínima. Kiwi sigue perseverando en tareas que promueven un desarrollo adecuado en las áreas de cognición, habla, visión y de destrezas de motricidad gruesa y fina. La determinación de Alma para incrementar las probabilidades de que su hija mejore en todas las áreas, se equipara a la receptividad y resolución de espíritu de Kiwi.

Otra constante en la vida de Kiwi es la fuerte presencia de la cultura latina y el idioma español. Aunque Alma y su esposo hablan inglés a veces, ambos se comunican con Kiwi en español. Sin embargo, el inglés siempre está presente en su vida, pues la multitud de terapistas con que se cruza en el camino son monolingües. En consecuencia, Kiwi tiene la oportunidad de escuchar inglés de sus padres, quienes hablan el idioma con mucha propiedad, de los terapistas y de las canciones y juegos en la TV y la i-Pad. Alma y su esposo están decididos a enseñarle los dos idiomas. Ambos apoyan fuertemente el bilingüismo, aunque sus intervencionistas con frecuencia abogan por un solo idioma (el inglés) cuando los niños como Kiwi muestran RD.

Recopilación y Análisis de Información

La primera autora recopiló cinco observaciones grabadas en video, de Alma y Kiwi en su entorno hogareño, a lo largo de cinco meses. Cada observación duró entre 40 y 60 minutos, para un total de 200 minutos de información permanente que se podía volver a ver en múltiples oportunidades. Las observaciones tuvieron lugar en la sala de la familia y, una vez, en el cuarto de juegos de Kiwi. No hubo guiones para episodios de juego ni la necesidad de juguetes especiales para el estudio. La primera autora asumió el papel de observadora y limitó su interacción con Alma y con Kiwi durante el tiempo de las observaciones. Como estábamos interesadas en la interacción entre madre e hija, la cámara capturó tanto a Kiwi como a su madre en cada toma. Así, pudimos ver y oír las respuestas e iniciativas de Alma y Kiwi.

Adicionalmente, la primera autora realizó una entrevista semiestructurada inicial con Alma, en la universidad. Esta entrevista proporcionó un conocimiento de los antecedentes de Kiwi y Alma. En el Apéndice A se pueden encontrar las preguntas de la entrevista. Después de cada observación, las tres investigadoras se reunieron para analizar la información, utilizando técnicas de educación de video. La metodología de educación de video es simplemente una modificación de la educación fotográfica, en la que se usan imágenes fotográficas para suscitar conversaciones entre los participantes, acerca de los significados que esas imágenes tienen para ellos. En este caso, usamos las observaciones grabadas en video para explorar a fondo los significados de las interacciones entre Alma y Kiwi. La educación de las grabaciones en video incluyó preguntas abiertas que suscitaban significados en Alma, dentro de una conversación semiestructurada. Las
imágenes de video dieron lugar a que Alma compartiera sus pensamientos acerca de las observaciones grabadas, sus experiencias con el video y/o a seguir el rastro de recuerdos estimulados por las imágenes visuales.

Después de que Alma compartió su interpretación de la información, las dos primeras autoras, apoyándose en el análisis de Alma, revelaron sus propias interpretaciones de los signos y significados emergentes. Nuestro mayor interés era retener las interpretaciones que Alma hiciera de los signos, antes de dar las nuestras. Las interpretaciones de Alma fueron consideradas como particularmente fiables. Sin embargo, a veces a Alma se le dificultó el análisis, pues los matices captados le recordaban no solamente las fortalezas de Kiwi, sino también sus debilidades. Nos mantuvimos especialmente sensibles a las reacciones de Alma al observar los videos, poniendo atención en volver a consultar su disposición para continuar con la investigación. También le recordamos que ella se podía retirar como participante y continuar como investigadora en los casos futuros.

Sin embargo, Alma asumió un papel activo y resuelto como participante/investigadora. Ella invitó a la primera autora a su hogar para realizar las observaciones y compartió con entusiasmo los reportes en curso sobre el progreso de Kiwi. Es más, ella transcribió y tradujo para el equipo el lenguaje contenido en las grabaciones de video. Alma también codificó las transcripciones escritas entre ella y Kiwi, utilizando una versión modificada de las categorías funcionales Moreno (1983). En la Tabla 1 se encuentran y se definen cada uno de los diferentes tipos de comunicación revelados en las observaciones. También analizamos los videos en busca de gestos y signos corporales que significaran intentos de Kiwi para comunicarse con Alma. Esta fue una tarea difícil para Alma, pues muchos de los signos mostrados por Kiwi tenían significado para Alma pero no para el resto del equipo. Con el tiempo y con la ayuda de Alma, comenzamos a notar y decodificar la aparición de una variedad de tipos de signos.

Tabla 1

**Categorías Pragmáticas del Discurso**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandato</th>
<th>Definición</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas Conceptuales (PC)</td>
<td>Preguntas que requieren que el niño forme una representación conceptual mental (&quot;¿Qué hacemos ahora?&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcciones (C)</td>
<td>Enunciados que corrigen la preferencia o comportamiento del niño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directivas (tono gentil) (D)</td>
<td>Enunciados que le dicen al niño qué hacer, en un tono más gentil que el de órdenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquetado (E)</td>
<td>Enunciados con los que la cuidadora etiqueta la tarea o comportamiento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelado o demostración</td>
<td>La cuidadora ejecuta partes de la tarea, con el fin de que el niño observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otras verbalizaciones (OV)</td>
<td>Enunciados que no corresponden a otras categorías (&quot;¡Bien!&quot;; verbalizaciones o gestos familiares únicos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas perceptuales (PP)</td>
<td>Preguntas cuya respuesta se encuentra en el campo perceptual inmediato (&quot;¿Qué es esto?&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comportamientos de bienestar físico</td>
<td>Besar, abrazar, palmear la espalda del niño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrección física</td>
<td>La cuidadora manipula físicamente la tarea u objeto para corregir al niño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabanza (A)</td>
<td>Refuerzo verbal de reconocimiento porque el niño ha hecho algo correctamente</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Como ya se ha dicho, este reporte de estudio casuístico se centra en las interacciones comunicativas de una madre latina y su hija con retrasos lingüísticos. En este estudio piloto de Alma y su hija, Kiwi, recopilamos suficiente información para comenzar a tratar la pregunta de investigación: ¿Cuál es la naturaleza de la interacción comunicativa entre una cuidadora latina principal y su niñita en el ambiente del hogar? Este estudio monocasuístico condujo a tres resultados preliminares: (a) Responsividad Materna, (b) Generación de Signos y (c) Sistema de Comunicación Familiar. En las secciones siguientes, definimos y describimos cada uno de estos conceptos y cómo se relacionan con la literatura existente.

**Responsividad Materna**

En este caso, la responsividad materna se refiere a la forma en que Alma respondió a su hija, Kiwi, aún cuando Kiwi no tuviera éxito en mostrar un lenguaje apropiado para la edad. Queríamos capturar la interacción comunicativa entre Alma y Kiwi pero pronto encontramos que las verbalizaciones de Kiwi se limitaban a imitar algunas de las vocalizaciones de Alma. Por ejemplo, Kiwi podía imitar los fonemas /k/, /g/, /m/ y /h/, lo mismo que un sonido de clickeo. No obstante, después de transcribir las dos primeras observaciones grabadas en video, cada una de aproximadamente 40 minutos, un rico patrón de lenguaje social (v.g., pragmática) emergió dentro de la información. Primero, Alma tradujo las grabaciones de video del español al inglés. Luego, Alma codificó las transcripciones escritas, utilizando una versión modificada de las categorías pragmáticas de Moreno (1983). Resultaba crucial que fuera Alma quien tradujera y codificara las transcripciones, pues queríamos garantizar que la información fuera fiel a sus interpretaciones. Lo que más llamó nuestra atención fue la enorme cantidad de conversaciones producidas por Alma al ocuparse de Kiwi. Después de solo dos observaciones, encontramos que Alma produjo un total de 1.164 interacciones con Kiwi. De estas, 205 fueron actos de etiquetado, 130 directivas gentiles, 124 declaraciones de alabanza, 103 comentarios y 192 preguntas. La Tabla 2 presenta un desglose de las distintas categorías y sus frecuencias de ocurrencia durante las observaciones.
Tabla 2

**Análisis de Muestreo de 2 Videos**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categoría</th>
<th>Video 1</th>
<th>Video 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas conceptuales (PC)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcciones (C)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directivas (tono gentil) (D)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquetado E</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelado o demostración</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otras verbalizaciones (OV)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preguntas perceptuales (PP)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comportamientos de bienestar físico</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrección física</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabanza (A)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectura (L)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Señalar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaración (D)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicación visual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregunta (P)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atribución de competencia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desaprobación</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control físico</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbalizaciones cantadas o calmantes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
<td><strong>790</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,164</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A menudo, la incapacidad de Kiwi para usar lenguaje expresivo produjo la finalización de los intercambios sociales. Por ejemplo, durante una observación, Kiwi notó el calcetín que tenía en su pie derecho y comenzó a halarlo. Observando a Kiwi, Alma etiquetó el calcetín utilizando una inflexión interrogativa, esperando que Kiwi imitara la palabra. Al ver que Kiwi no imitaba la palabra, Alma pasó a dar una directiva gentil, alentando a Kiwi a que se quitara el calcetín. El siguiente extracto de la transcripción ilustra cómo Alma inicia la interacción:

**Alma: ¿Calcetín? (Alma dirige la mirada al pie de Kiwi)**

[Kiwi mira su pie y sigue halando el calcetín.]

**Alma:** ¿Calcetín?

[Kiwi continúa mirando y halando su calcetín.]

**Alma:** ¡Quítatelo!

[Kiwi continúa mirando y halando su calcetín.]

**Alma:** ¿Calcetín?

[Kiwi continúa mirando su calcetín pero deja de halarlo.]

**Alma:** ¿Calcetín?

[Cierra la cita]

**Cuando Kiwi dejó de halar su calcetín, esto dio fin a la interacción. Sin embargo, cuando Kiwi se desentendió, yaciendo sobre el piso, Alma inició una nueva conversación, así:**
¿Te vas a acostar?
[Kiwi se deja caer lentamente desde una posición sentada hasta quedar sobre la espalda.]
Alma: ¡Cuidado!
Alma: ¡Cuidado!
[Kiwi yace completamente de espaldas sobre el suelo, mirando hacia el techo.]
Alma: ¡Muy bien!

Aunque Kiwi se desprendió de la interacción yaciendo sobre la espalda, Alma comenzó inmediatamente un nuevo episodio interactivo, comentando los actos de Kiwi. Este ejemplo ilustra la exigencia de trabajo intensivo de Alma para sostener ambos lados de la conversación. Era como si Alma y Kiwi estuvieran en un balancín que exigía que Alma hiciera todo el trabajo para poder continuar con el juego. La intensa responsividad de Alma al menor movimiento de Kiwi parecía ser agotadora; sin embargo, Alma continuó iniciando la comunicación a lo largo de cada observación de 40 minutos. Lo más destacado era la profunda ausencia de respuestas verbales de Kiwi a las iniciativas de su madre. Otros investigadores han señalado lo frecuentes que son las iniciativas maternales de padres con infantes prematuros o con aquellos que tienen discapacidades pero han considerado esta interacción como intrusiva o controladora (Forcada-Guex, Borghini, Pierrehumbert, Ansemnet, y Muller-Nix, 2011; Muller-Nix, Forcada-Guex, Pierrehumbert, Jaunin, Borghini, y Ansermet (2004). Puede ser que la reacción del infante a estas interacciones haya llevado a los investigadores a definir las iniciativas como intrusivas. Sin embargo, en este caso, Alma simplemente cambió el tema de conversación para comentar sobre la acción de Kiwi, en lugar de detenerla. Después de comentar, Alma recuperó la atención de Kiwi sugiriendo una clase diferente de exploración. Este redireccionamiento fue hecho con un tono suave y un afecto positivo. En todo caso, la escasez de verbalizaciones, junto con los movimientos de Kiwi para romper el contacto, solamente fortalecieron la resolución de Alma para estimular intercambios lúdicos con Kiwi una y otra vez. ¿Qué fue lo que mantuvo a Alma en esta partida de un solo jugador apostando continuamente el todo por el todo?

Generación de Signos

La responsividad de Alma, a la luz de la ausencia de lenguaje expresivo por parte de Kiwi, fue alimentada por la generación de un sistema de signos semióticos, constituido por signos icónicos, indiciales y simbólicos. Estos signos no-verbales surgieron de los movimientos físicos de Kiwi al estar sentada derecha. Aunque muchos de estos movimientos aparentemente se desarrollaron a partir de reflejos motrices involuntarios, pronto se transformaron en gestos rudimentarios. Por ejemplo, la debilidad de Kiwi en el lado derecho de su cuerpo desvió su atención y enfoque hacia sus extremidades izquierdas, en particular, su mano y brazo izquierdos. Cuando Kiwi agarraba un objeto con su mano izquierda, ella podía coordinar su mano y brazo para colocar el objeto sobre una mesa, en el piso o en un balde. Sin embargo, cuando tenía la mano vacía y estaba sentada, con frecuencia estiró su brazo hacia el frente, transversalmente sobre su cuerpo hacia la derecha y lo extendió hacia su lado izquierdo. La restringida movilidad de Kiwi contribuyó a la aparición de un signo ambiguo, similar a un rudimentario gesto de señalar.

Cuando Alma preguntaba, “¿Qué quieres hacer ahora?,” Kiwi extendía su brazo izquierdo hacia el frente de su cuerpo. Alma interpretó este signo como un signo o gesto indicial, que señalaba que Kiwi quería moverse en esa dirección. A veces, Alma interpretaba el gesto como si significara que Kiwi quería obtener algo en otra parte de la habitación o incluso que quería salir.

Numerosos signos, algunos icónicos, algunos indiciales y unos pocos simbólicos, emergieron gradualmente de la interacción entre Alma y Kiwi. Por ejemplo, cuando Alma le
preguntaba a Kiwi, “¿Y ahora qué?,” Kiwi colocaba su mano abierta, con los dedos extendidos, sobre la cabeza y tocaba su frente con el pulgar. Este signo tiene su origen en el Lenguaje de Señas Americano y Alma lo modelaba con frecuencia al hablar con Kiwi sobre su papá. El signo es icónico, pues originalmente representaba el saludo de un caballero levantando el sombrero. Kiwi imitó pronto este signo al jugar con Alma, ante lo cual Alma la llevaba a ver a su papá en otro cuarto. Esta equiparación del signo con la persona, el papá de Kiwi, pronto vino a significar “el papá de Kiwi.” Cada vez que Kiwi gesticulaba “papá,” Alma repetía la palabra simbólica “papá” y luego hacía un comentario sobre él. Como el signo simbólico de “papá” solamente representaba una palabra, Alma tuvo que ampliar la palabra y adivinar cuál era el significado del signo para Kiwi. “Papá” podría significar, “¿Dónde está papá?,” “Quiero estar con papá” o aún una forma simple de balbuceo como en “pa pa pa.” Si el papá de Kiwi estaba en la casa, Alma podía interpretar el significado del signo como “¿Dónde está papá?” En este punto, Alma llevaba a Kiwi a verlo. Si el papá de Kiwi estaba trabajando, Alma podía ampliar la expresión a “Papi está trabajando.” En cualquier caso, la ampliación lingüística que Alma hacía del signo comunicativo de Kiwi, aumentaba la exposición de Kiwi a una amplia variedad de estructuras oracionales y de vocabulario.

También captamos la evolución de un signo idiosincrático que Kiwi adaptó a partir del signo para “papá.” Kiwi estiraba sus dedos, separándolos para hacer el signo de “papá,” pero en lugar de tocarse la frente, con el pulgar tocaba su lengua extendida. Kiwi emitía un sonido gutural, usando este signo hasta que Alma preguntaba “¿Tienes hambre?” Cuando Kiwi volvía a producir el mismo signo, Alma le proporcionaba algún bocadillo o comenzaba a preparar una comida. Kiwi había creado el signo por sí misma, adaptando el signo de “papi” para que significara “tengo hambre.”

El Surgimiento de un Sistema de Comunicación Familiar

Con la generación y proliferación de signos corporales combinados con vocalizaciones, Kiwi y Alma trabajaron cooperativamente para crear un sistema de signos familiar, que era comprensible para Alma y su marido pero no para los miembros de la familia o para los conocidos. Los signos familiares del hogar pasaron sin ser reconocidos por el mundo exterior. En el hogar, Kiwi usaba los movimientos de su brazo para apartar juguetes, indicando disgusto o negativa. Al querer desligarse de una conversación, Kiwi cambió frecuentemente su postura de estar sentada a estar acostada sobre su espalda. Cuando Kiwi dio palmadas a su pañal, Alma le preguntó si necesitaba que se lo cambiara. Cuando Kiwi dio palmadas a la bandeja incorporada a su asiento, Alma proporcionó un juguete u objeto para que ella explorara. Al estar sentada en el canto de Alma durante la hora de los cuentos, Kiwi golpeó suavemente su puños uno contra el otro, significando “Más” y dio vuelta a la hoja del libro. Todos estos signos comunicativos mantuvieron a Kiwi en la presencia inmediata de Alma y era evidente que ellas mostraban un vínculo muy fuerte. Esta unión estaba apoyada en la interacción social 1:1 en el contexto del hogar y cuando Alma no podía estar con Kiwi, su esposo estaba allí para remplazarla. Esta interacción intensiva 1:1 con Kiwi da lugar a la idea de que el discurso de los padres puede mejorarar el desarrollo lingüístico posterior. De hecho, la investigación (Ramírez-Esparza, García-Sierra, y Kuhl, 2014) señala que los infantes que interactúan con un solo individuo cuya producción discursiva es exagerada, producen una mayor cantidad de habla y un lenguaje posterior más avanzado. Esta interacción social 1:1 permite más respuestas contingentes entre el cuidador principal y el niño. Además, esta conclusión corrobora el trabajo de Kuhl (2007, 2011) y de Kuhl, Coffey-Corina, Padden, Munson, Estes, y Dawson (2013), que sugiere que la adquisición del lenguaje necesita de la interacción social para
suscitar el aprendizaje, tanto en niños cuyo desarrollo es típico, como en aquellos con retrasos lingüísticos.

Aún así, este exitoso intercambio social no estuvo exento de retos. El papel de trabajo intensivo de Alma para proveer una interacción 1:1, junto con la responsabilidad de proporcionarle a Kiwi un acceso a la exploración del entorno, puso a Alma a desempeñar un papel extenuante. Sin embargo, Alma y su familia tuvieron la fortuna de poder suplir más que las necesidades básicas de la vida. La sala donde grabamos sus interacciones estaba llena de abundantes juguetes estimulantes y libros. Estos artefactos estaban fácilmente al alcance de Alma y ella se los podía dar a Kiwi y cambiarlos por otros cuando Kiwi se aburría. Uno de los pedidos de Kiwi que pudo ser interpretado fue el pedido de libros. Con frecuencia, Kiwi se quedaba sentada y prestaba atención a los libros de tapa dura mientras Alma los leía una y otra vez. Sin el apoyo de cuidadores secundarios y de proveedores de intervenciones, el potencial de fatiga del cuidador puede volverse insostenible. No fue difícil entender cómo los cuidadores que no cuenten con el tipo de apoyo que Alma y Kiwi tienen, pueden fácilmente verse ocupados realizando las tareas propias del hogar o otras responsabilidades, inhabilitándolos para proporcionar esta estimulación intensiva. Esta situación se presentó durante una observación, cuando Alma se le perdió de vista a Kiwi. Los signos corporales de Kiwi desaparecieron. Estuvo sentada o se acostó boca arriba y permaneció silenciosa y quieta. Pateó varias veces y se tocó los dedos de los pies. Permaneció calmada, quieta y silenciosa, como si estuviera a la espera de escuchar la voz de Alma. Solamente cuando Alma volvió a sentarse con ella, Kiwi movió los brazos hacia adelante y atrás, emocionada, y volvió a sentarse derecha.

**Discusión**

El propósito de este estudio piloto exploratorio se cumplió, pues logramos poner al descubierto las complejidades de las interacciones sociales de Alma y Kiwi. Como la literatura ha señalado, la responsividad maternal a los infantes con RD es crucial para el desarrollo lingüístico posterior (Boström, Broberg y Bodin, 2011). Sin embargo, a diferencia de los niños cuyo desarrollo es típico, los infantes con RD, como grupo, comparten varias características, tales como una actividad baja, menos afecto positivo y presentan menores frecuencias de iniciativas sociales (Rogers, 1988). Además, la naturaleza bidireccional de la interacción social contribuye a los cambios cualitativos del comportamiento, tanto del cuidador como del niño, creando una coreografía continua de intercambios entre los miembros de la pareja. Cuando los cuidadores principales están sintonizados con el surgimiento de signos y señales del infante, pueden responder en formas plenas de sentido. Aún así, con los infantes con RD, es difícil discernir los signos emergentes, lo cual puede hacer que los cuidadores respondan a cada señal o, tal vez, a ninguna. Por otra parte, con los infantes que presentan frecuencias más bajas de mirar con fijeza, sonrisas y arrullos, es necesario que los cuidadores reconozcan esto como inmadurez psicológica y no lo interpretan como un rechazo. La forma en que los cuidadores interpretan los signos de los infantes resulta crucial para la sostenibilidad de la interacción. Blumer (1969), en su teoría del interaccionismo, planteó que la gente actúa frente a las cosas con base en el significado que estas cosas tienen para ellos. Estos significados se funden en un conjunto de creencias acerca de las habilidades, necesidades y expectativas de desarrollo futuro del niño. En consecuencia, los cuidadores tienden a actuar de acuerdo con las creencias que tienen sobre sus infantes y sobre el papel de estos en el proceso de desarrollo.

Alma reconoció los retrasos comunicativos de Kiwi pero también tuvo la convicción de que con intervenciones intensivas Kiwi podría lograr avances lingüísticos adecuados. Sus
convicciones se reflejaron en su deseo de obtener servicios intensivos de habla y lenguaje, terapia ocupacional (TO) e intervenciones tempranas para Kiwi. Además, Alma también consideró su papel como maestra de Kiwi. En varias ocasiones, Alma mencionó que con frecuencia había practicado con Kiwi destrezas tomadas de las sesiones de terapia; “Con la terapista de lenguaje, aprendí a usar signos infantiles con Kiwi y la fisioterapeuta sugirió que Kiwi usara el aparato ortopédico para estar de pie. Yo la dejo estar de pie y recostarse contra el sofá cuando usa el i-Pad.” Otros investigadores han sugerido que las madres méxico-americanas pueden considerar que su papel es el de “cuidadoras maternales,” más que el de “maestras,” y se fijan más en la naturaleza de la comunicación que en la tasa de su adquisición (García, Pérez y Ortiz, 2000). Este no fue el caso de Alma, aunque es probable que su fe en el desempeño de papeles múltiples haya surgido de su educación superior como maestra/investigadora.

Claramente, el examen de la comunicación de Alma y Kiwi en la etapa prelingüística temprana produjo revelaciones sobre la naturaleza de los retrasos lingüísticos de Kiwi. Con Alma, Kiwi experimentó una preponderancia del lenguaje verbal y una retroalimentación positiva extensiva pero el desarrollo lingüístico de Kiwi siguió estando a la zaga del de sus pares en edad. Este retraso puede ser entendido como el resultado del conjunto de limitaciones físicas comunes a los niños con parálisis cerebral. Con una movilidad limitada para explorar su entorno, Kiwi dependía de otros para crear un campo proximal de distintas experiencias sensoriales. Era necesario que múltiples objetos, juguetes e ítems sensoriales estuvieran fácilmente a su alcance. Es más, al sostener un juguete u objeto, para Kiwi era difícil explorar sus dimensiones o atributos con una sola mano. Al no poder sostener y examinar los objetos de cerca, la atención de Kiwi se desvanecía rápidamente. Aún así, la asidua atención de Alma sobre las acciones de Kiwi y la clara perfusión de información lingüística que ella compartía con Kiwi, crearon una estrecha red de comunicación, de la cual se generaron nuevos signos.

Estos signos nuevos, que tomaron la forma de gestos rudimentarios, fueron la señal de que los movimientos involuntarios de Kiwi se habían convertido en actos intencionales de comunicación. Esta fue una coyuntura crítica para el sistema comunicativo familiar de Kiwi y Alma, pues los gestos sirven para lograr y conservar la atención y la comunicación con otros. Alma interpretó la extensión del brazo y de la mano de Kiwi como un signo indicial o lo que comúnmente se llama señalar. Ademá, Alma actuó desde una perspectiva socio-cognitiva, en la que señalar constituye una comunicación intencional, con el fin de dirigir la atención de otra persona o evento por una razón específica (Tomasello, Carpenter, y Liszkowski, 2007). Bates, Camaioni, y Volterra, (1975) describieron dos motivos para el gesto de señalar: el imperativo y el declarativo. El imperativo sirve para controlar el comportamiento del oyente, mientras que el declarativo busca comentar sobre un objeto o evento. En el caso de Kiwi, Alma interpretó el gesto de Kiwi como uno imperativo, llevando a Kiwi con frecuencia a otro lugar o reubicándola con respecto a la dirección del gesto. Cuando Alma le acercaba objetos a Kiwi, con frecuencia le pedía que escogiera el objeto que prefiriera. Kiwi extendía su brazo y usaba su mano para palmeo uno de los objetos cercanos a ella. En ocasiones como esta, Alma interpretó el gesto de Kiwi como imperativo. Curiosamente, no observamos casos en los que Alma interpretara los gestos de Kiwi como declarativos. Pueden existir varias razones para esto.

Primero, los gestos de Kiwi no eran gestos típicos de un acto de señalar, en los que se extiende la mano con el dedo índice dirigido hacia un objeto o evento (Leavens, Hopkin y Thomas, 2004). Aún así, Alma interpretó este movimiento como un signo indicial. Segundo, Alma sabía que Kiwi sufría de miopía y era probable que no pudiera ver cosas a distancia y los gestos de Kiwi rara vez incluían vocalizaciones. Típicamente, la vocalización de un infante lleva a la madre a
responder de una manera similar. Sin embargo, al no contar con la señal vocal, Alma se inclinó a interpretar el gesto como uno directivo.

Independientemente del significado que Alma le atribuyera al acto de señalar de Kiwi, Alma prosiguió con una frase semántica o comentario pertinente. De esta forma, Kiwi escuchó vocabulario adicional y frases sintácticamente complejas, respondiendo los comentarios de Alma con signos corporales (esto es, mirar hacia Alma, inclinarse mientras gesticulaba), creando intercambios por turnos, como aquellos que se ven en las conversaciones típicas. Esta interacción mutuamente compartida mantuvo tanto a Kiwi como a Alma comprometidas en extensos períodos de socialización. Debido a que Alma interpretó estos signos como ofertas intencionales, estos sirvieron para reforzar las iniciativas y elaboraciones comunicativas de Alma. Otros investigadores también han señalado que los gestos de actitud de señalar de los niños resultan en una respuesta verbal inmediata de los adultos (Kishimoto, Shizawa, Yasuda, Hinobayashi y Minami, 2007), creando un contexto que llama a más interacciones.

El surgimiento de los gestos de Kiwi anunció el paso de una comunicación lingüística pasiva a una activa, que incitó a Alma a establecer más oportunidades de aprendizaje contingente para Kiwi. Cuando Kiwi gesticulaba, Alma le etiquetaba o describía los objetos. Cuando Alma le hacía preguntas a Kiwi, creaba un contexto de expectativas, al cual Kiwi respondía inclinándose hacia el objeto, señalándolo o dándole palmaditas. Cuando Kiwi respondía, Alma le alcanzaba el objeto. Los infantes sin discapacidades pueden manifestar el aprendizaje contingente a la respuesta en 2 o 4 minutos pero los infantes con discapacidades necesitan de más tiempo para mostrar estos mismos comportamientos (Hutto, 2003). Además, el aprendizaje contingente a la respuesta tiene lugar naturalmente, a través de la exploración del entorno. Solamente la persistencia de Alma en alcanzarle a Kiwi diferentes objetos y juguetes para que explorara, narrando la acción que tenía lugar, pudo mantener viva una rica y positiva red de interacción. Una vez que Kiwi comenzó a usar gestos deícticos, comenzó a desempeñar el papel de iniciadora y Alma pudo renunciar a la responsabilidad de iniciar todas las interacciones. Este avance del desarrollo estableció una sincronía balanceada en sus interacciones, donde la dualidad de la responsividad contingente sirvió como medio de refuerzo y sostenimiento de su interacción (Paavola, Kunnari y Molannen, 2005).

El surgimiento de los gestos de Kiwi fue, efectivamente, un avance crucial hacia el establecimiento de una conexión social fuerte con otros en el entorno del hogar. Ayudó a crear un contexto de comunicación interactiva balanceada, aliviando la carga de Alma. Adicionalmente, pudimos comparar la investigación relativa a la naturaleza de los gestos de Kiwi, con los gestos de infantes de desarrollo típico, en términos de sincronía, frecuencia y forma. No sorprende que las formas gestuales iniciales de Kiwi no correspondieran a movimientos motrices refinados sino rudimentarios, como resultado de sus déficits motrices de origen neurológico. A pesar de estas limitaciones, su deseo de usar gestos para comunicarse era impresionante y ciertamente exitoso en atraer la atención de otros. Con todo, queda la pregunta acerca de cuál es la similitud de estos gestos y los gestos tempranos de bilingües simultáneos típicos. Nuestros casos adicionales de investigación pueden arrojar algunas luces sobre esta materia.

**Recomendaciones**

Dado el diseño de este estudio casuístico, no sería apropiado generalizarlo para la más amplia población de madres latinas y sus niños con retrasos lingüísticos. Más bien, esperamos que las densas descripciones contextuales dadas aquí permitan que el lector compare este caso particular con otros de naturaleza similar, abriendo una oportunidad a la transferibilidad de resultados. En otras palabras, los facultativos que estén trabajando con familias de tipo similar
pueden encontrar útil esta información en el examen de la comunicación lingüística temprana de diadas madre/niño latinas que también tengan discapacidades. A la luz de lo anterior, tenemos varias recomendaciones:

- Los facultativos que trabajen con diadas madre/niño latinas querrán examinar y observar de cerca la naturaleza de la comunicación entre madre y niño en el entorno del hogar, para basarse en este sistema familiar para el trabajo en el entorno escolar.
- Independientemente del idioma natal del niño y la familia, es necesario que los facultativos escolares hablen inglés y el idioma natal del niño, incluso cuando el niño tenga un habla expresiva limitada.
- La comprensión de los significados familiares de los gestos tempranos es crucial para la creación de un puente de comunicación entre el maestro y el niño.
- La responsividad a los intentos comunicativos del niño también es crítica para la creación y conservación de una relación con el niño.
- Es necesario que los maestros atribuyan una intención y un significado a los gestos rudimentarios del niño, con el fin de darle voz al niño en el salón de clases.
- Lo que más importa para el beneficio del niño es que el maestro esté en sintonía con las señales e intenciones de comunicación del niño y que responda prontamente a esos signos, de manera que las interacciones sean sincrónicas y mutuamente fortalecedoras (Kassow y Dunst, 2004, 2005).

Investigación Futura

Es necesario que en el futuro se realicen investigaciones basadas en estudios casuísticos cualitativos a fondo, para que los facultativos tengan información acerca de la naturaleza y ontogénesis de la adquisición del lenguaje por parte de niños latinos con retrasos o desórdenes lingüísticos. Solamente una descripción detallada de las interacciones en las diadas madre/niño puede familiarizar a los maestros con el sistema de comunicación que se desarrolla en el hogar y usarlo como base en la escuela. Además, dadas la escasez de investigaciones sobre el desarrollo de los gestos en niños bilingües y la práctica corriente de emplear gestos para mejorar la comprensión en estudiantes con un segundo idioma, necesitamos evidencia empírica para apoyar esta práctica. ¿Los gestos ayudan a los estudiantes con un segundo idioma a comprender e incrementar el desarrollo de vocabulario? ¿Los gestos son destrezas compensatorias para los estudiantes con retrasos y desórdenes lingüísticos, o abren el camino al habla expresiva posterior? ¿Los gestos en niños con retrasos lingüísticos se desarrollan simultáneamente o secuencialmente? Estas son solo algunas de las preguntas esenciales que los futuros esfuerzos investigativos deberán explorar.
References


Korean and Korean-American Bilingual Students’ Responses to Multicultural Children’s Literature

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to investigate how Korean immigrant children (born in Korea) and Korean-American children (born in the U.S.) responded to multicultural Korean children’s literature. Two questions were investigated: (1) What were the textual connections that the children demonstrated in their oral responses to the multicultural literature? (2) Were there differences in how the two groups of children responded to a cultural topic? The study was qualitative, and involved discourse analyses of the students’ book discussions and interview responses. The Korean immigrant children differed from the Korean-American children in the types of connections they made with the multicultural Korean literature and in how they viewed the cultural topic. The multicultural Korean literature served as mirrors for the Korean immigrant children, but as windows for the Korean-American children. Exploratory talk helped one of the older Korean-American children to shift his responses toward empathizing with one of the characters.

Introduction

Many Korean parents in the United States (U.S.) send their children to Korean heritage language (home language) schools so that they don’t lose their Korean and Korean identity as they acquire English. Some of the children are first-generation immigrants, children born in Korea who later move with their families to the U.S; whereas, other children are second-generation immigrants, children born in the U.S to first-generation immigrant parents (Shin, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Tse, 2001). Given the different immigrant status of Korean children who attend Korean heritage language schools, it is worthwhile to consider the type of curriculum and instruction provided in the schools to help Korean children become bilingual and bicultural. A number of researchers advocate the benefits of including multicultural literature in the education of language minority students (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Cai, 2002; Colby & Lyon, 2004; Sims Bishop, 1990, 1992; Louie, 2005). Colby and Lyon (2004) argue that “[m]ulticultural literature helps children identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity” (p. 24). Louie (2005) claims that providing language minority students with literature that portrays their own cultures and asking them to make personal connections to the characters or texts before introducing literature about other cultures is desirable because “it is difficult for students to step into others’ positions and to operate cognitively and emotionally with a set of beliefs and values that are not their own” (p. 568). How first-generation and second-generation Korean immigrant children respond to multicultural Korean children’s literature is a topic that has not been adequately explored. Furthermore, how different immigration status affects the children’s value and belief systems as well as their identity formation as either Korean or Korean-American have been rarely investigated in this field of study.

The purpose of this paper was to investigate how two types of Korean students in the U.S. – Korean immigrant (first-generation immigrants born in Korea) and Korean-American students (second-generation immigrants born in the U.S.) – responded to multicultural Korean children’s literature. I addressed two questions:

1. What were the textual connections that Korean immigrant and Korean-American children demonstrated in their oral responses to multicultural literature about Korean immigrant children’s experiences in the United States?
2. To what extent were there differences in how Korean immigrant and Korean-American children viewed a cultural topic in one of the books?

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

**The merits of multicultural literature**

As classroom teachers encounter more linguistically and culturally diverse students, many of them have seen the merits of using multicultural literature in their classrooms. Sims Bishop (1990, 1992) has argued that literature for children should be both their mirrors and windows. She (1992) recommends that children be involved with literature that allows them to see themselves mirrored in the texts as well as literature that provides windows through which they can see the world around them. Through this process, she points out that children can become aware of the differences between their own world and that of others, find similarities between themselves and others, and develop tolerance and understanding of unfamiliar cultures. Sims Bishop (1990) observed that children of the dominant group could easily find children’s literature that served as their mirrors, but were less likely to find literary windows that presented others. On the other hand, children outside the dominant group have numerous windows to see the dominant culture, but few literary mirrors that reflect their identities and experiences.

Möller (2008) proposed a theoretical framework – a response development zone (RDZ) – to examine students’ responses to multicultural literature, allowing educators to comprehend not only the students’ level of development but also their potential for learning how to respond to unfamiliar texts or responses (p. 152). She argued that teachers should create a RDZ by giving students the opportunity to engage in discussion about multicultural texts in which they produce their own thoughts as well as receive guidance from others. Through interaction and collaboration within the RDZ, readers are able to see themselves, others, and the world with multiple viewpoints, which can accelerate their understanding of different points of view and social issues.

Möller’s (2008) RDZ concept illustrates how Athanases’s (1998) emphasis on “power of exploratory talk” (p. 293) could be implemented. According to Athanases, exploratory talk one-on-one with the teacher and/or within small groups scaffolds students’ engagement in discussion with others and helps them to move form external activity/influences to internal psychological development.

**Immigrant Children’s Identity Construction**

Language and identity are closely interconnected because language is a primary medium for communication that represents one’s culture, and through communication one’s identity is established (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996). Many researchers and scholars have demonstrated the positive correlation between language and one’s identity (Baker, 2001; Clyne, 2005; Gee, 2008; McCarthey, 2001). Immigrant children’s heritage language (HL) indicates that they belong to a particular ethnic group that shares the same cultural heritage (Noels et al., 1996; You, 2005). Thus, HL is “an important symbol of ethnic identity” (Baker, 2001, p. 69). McCarthey (2001) demonstrated that for students who are from diverse linguistic/cultural backgrounds, “literacy, cultural and language background, and personal characteristics all played a role in [their] construction of identities” (p. 142). Researchers further found that HL development plays an important role in children’s identity formation by encouraging higher self-esteem within their ethnic group (Phinney et al., 2001; Tse, 1997, 2001) and have good sense of their cultural identity.
(Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Laroche et al., 1998; Pigott & Kabach, 2005). Researchers to date have demonstrated the close relationship between HL and individual’s ethnic identity because positive attitudes towards one’s ethnic identity can promote HL learning, and proficiency in HL can positively impact their ethnic identity formation.

Given the significance of one’s positive ethnic identity formation through HL learning, You (2005) investigated elementary Korean-American children who have attended a heritage Korean language school. He examined their attitudes toward HL learning (by adopting Tse’s (1998) ethnic identity development model) as well as their ethnic identity as Korean-Americans. You found that students who provided good reasons to learn HL (e.g., good communication with relatives, advantages of being bilingual, and desire to visit Korea in the future) and attend the heritage Korean language school preserved a positive ethnic identity as Korean-Americans. Thus, the study found the close relationship between children’s HL learning and their positive ethnic identity. This finding corroborates Tse’s (1998) argument that HL learning is accelerated when an individual has positive attitudes toward his or her HL use and their ethnic group.

**Korean Immigrant Families’ Attitudes and Practices toward Bilingualism**

Researchers have revealed that many Korean immigrant parents understand the positive effects of bilingualism on their children and the merits of promoting their children’s heritage language learning (Kim, 2011; Shin, 2005; Shin & Krashen, 1998; You, 2005). In particular, You (2005)’s study demonstrated that “[immigrant] parents’ attitude toward native language and its use is very important to their children’s heritage language maintenance” (p. 716). The Korean-American parents in his study showed their strong desire for their children to develop heritage language and culture. In his study of 3rd to 8th grade Korean heritage language learners, one particular student presented more positive attitudes towards Korean language learning than Vietnamese language learning and showed a positive ethnic identity on being Korean. The student’s father was a Vietnamese-American but seldom spoke Vietnamese, but his mother, a Korean-American, often spoke Korean to her child and taught Korean culture. This finding implies that immigrant parents’ positive attitudes toward heritage language learning can lead their children to develop the heritage language as well as their ethnic identity.

However, in spite of many Korean immigrant parents’ positive attitudes toward their children’s bilingualism, it is true that they still have personal pressures to switch their primary language to English (Shin, 2005). For many Korean immigrant parents, their children’s Korean literacy skills have little direct relevance to their school performance, but the mastery of English is seen to exert immediate influence on their children’s success in school and their self-esteem (Kim, 2011). That is, in Korean immigrant families, language shift commonly appears when parents have a strong emphasis on their children’s English education (Hurh, 1998; Hurh & Kim, 1990; Kang, 2013; Shin, 2005). Thus, although the parents have a positive attitude toward teaching heritage language to their children and strong desire to raise their children as bilingual, there is a gap between those ideals and their real practices at home. For instance, in Ro and Cheatham’s (2009) study, the Korean immigrant parents presented their strong value of teaching Korean to their American-born child. Though after entering kindergarten, the child’s English language use at home increased, and the parents increasingly accepted their child’s English use at home over time. At the same time, the parents’ use of English increased as well by code-switching from Korean to English and translating Korean to English because of the child’s dominant use of English. Accordingly, the child’s communicative skills in Korean decreased not only due to the
rapid growing of his English exposure (e.g., English schooling, English-speaking peers, English media) but also because of his diminished use of Korean at home with parents.

Kang (2013) indeed found in Korean immigrant families that parents’ use of code-switching to English in their utterances led the children to easily respond in English. Ro and Cheatham suggested that “families who only speak the home language have greater opportunities to become bilingual and biliterate” (p. 302). In the same sense, other researchers have found that language minority parents’ consistent HL use at home can play a pivotal role in maintaining their children’s bilingual/bicultural identities and their active establishment of bilingualism (Kasuya, 1998; Lanza, 1997).

Methods

I employed the constructivist/interpretive paradigm (Mertens, 2005) because I wanted to create an understanding of how the children connected to the topics in the books. I anticipated that all participants, including the teacher, constructed their own interpretations of the texts (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2005). Since "reality is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005, p.12), the constructivist/interpretive research paradigm, with its focus on social construction, multiple participant meanings, and naturalistic phenomenon (Creswell, 2003), was appropriate for my research.

Based on the constructivist/interpretive paradigm, I employed a qualitative discourse analysis methodology, in which I analyzed the students’ book discussions, juxtaposing my text analysis with my analysis of the student interview transcripts. Researchers have pointed out that discourse analysis can help researchers examine the cultural orientation of language and literacy events in classrooms (Bloome et al., 2008) because it involves a close examination of what people actually do with language (Gee, 2010). Gee (2010) recommends that discourse analysis – derived from cultural (Barrera, 1992), social (Street, 2003), and political (Shor, 1999) views of language and literacy – be used to analyze oral and written texts. He observes that people use oral and written languages in various ways to create their identities, to perform cultural roles, and to convey cultural, political, and social messages. According to Gee (2010), when people encounter texts, they interpret and construe their own unique meanings of texts because their experiences vary by contexts as well as their social and cultural groups. Gee explained that researchers should understand how a particular person or a group of people use words, phrases, sentences, and/or discourses from their perspectives. Accordingly, in Gee’s view, people use language to do, not just to say.

Setting

The data were collected over six weeks during the spring semester at a Saturday Korean heritage language school in a Korean church in the Midwest. I used pseudonyms for all locales and participants.

Participants

Students. All of the students enrolled in the first-grade class (n = 6) at the Korean language school (four females and two males) participated. They attended American schools Monday-Friday, with five of them in first grade and one male student in third grade. (The third grader’s parents placed him in the first grade class due to his low Korean proficiency). I divided the
students into two groups according to their immigration status and language proficiencies. In Group A, there were three students who had been born in Korea and who had immigrated to the U.S. with their families. They were proficient in Korean but limited English speakers. The other three students were in Group B. They had been born in the U.S., and were proficient in English but limited Korean speakers. Table 1 provides demographic data for the six students.

**Mothers of the students.** Secondary participants were the mothers of each of the six students. All six mothers, who were responsible for their child(ren)’s school transportation, agreed to participate in an interview, which was conducted after the school day.

**Researchers.** I was the researcher and the teacher in this study. I am a native Korean speaker and bilingual in Korean and English. In this paper, I refer to myself in the first person as researcher and in the third person as teacher.

**Data Sources and Procedures**

**Materials.** I selected three Korean multicultural books, available in both Korean and English – *Sumi’s First Day of School Ever* (Pak, 2003), *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2003), and *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003) for the teacher and students to read and discuss. The books have similar storylines; they depict Korean immigrant children who experience challenges due to a different language and school environment in the U.S.

**Audio-recordings of book discussions.** The book discussions between the teacher and six students were audio-recorded over six weeks, and later transcribed and translated into English. Each book discussion was held daily for 40 to 50 minutes. The total amount of time that the students participated in the book discussions was 272 minutes. The teacher first read the books aloud in Korean, then had the children read the books independently in Korean and/or English. The book discussions were held after the children had read the books independently. During the book discussions, the teacher also asked the children about a cultural topic (i.e., if they thought the main character in *The Name Jar* should choose an English name or keep her Korean name). When the teacher held the book discussions, she predominantly used Korean, but sometimes code-switched to English to specifically invite the less-proficient Korean students to participate in the book discussions. The students used Korean and/or English in the book discussions, sometimes code-switching.

**Student interviews.** I conducted two semi-structured, open-ended interviews with each of the students. The first interview occurred (10-15 minutes) before the book discussions. Its purpose was to learn about the student’s language use at home and school, language preferences, and view of her/his language proficiencies in Korean and English. The second interview was conducted for 20 minutes with each student at the end of the book discussions. Each student was asked questions about her/his specific responses to the books during the book discussions. I played back audio-recordings of key parts of each student’s book discussions to find out more about the students’ book responses. I used Korean or English according to the students’ preferences.

**Mother interviews.** Each of the mothers was interviewed at the beginning of the spring semester before the book discussions began about their children’s immigration status, the parents’ language use and literacy practices at home, and their attitudes and perspectives toward teaching Korean. The interviews lasted for 15-20 minutes, and were conducted in Korean after school. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, beginning with 15 common questions. All the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English.
Data Analysis

I used discourse analysis (Gee, 2010) to analyze the transcripts of the book discussions and interviews with the students and their mothers. For research question #1, I coded the students’ oral responses to the multicultural texts to see whether the students used the texts as their mirrors or windows (Sims Bishop, 1990; 1992) by adapting Keene and Zimmerman’s (1997) classification – text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections. I changed the “text-to-world” connection to “text-to-other” to reflect when the students connected the stories to the real world beyond their personal experiences (e.g., “She [a local student from China] may want to keep her Chinese name because Unhei [a character from one of the books] was happy at the end of the story because she kept her Korean name.”) To capture everything that the students said about the books, I added the category “other,” which referred to the students’ general statements about the books (e.g., “I like her clothes,” “I think he is mean.”) For research question #2, I compared the students’ viewpoints about The Name Jar (Choi, 2003) by juxtaposing their oral responses in the book discussions with their interview data. The students’ responses to one particular book (The Name Jar) was chosen for the close-up analysis because the book illustrates a main character’s identity negotiation about whether she should create an English name or preserve her Korean name in her new American school. Because the topic is closely related to the students’ own experiences as Koreans, their text-to-self connections fostered their active participation.

Findings

Types of Oral Responses to Multicultural Korean Literature

Table 2 shows the types of oral responses that the two groups of students made to the three books. Although all six students were engaged in the book discussions, the three students in Group A (those born in Korea) were the only ones who used their personal experiences to make text-to-self connections and who demonstrated empathy with the characters in the books.

Text-to-self connections. Excerpt 1 (below) shows two of the Group A students’ discussion of the book Sumi’s First Day of School Ever. The teacher and the students used Korean in their discussion. The two students – Lin and Jini (Group A) – made text-to-self connections when they responded to the books by sharing their experiences and feelings. (T = teacher; bold = text-to-self connection; italics = English).

[Excerpt 1. Book discussion about Sumi’s First Day of School Ever]
1. T: Have you ever had an experience like Sumi? Do you all remember when you went to an American school for the first time?
2. Jini: I remember because I came to the U.S. last year. I did the same thing as Sumi. My mother taught me how to say my name in English and how to write it in English. And I practiced it.
3. T: Oh, did you? Were you excited to go to a new school here or were you worried?
4. Lin: I was afraid of making American friends because I could not speak English.
5. Ji-Ye: I felt the same feeling like Sumi. I didn’t want to go to school.

In response to the teacher’s question, asking whether the students had a similar experience as Sumi on their first day of school in the U.S. Jini who recently had moved to the U.S. responds that she had a similar experience as Sumi (line 2). During the second interview, Jini shared that
similar to Sumi, she had a hard time understanding what her American teacher said and making new friends because she was not fluent in English. In responding to Lin’s response that she was afraid of making new friends because she was not good at English (line 4), Ji-Ye replied that she also had the same feeling (line 5). Lin’s response showed that she made a connection to Sumi by remembering how she felt on her first day at an American school. Lin came to the U.S. two and a half years ago, but she still remembered her first day of school. In the second interview, Lin stated, “I did not like it when I had to leave my mom because I was afraid of making new friends and speaking English with them.”

Excerpt 1 shows that Jini, Lin, and Ji-Ye (students in group A) often interpreted the texts by reflecting on their personal experiences. It is evident that the students in Group A used the texts as their mirrors by taking the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and to make text-to-self connections.

Text-to-text connections. Excerpt 2 (below) shows that the students in both groups made text-to-text connections when they discussed the book *My Name is Yoon*. The students read and learned about *My Name is Yoon* after they read *Sumi’s First Day of School Ever* and *The Name Jar*. The students thought that the main character in *My Name is Yoon* had similar experiences to the characters in the other two books. They already had read and discussed the characters in the first two texts, so their familiarity with the two texts helped them to make text-to-text connections (text-to-text connection = underlined; italics = English).

[Excerpt 2. Book discussion about *My Name is Yoon*]
1. Ji-Ye: Teacher, I think it is the same as what Sumi did with her mother.
2. T: Oh, you remember Sumi’s story. Right. Sumi did it, too. Do you know when both of them learned how to say and write their names in English?
3. Ji-Ye: When they went to the school for the first time.
4. Min: Yes, they went to the school for the first time. I think Unhei, too. *I mean Unhei didn’t practice how to say her name, but she also went to the school for the first time*.
5. Hoon: Right. That’s why she rode the school bus for the first time and met mean kids.
6. Yuna: *Not only Unhei, but Sumi had a mean kid in her class. So they share the same experiences.*

When the teacher asked a question about *My Name is Yoon*, Ji-Ye (Group A) made text-to-text connections with the main character in *Sumi’s First Day of the School Ever* (lines 1 & 3). In line 2, even though the teacher had only asked a question about Yoon and Sumi, Min (Group B) connected Unhei’s story to those of Yoon and Sumi (line 4). Min, who did not connect his personal experiences to those of the main characters in the books by making text-to-self connections (see Excerpt 1), was able to make text-to-text connections. Min’s response suggests that he was thinking about Unhei’s story while discussing Sumi and Yoon’s stories. Responding to Min’s response, Hoon elaborated on Unhei’s behavior (line 5), and Yuna made a text-to-text connection by comparing Unhei and Sumi (line 6).

Excerpt 2 shows a different pattern in Group B’s participation compared to Excerpt 1. The students in Group B engaged in the discussion in Excerpt 2 as much as the students in Group A (see Table 2) because they were able to discuss similarities among the three characters in the books.
Differences in Value Perspectives about a Cultural Topic

Close examination of the students’ oral responses to the characters and events in *The Name Jar*, along with their interview data, revealed the students’ perspectives on maintaining their Korean names. In Excerpt 3, the teacher asked the students to talk about their favorite parts in the book and whether they thought it was good for Unhei (the main character) to create an English name. All three students in Group A (Jini, Lin, and Ji-Ye) selected the same part of the book as their favorite part (Unhei preserves her own Korean name) and seemed to value Unhei’s Korean name and her identity as Korean, whereas, the students in Group B (Min, Hoon, and Yuna) saw the usefulness of using an English name in the American classroom.

[Excerpt 3. Book discussion about *The Name Jar*]
1. T: What is your favorite part in this book?
2. Jini: I like the part that Unhei did not change her name to English.
3. Hoon: My favorite part is when the class creates the name jar for Unhei because I like to have an English name in my American school and the Korean name here [Korean school]. Unhei can do the same thing like me.
4. Min: Me, too. That is my favorite part. I think having an English name is cool because you will have two names – one in Korean and one in English. I like it.
5. Yuna: I liked it, too. I will create the name Grace for Unhei.
6. Jini: But Unhei’s grandmother made the name for her.
7. Ji-Ye: She would lose the meaning if she uses an English name. I really liked that Unhei didn’t change her name to an English one. That is my favorite part.
8. Lin: Me, too. I like that part the most. Also, I like when Joey hid the name jar. Joey helps Unhei keep her Korean name.

When the teacher asked the students to identify their favorite parts in the book (line 1), Hoon, Min, and Yuna (Group B) responded that they liked it when the class created an English name jar for Unhei (lines 3-5), whereas, Jini, Ji-Ye, and Lin (Group A) articulated that they most liked it when Unhei did not change her name to English (lines 2, 7, & 8). The students in Group B (Min, Hoon, and Yuna) believed that having an English name was beneficial to Unhei and saw the usefulness of having an English name in the U.S. When Hoon provided his reason for his favorite part (line 3), he reflected on his own experience – using an English name in his American school and a Korean name in his Korean school. Then Hoon suggested that Unhei could do the same thing and have two names (line 3). In the interview, Hoon explained that “if Unhei has an English name, the class can pronounce her name correctly and can remember [it] easily so that Unhei does not get stressed or feel bad.”

Min’s response showed that he thought that using an English name in an American classroom would be helpful to Unhei (line 4). In his interview, Min stated, “Students in an American school usually have English names even though they are not American, so it is good to follow what others do so that I am not considered an alien. But in the Korean school, all kids use Korean names, so I prefer to be called by my Korean name here.” On the other hand, the students in Group A showed a different pattern in their responses about their favorite part in the book, *The Name Jar*. Jini’s favorite part was when Unhei did not change her name because her grandmother had made it for her (line 6). In the interview, Jini explained, “If Unhei changes her name, her grandmother might be sad and feel bad.” Jini’s explanation showed how she demonstrated empathy with Unhei’s grandmother.
Ji-Ye also selected the same part as Jini as her favorite part because Ji-Ye believed that Unhei would lose the meaning of her name if she changed her name to an English name (line 7). When the teacher asked Ji-Ye about her book discussion response, Ji-Ye replied, “Unhei’s name is Shining Wisdom in Korean, but if she selects an English name, she would not have the same meaning in her name anymore.” During the interview, Ji-Ye explained that the meanings of Korean names are understood and recorded in Hanja or Chinese. Ji-Ye pointed out, “Un means Shining and Hei means Wisdom. Me, too. I have two meanings…kind and beautiful. Ji means kind and Ye means beautiful.” Ji-Ye clearly made text-to-self connections by articulating the meaning of her own name after analyzing the meaning of Unhei’s name.

Likewise, Lin, who also selected the same part of the book as her favorite, pointed out that she liked the part when Joey (Unhei’s classmate) hid the name jar so Unhei could keep her Korean name (line 8). During the interview, Lin explained, “I [initially] thought that Joey was a mean student because he hid the name jar, but he [actually] was kind because he wanted to help Unhei keep her own name.” Lin’s responses indicate that she viewed the importance of preserving a Korean name even in an American classroom.

When the teacher realized that the students in the two groups had different patterns in their responses, she asked them about the purpose of names to learn more about their perspectives regarding names and identity. The following excerpt focuses on the conversation between the teacher and Min (Group B) during the book discussion. It shows that Min’s responses to the question about whether Unhei should create an English name shifted during his conversation with the teacher.

[Excerpt 4. Class discussion about the purpose and role of names]
1. T: Now I have a question for you, Min. You mentioned that name is important because it is part of your identity and it is all about you. Do you think, do you have two identities because you have and use two different names here and in your American school?
2. Min: No. Oh, maybe yes … because I act like an American in my school, but I try to be more Korean here.
3. T: Oh, do you? But can you think about this? Unhei is Korean, not American. But if she creates an English name, don’t you think she will lose her Korean identity?
4. Min: Um…I don’t know. Then maybe she needs to keep her Korean name. Yeah, I don’t think it is a good idea to create a name for Unhei.
5. T: Are you sure? Why did you change your mind? (laughs)
6. Min: Because I thought that it is good for Unhei to have an English name not just for herself, but also for the other kids in her class, because if she has a name, which is easy to pronounce she will have more friends and won’t get teased by others….
7. Min: But I didn’t think that she would lose her Koreaness if she just changes her name. But now I think she may lose her Koreaness if she uses an English name. And maybe her parents do not want her to lose her Korean identity by creating an English name.

Min who was a third grader in his American school (two years older than the other students) knew the meaning of the word identity and defined identity as another word for name. The teacher asked a question to Min because she thought Min understood the importance of an individual’s name that he or she is given from Min’s response (line 1). The teacher helped Min to comprehend that Unhei’s Korean name might include her identity (line 3), which led Min to change his idea from creating an English name for Unhei to maintaining her Korean name (line 4). Min’s further responses explained the reason why he thought creating a new name was a good idea for Unhei,
but at the same time he admitted that he didn’t think about the other part, which is related to Unhei’s identity as Korean (line 7). Min’s responses shifted; he thought that creating an English name was good for Unhei during the discussion with other peers, but he later believed that keeping Unhei’s Korean name was a better choice for her. He had not considered Unhei’s feelings if she changed her name to an English one, rather he thought more about the effects of having an American name which would help others to say her name more easily (line 6). However, after the discussion with the teacher, Min was finally able to consider how changing her name could affect Unhei from the perspectives of Unhei and her family.

The exploratory talk with the teacher appeared to result in Min’s responses shifting. During the discussion with his peers (Excerpt 3), he thought that creating an English name would be good for Unhei because as he later explained (Excerpt 4), it would be easier for her classmates to pronounce and result in less teasing. However, in his later discussion with the teacher, he stated that keeping Unhei’s Korean name was a better choice for her because he had not considered the identity issue and the effect of choosing an American name on her parents (line 7).

**The roles of parents’ sociocultural ideologies**

From the interview with the mothers, it was discovered that there were different patterns between the two groups when it comes to the parents’ language use/practices at home and their attitudes/perspectives toward teaching their children Korean. The mothers reported that they spend more time teaching their children Korean and show higher interests in their children’s Korean language learning. The mothers in Group A reported that they encourage their children to speak in Korean at home and all families have Korean language only policy at home. All the three mothers believe that learning Korean is important for their children since they plan on returning to Korea and do not want their children to fall behind in schools. Indeed, the mothers responded that they planned to go back to Korea when their husbands completed their studies in the U.S. Furthermore, the mothers in Group A replied that they try to teach Korean culture, customs, and traditions beyond the Korean language (e.g., celebrating Korean holidays, teaching traditional Korean plays, making/eating Korean food together on special days, bringing Korean traditional clothes from Korea, telling traditional Korean stories).

On the other hand, the mothers in Group B responded that they had not spend much time teaching in Korean rather tend to emphasize more on English learning and homework from American school. They admitted that they let their children speak in English at home and do not endeavor to teach Korean culture to their children. One of the mothers stated that “I think learning Korean is important for my child. However, honestly, I am satisfied with what she is doing now. I sent her to the Korean language school because I hope that she could maintain her Korean skills. I know it is not easy for her to develop much Korean as times goes by as she will learn more English. Since she will stay here forever and find a job here later, English would be a more important language to her.” Like this mother, other two mothers also mentioned that English is the necessary language for their children, but Korean is the optional to master as they will permanently live in the U.S.

The mothers’ responses collectively indicate that the students’ perspectives on Korean names might not be only affected by their language preference or proficiency. The parents’ involvement in teaching Korean (language and the culture) and their perspectives on raising their children as Korean or Korean-American might have also influenced the students’ identity formation.
Summary and Implications

The purpose of this paper was to investigate Korean immigrant and Korean American students’ textual connections to multicultural literature and their viewpoints toward a cultural topic (use of a Korean or American name). In terms of the first research question (What were the textual connections that Korean-American and Korean immigrant children demonstrated in their oral responses to multicultural literature), there were different patterns in the two groups of students’ responses to the three books (Sumi’s First Day of School Ever, The Name Jar, and My Name is Yoon). The students in Group A (first-generation Korean immigrants) made both text-to-self and text-to-text connections with the three books, whereas, the students in Group B (second-generation Korean-Americans) did not make any text-self connections although they did make text-to-text connections.

The three students in Group A made the connections to the characters (Sumi, Unhei, and Yoon) by sharing their experiences and by revealing their emotional empathy. Particularly, Lin (Group A) expressed “parallel emotional empathy” (Louie, 2005, p. 574). For example, Lin was able to explain Unhei’s feelings by imagining herself in Unhei’s shoes. According to Louie (2005), students reveal their emotional empathy when they are able to understand others’ thinking, feelings, and experiences (p. 574). Close analysis of the findings showed that all three students in Group A demonstrated their emotional empathy toward the main characters in the books, while the students in Group B did not empathize emotionally with the characters in the books.

Considering the fact that the three books portray Korean immigrants and their experiences and challenges in their American schools, the stories and images appear to be more closely related to the students in Group A (Korean immigrants) than the students in Group B (Korean-American students). That is, the books that the students read helped the students in Group A to make immediate text-to-self connections, and the images in the books “affect[ed them] in a very personal way” (Leon, 2002, p. 50), which helped them to reflect on their own experiences by making text-to-self connections (Sims-Bishop, 1992). These findings indicate that when students share similar experiences with characters in a book, they are more likely to make connections to themselves and voice their emotions and feelings by empathizing with the character. The responses of the students in Group A suggested that as recent immigrants to the U.S., they sometimes felt alienated in American schools. Thus, providing multicultural literature that represented their experiences provided them with mirrors (Sims Bishop, 1992). However, the students in Group B, were born in the U.S., and did not personally connect to the Korean immigrant students’ experiences in the three books. The Group B students illustrate the importance of paying attention to students’ immigrant status when selecting multicultural literature. The three books in this study served more as their windows than their mirrors (Sims Bishop, 1992).

The Group B’s (Korean-American students) responses imply that they identify less with some cultural topics due to the social and cultural contexts they are exposed to as American-born children in the U.S. However, it is important to note that their lack of responses might be due to the teacher’s biased questions (Have you ever had an experience like Sumi? Do you all remember when you went to an American school for the first time?; see Except 1). The question by the teacher about whether the students had similar experiences to Sumi (the main character in the book) targeted the students in Group A, Korean students in the U.S., rather than American-born students who might not have had those experiences because attending American school was not a new or challenging experience for them. The teacher could have raised other types of questions in order for Group B to make text-to-self connections in their responses. Indeed, the book The Name Jar also portrays a Korean immigrant family who goes to a Korean market in the U.S. to
cook and eat Korean food at home. Thus, if the teacher asked additional questions, for instance—
“Do you also go to Korean markets here? Do you eat or like to eat Korean food at home like the main character in the book?” - the students in Group B would have been able to provide their text-to-self responses by sharing their experiences. That is, although the main theme of the three books is a recent Korean immigrant child’s different and difficult experiences in the U.S., Korean culture and tradition are displayed in the stories as well as in the illustrations. The question about ethnic food is not only related to the Korean-born immigrant children, but also to the U.S.-born Korean-American children. Thus, there was a space where the teacher could have helped the students in Group B to make text-to-self connections in their responses. This indicates that both the teacher’s selection of a certain part of the book and her choice of questions can play a pivotal role in students’ participation as well as their types of responses. This implies that multicultural literature should be chosen and used cautiously considering the different immigration status of students. Previous studies on children’s multicultural literature have shown the significance of teachers’ discourse and assistance in helping students to become engaged in multicultural book discussions (Möller, 2008; Galzier & Seo, 2005).

In terms of the second research question (To what extent were there differences in how Korean-American and Korean immigrant children viewed a cultural topic in one of the books?), the findings revealed the students’ different perspectives and value stances about the names their Korean parents and grandparents had given them. The students in Group A valued maintaining Korean names because the names were from their parents or grandparents, whereas, the students in Group B valued creating an American name for students from other countries because they saw the usefulness of having an English name.

The students’ discussions about whether or not to maintain a Korean name or to create an English name corroborate previous research findings that classroom discussion on cultural issues can assist students in constructing their cultural identities (Athanases, 1995; Tse, 1998; You, 2005). Similar to the previous findings, the students in this study revealed their self-identities when they showed their viewpoints on a cultural topic: whether Korean children should use their Korean names or adopt American names in American schools. The findings imply that teachers should know that “children develop their racial identity during preschool and elementary school years” (Ramsey, 2008, p. 25), and students are able to identify and share their perspectives and value stances when they engage in book discussions that portray the students’ cultures and experiences.

The example of Min, the third grader who initially did not value using Korean names in American schools, but later stated that Unhei should keep her Korean name, reveals the potential of Möller’s (2008) RZD. Close conversation with the teacher (the other five students were distracted because they were about to have recess time) appeared to have helped Min to develop a different perspective. The teacher’s interactions with Min illustrate the role of the social context, and how their conversation appeared to help him rethink his initial position. Min’s change in perspective supports Athanases’s (1995) argument for “the power of exploratory talk” during discussions. Min’s example indicates that classroom teachers should know the benefits of student learning through social interaction because such interactions help students to exchange their ideas and develop their thinking.

Lastly, the findings show the importance of not making essentialist assumptions about language minority children’s identities, language use, and responses to multicultural books. The two groups of students’ immigration status and schooling experiences appeared to have influenced not only how they responded to the texts but also how they identified themselves. Parents’ attitudes and practices at home also have impacted on the students’ language learning and their
perspectives on a cultural topic (i.e., Korean names) (Shin, 2005; You, 2005). Additional research needs to focus on the role of the teacher and student discussion in helping students to make connections to multicultural texts that do not reflect their own experiences. In particular, researchers need to investigate how we can shorten the distance between students and multicultural literature when they encounter literature about others (Louie, 2005).
References


Table 1.

*Description of the Students*

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<tr>
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Table 2.

*Students’ Responses to the Three Books*

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Bridging Identity and Practice: Enseñando para hacer justicia

Katherine Espinoza and Idalia Nuñez
University of Texas at Austin
Abstract

Using a qualitative case study approach, we examined a cohort of 16 bilingual preservice teachers in their teacher preparation program. The following question was investigated: How does a cohort of sixteen bilingual preservice teachers go about shaping their identities within their preparation program, and how is that program influencing their teaching practices? Data sources included preservice teachers’ written reflections and anecdotal field notes over the course of one semester during their teacher preparation program. Findings are reported under three thematic categories: defining identity, teacher preparation program, and social justice teaching practices. Findings from our study further suggest that preparation programs aimed at bilingual preservice teachers are critical in fostering growth that will enhance the identities of these preservice teachers as future bilingual teachers.

Introduction

My identity as a teacher is getting shaped with the help of the courses I took these past two semesters. This has not only influenced the manner in which I have planned my lessons, but it has changed my perspective on teaching completely, in a positive way!

Marta, a bilingual preservice teacher wrote this during her first internship and it reveals how she is feeling as a Latina preservice teacher. Latina/o bilingual preservice teachers have complicated and contradictory experiences and emotions when it comes to their own identity formation. It is extremely important that Latina/o bilingual preservice teachers experience opportunities in their teacher preparation programs where they are able to negotiate and reflect upon their personal experience both as preservice teachers and members of marginalized groups. Rarely has bilingual preservice teachers’ identity formation been examined. It is our contention that incorporating culture, language, and heritage into their bilingual teacher preparation courses and field experience will support them in working towards social justice teaching. Sonia Nieto (2000) suggests examining the sociopolitical context of teacher education to better understand how educators can address and affirm diversity. Nieto’s (1999, 2000, 2005) work suggests that as a result of the hostility and inequalities confronted in their own educational experiences, teachers of color can relate better to students of color. Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez (2002) and Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) argue that the role of teacher education should be to help teachers learn to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to teach for social justice. The purpose of this project is to explore how the beliefs held about social justice by bilingual preservice teachers are (or are not) formed during their teacher preparation.

Perspectives

To investigate the role that identity development plays in bilingual preservice teacher education programs, we drew from the concept of identity formation presented by Holland, D., Lachicotte, Skinner, Cain (1998), concept of self-authoring and figured worlds. The concept of self-authoring is derived from the Foucauldian theme of discursive theory. “Identities become important outcomes of participation in communities of practice in ways analogous to our notion that identities are formed in the process of participating in activities and organized by figured worlds” (p. 57). In discursive theory, the powerfulness of discourse leads to the social construction of one’s self. This exemplifies how messages are conveyed through
discourse. Holland et al. (1998) explain how identity formation transpires in the realm of figured worlds. Figured worlds are socially situated, and are “peopled by the figures, characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within, distinguishable perspectives on, and orientations towards it” (p. 51). In the figured worlds to which they belong, individuals must negotiate their own positionality. There is also a process of identity devaluation that takes place in the transformation process. This research will provide information necessary to aid in the understanding of the critical role of bilingual preservice teacher preparation with regards to personal identity formation.

Borderlands theory as presented by Anzaldúa (1987) and Elenes (2007) unpacks the physical and figurative borders Latina/os cross as part of their daily lives. Just as these borders are both real and figurative, identities are also constructed in both realms. Anzaldúa, uses the Nahuatl term “Nepantla” as a reference to the figurative “space of the middle” referring to the marginalization of a people or culture and the creation by these people of alternate spaces in which to live and function in order to resist the mainstream. Redefining and acknowledging cultural differences within this alternate space becomes a powerful and positive experience. Preservice teachers through their own self-discovery of mainstream versus alternate space identities can positively impact their teaching strategies for social justice. Returning to the work of Anzaldúa (1987) and Delgado Bernal (2010) suggests that the incorporation of pedagogies of the home serves as a cultural knowledge base to help Latina/os build bridges between home and school which aid in the reclaiming of these identities that have been in hiding. Holland et al. (1998) explain how identity formation transpires in the realm of figured worlds. Identity is viewed as a process rather than as a product. Researchers investigating Latina/o bilingual preservice teacher identity formation have often used this approach to explore areas related to: self reflection, dispositions, and agency to thus become maestra/os equipped with the knowledge base necessary to teach for social justice. Holland et al. (1998) explains thoroughly how individuals are in a state of identity transformation. During this transformation, several personal changes happen to an individual. Individuals are in constant reconstruction of their sense of self. In the figured worlds to which they belong, individuals must negotiate their own positionality. There is also a process of identity devaluation that takes place in the transformation process. In the process of devaluation, individuals reflect on their lived experiences and orchestrate their identities. One must look at conception, the notion that identity formation is alive, lived and an unfinished process. Viewing identity formation in this way allows one to realize that the person is continuously developing and changing. It is through engagement in these reflective processes that individuals have the opportunity to author themselves.

Regarding Latino bilingual teacher identity, current research has found linkage between teacher identity formation and opportunities to self-reflect (Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Kleyn & Valle, 2014). Palmer and Martinez examine teaching in bilingual contexts focus on methods and strategies in addition to drawing attention to the need for “extraordinary pedagogies” that are informed by robust understandings of language and bilingualism is important. Their work draws on work from Davies and Harré (1990), who found that, “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (p. 48). People are positioned both inter-actively and reflexively (i.e., by oneself). They argue that many of the current approaches to teaching bilingual Latina/o students are inadequate because they are informed by monolingual perspectives on language that over-emphasize linguistic structure. The process of self-reflection thus becomes an essential component of teacher identity formation. Kleyn and Valle’s (2014) research following the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) and its approach on co-teaching had three themes emerged
from their research: a) Impact upon Structures of Academia, b) Discipline Dis/connections, and c) Reciprocal Learning. Their findings challenge teacher educators to consider whether or not a traditional approach to teacher preparation truly offers preservice teachers the tools to serve students with all the social and human differences they may bring to the classroom. In the current climate in which schools are increasingly under the microscope for evidence of quality and effectiveness, this work pushes us to rethink traditional boundaries and approaches for teacher education programs. The work of Palmer and Martinez (2013) and Kleyn and Valle (2014) call on schools of education to transgress traditional academic boundaries in order to adequately prepare preservice teachers for the twenty-first century classroom.

Along with reflection, another aspect of identity formation for teachers is their personal attitudes, which orient them as either a supporter of or someone in opposition to bilingualism. Weisman (2001) interviewed four Latina teachers and examined the relationship between their bicultural identities and their attitudes toward English and Spanish. Through a critical perspective, he addressed issues of bicultural development and linguistic attitudes within a context of existing societal power relations. A strong connection was made between identification with Latino culture, political consciousness, and value for the Spanish language as a means of affirming the cultural identities of Latino students. To further extend this, Palmer (2011) examines the discourse of teachers’ ideologies within transitional bilingual education programs (TBE). She argues that TBE teachers demonstrate a tension between their stated positive orientations toward bilingualism and the restrictive influences of what is termed the “discourse of transition” as they talk about their students, about their classrooms, and about their own decision-making in TBE programs. As this research was conducted with practicing teachers, it further pointed to the need for preservice teacher education programs that prepare Latina/o students to grapple more realistically with the contradictions they face between the ideologies they may want to hold and follow and those they find themselves reflecting on as they engage in their practice. This further illustrates different ways in which bicultural individuals cope with the pressures of living in a society that promotes conformity to the dominant culture. These studies re-emphasize Nieto’s (1999) claim that teachers of color can relate better to students of color based on their previous experiences and epistemic knowledge.

Urrieta (2009), in his book Working from Within, examines issues of identity and agency as taken up by 24 participants. In doing this, Urrieta formulates a deeper evaluation of how these individuals have managed to become activists in schools in the United States. The purpose of this book is to show how Chicanas and Chicanos have managed to work from within the limits found in a range of educational settings, from colleges to elementary schools. These narratives provide insight on how individuals working with marginalized students can cultivate themselves as activists for their students through daily interactions. Urrieta incorporated the use of positioning, figured worlds, and self-authorship in order to narrate the stories of the participants. Several important factors are also reflected in the participants’ narratives dealing with issues faced by immigrants and Mexican American students: educational mobility, Chicana/Mexicana mothers’ pedagogies, memories of “whitestream” (Urrieta, 2009) schooling, and negative hostile portrayals. From this, Urrieta transitions to exploring how some Mexican Americans become Chicana and Chicano activist educators. “Identities are not something people are born with; but as such something that they come to consciously assume” (p. 56). In relation to the Mexican American population this is important because it gives insight into the identity shifts undertaken by Mexican Americans in their journey to become urban educators. Urrieta goes on to explain how Figured Worlds play a crucial role in the identity formation process of Chicana and Chicano activists. A concise explanation of how Chicana and Chicano activism transpires at the micro and
macro level of figured worlds is developed. Here a reader learns that the reason behind Chicana and Chicano activism is the desire to join la causa to push for equality in U.S. society and in this case to champion for equitable educational opportunities. Rios’ (2010) work examines how the social and political moments have implications for identity, ideology and issues, and imagination toward the development of a critical consciousness. Importantly, Urrieta’s work deconstructs the process these educators took to identify themselves as activist educators.

Fitts and Weisman’s (2010) qualitative study conducted interviews and observations that examine the development of bilingual and bicultural preservice teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about social justice and the role these play in the education of language minority children. They discuss the results of a study of bilingual and bicultural preservice teachers and their conceptualization of social justice and the role of social justice in teaching. In their findings, they identify several key factors regarding teaching and instilling in bilingual preservice teachers a desire to teach for social justice. Fitts and Weisman (2010) recognized and actively used their own funds of knowledge to connect with and legitimate the unique perspectives, knowledge and skills of the bilingual-bicultural participants. To capitalize on this, the participants frequently used life stories and narrative to illustrate concepts, pose problems, and to initiate reflection and dialogue. Through these reflections, societal constructs, such as relationships to power and language, were legitimized. In addition to creating an authentic space for life stories and experiences in the university classroom, the professors cultivated strong personal and caring relationships with their students. Their findings indicate that university professors need to be able to legitimate the experiences and perspectives of bilingual/bicultural teacher candidates. Professors need to be able to guide their students to recognize and reflect upon instances of misrecognition as well as existing inequities of resources. Delgado Bernal (2010) argues that students of color are holders and creators of knowledge, but they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings.

Delgado Bernal (2010) attest that through these opportunities to develop and reclaim their lost identities, Latina/o preservice teachers engage in the process of constructing their identity as maestra/os. Identities are a central factor in the development of Latina/o bilingual preservice teachers. These identities are dynamic and constantly shifting. It is essential that we can create counter-spaces, contexts in our universities, for the reclaiming and reframing of these identities. Berta-Ávila (2004) reminds us that Latina/o (and any other) educators do not have the kinds of knowledge and skills to be effective teachers of Latino students by virtue of their skin color. Accordingly, preservice teacher education programs serving students of color must invest efforts into fostering the growth of a critical cultural and professional identity. Ceballos (2012) argues that the affirmation of their bilingual teacher identities and the retracing of experiences should be taking place from the time that preservice teachers are in teacher education programs. Díaz and Flores (2001) found that for Latina/o preservice teachers there is a relationship between strong ethnic identities nurtured during the teacher preparation program and a positive teacher self-concept in the profession. In order to continue working toward preparing Latina/o bilingual preservice teachers, we must continue exploring areas related to: defining identity which leads to a social justice teaching orientation, social justice teaching in preservice teacher education, and teaching practices which are reflective of social justice teaching.

Methods

This study implemented a qualitative case study research design as qualitative methods allow for natural interpretations of events. According to Merriam (2002) in a case study, the
researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon. Dyson and Genishi (2005) define a social unit as a person, a group, a place, or an activity. A case study proves to be an appropriate method for conducting research because: “The process of conducting a case study begins with the selection of the case” (p. 179). This study focused on the experiences of sixteen bilingual preservice teachers in the same cohort. Participants in the research study were purposefully selected, and had to fit the following criteria: be enrolled in the bilingual teacher preparation program, be enrolled in the first internship during the Spring 2014 semester, and be bilingual. In this study, the sixteen student bilingual preservice teachers in the cohort bound the case. We (Author 1 and Author 2) investigate the following research question: How does a cohort of sixteen bilingual preservice teachers go about shaping their identities within their preparation program, and how is that program influencing their teaching practices? In order to address this research question, we examined bilingual preservice teachers’ written reflections and researchers’ field notes over the course of one semester during their teacher preparation program. We looked for examples of ways in which they were defining their identities, and how their identities influenced their desire to teach for social justice.

Context

This research was conducted at a teacher preparation program within an institution of higher education in Texas. This university has an established bilingual education program that prepares students to become bilingual educators in elementary schools. The program is designed to give bilingual preservice teachers exposure to the education field through a series of internship opportunities. Each semester, bilingual preservice teachers are expected to take content courses at the university and are also assigned to be interns at a particular elementary two days per week for the duration of the semester. They start with Internship I, then Internship II, and finally they end with Student Teaching. After student teaching, the preservice teachers are prepared for graduation. This study will focus on the cohort of bilingual preservice teachers who were enrolled in their Internship I semester in Spring 2014.

Participants

The participants for this study were a cohort of 16 bilingual preservice teachers selected based on the purposeful sampling criteria (Merriam & Associates, 2002), which included: bilinguals enrolled in the bilingual teacher preparation program that provided foundation courses focused on curriculum and instruction for bilingual settings, and enrolled in the first internship during the Spring 2014 semester. The participants were assigned pseudonyms. This cohort included three male preservice teachers and thirteen female preservice teachers who speak, read, and write in English and Spanish to varying degrees of proficiency. They were in the bilingual education program seeking a degree to become elementary bilingual educators.

Positionality

Prior to engaging in our research study, we (Author 1 and Author 2) worked as facilitators for the teacher preparation program in which our participants were enrolled. Our role as facilitators was to observe bilingual preservice teacher in the field and support their experiences through coaching and mentoring. Our positionality as facilitators in the program gave us access to our participants. By working closely with them throughout their internship experience, we were able
to develop rapport with them. Even though this was a blind study, this rapport strongly influenced obtaining consent for participation. In our own experience as preservice teachers we had the opportunity to learn from professors who instilled in us the importance of what it meant to be activists for bilingual students. Having gone through the transformative process of becoming maestras allowed us to engage other bilingual preservice teachers that we interact with in dialogue through the use of our own experiences.

**Data Sources**

Data collection took place during the Spring Semester 2014 as part of the participants’ Internship I experience. The data sources were derived from their coursework and their Internship program. In order to avoid any conflicts of interest, the primary source was archival data reviewed after the end of the semester. In qualitative studies, researchers need to ensure trustworthiness (Mertler, 2009). To accomplish this, we employed triangulation, “a process of relating multiple sources of data in order to establish their trustworthiness or verification of the consistency of the facts while trying to account for their inherent biases” (Mertler, 2009, p. 11). The following is a list of the multiple sources along with a description of their implementation that was collected.

- **Writing Samples** – As part of their Internship I program, preservice teachers are required to reflect on assigned topics or prompts about education during three mandatory seminars held throughout the semester. From these writing samples, we identified the current language ideologies held by the preservice teachers and some of the practices they engaged in during the field.

- **Lesson Plans** – During time in their field experience, the bilingual preservice teachers are required to design and implement lessons. They completed one lesson per subject area for the grade level assigned. These lesson plans included the following sections: ideas for lesson, objectives, state standards, language proficiency standards, materials, preparation, procedures of lesson (i.e., anticipatory set, teaching and instruction, guided practices, independent practices, closure, and evaluation), and a section of differentiation. With these work samples, the research identified the language practices that the participants implemented during their lessons.

- **Lesson Reflections** – After completing a lesson plan and implementing it in the field, bilingual preservice teachers were required to reflect on six questions that were assigned by the teacher preparation program. These questions asked about the experience during the lesson, future modifications or adjustments to the lesson, language and literacy practices, and decisions about materials used. These reflections allowed us to really understand some of the practices they implemented and the rationale behind the use of them.

During the semesters in the field, bilingual preservice teachers were asked to fulfill the requirements of the teacher preparation program. We took on the role of facilitator only during the semester of spring 2014. We made sure the preservice teachers completed their required assignments for their first internship. After the completion of their first semester, we asked for consent through a third party; the entire cohort consented to participate. We collected all data from the assignments that took place during the semester to use for analysis.

Data were initially analyzed separately through the process of open coding after each method of data collection was complete: observations, artifacts and field notes to identify codes,
themes, and issues. After open coding, data were then organized by themes; data were coded and then recoded in order to find correlating themes. Analytical coding refers to “coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning” (Richards, 2009). This allowed us to find patterns that may appear across data.

Findings

Our analysis revealed three important themes: (i) Defining Identity Leads to a Social Justice Teaching Orientation; (ii) Social Justice Teaching in Teacher Preparation Program and (iii) Teaching Practices Reflective of Social Justice Orientation. Our findings are that this teacher preparation program provides preservice bilingual education teachers with opportunities for reflection that seems to encourage them to develop stronger cultural and linguistic identities. This then appears to open up a space for them to become teachers of social justice for their students. There seems to be a connection between what they are learning about their identity in their teacher preparation courses and in their teaching practices which are reflected in their orientations as social justice teachers and advocates for their students.

(i). Defining Identity Leads to a Social Justice Teaching Orientation

Bilingual preservice teachers define their identity culturally and linguistically by their personal backgrounds; this is in accordance with what Holland et al. (1998) defines as “history in person.” In this case, the preservice teachers used examples of ethnicity, race, gender culture, religion, and their roots to define who they are. The following are excerpts from written reflections:

Sophia: I would define my identity as Mexican, someone who embraces being bilingual and cares about others’ success.

Andrea: I think that I would define my identity as [a] Latina who is passionate about education, is responsible and believes that all children should get the opportunity to learn.

Both of these writing samples present how in their preservice teacher preparation program these students are given the opportunity to define themselves. This is indicative of the importance of the teacher preparation program for these preservice teachers. Having the opportunity to define themselves culturally and linguistically gives them the opportunity to develop a social justice orientation towards advocacy. Sophia and Andrea both use race as a means of identifying who they are. Andrea also uses gender, but we see how she is still in the process of finding who she is based on her choice of words.

(ii). Social Justice Teaching in Teacher Preparation Program

In essence the foundation courses became a space for them to understand the importance of their roots and beliefs in order to embrace their identities. The role of the bilingual teacher preparation program in supporting students’ construction of powerful identities as activist teachers for their students is also being reflected. Through their coursework in the preparation program, the bilingual preservice teachers were able to reflect upon their prior experiences and reclaim their sense of self. This space became a figured world occupied by the bilingual preservice teachers. The following is an example that shows how the courses preservice teachers take influence their lives:

Marta: In my Social Studies Methods class this semester I have been able to see how the history I was taught is not exactly the history that I should be teaching my students.
Sophia: Moreover, I feel that the teaching style I exhibited when teaching my social studies lesson was due to the social studies methods class that I am taking. I feel that this class has really opened my eyes into how an elementary teacher should teach social studies. It has been eye opening by the fact that I have come to the realization that the way I was taught as a fourth grader and throughout my elementary, middle, and high school years was in this “sugar-coated” manner. I have learned that the way I was taught about history should not be the way I teach my future students about history.

This further shows how through their teacher preparation program, bilingual preservice teachers are engaging in practices that allow them to teach for social justice by allowing them to see the injustices in their own education. By reflected on what happened in their own education, Sophia and Marta are able to realize the injustices they were subjected to. This has also given them the ability to reflect on how this will impact their own teaching as future bilingual teachers. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) refer to these as “majoritarian tales”—narratives that teachers may have internalized through their own schooling by their subjection to curriculum that reflects and supports the dominant narrative of whitestream schools (Urrieta, 2009).

(iii). Teaching Practices Reflective of Social Justice Orientation

Teaching practices implemented by the bilingual preservice teachers were reflective of their identities and the role of the teacher preparation program. These practices included: the use of both languages with students and during instruction, utilizing culturally relevant practices, and the building of relationships of respect with students. Below is an excerpt that depicts a situation encountered by one of the preservice teachers while working in the field:

Sophia: At the beginning of this semester, it was really important for me to notice that the students did not really speak Spanish, and [they] would also say that their teacher did not really want them to code-switch. Since I heard about this, I set myself a goal about letting students know that their language is part of their identity, and that there is nothing wrong with being bilingual and code switching.

The commitment to use bilingual language practices is indicative of her willingness to engage in her orientation towards social justice. Her willingness to allow students to be bilingual and use practices such as code switching show how Sophia plans on engaging students in opportunities to affirm their own culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. On another occasion, Marta incorporated the use of tangible and culturally relevant objects to capture the attention of her students to engage them in learning. For engagement, Marta showed the student an actual piece of pan dulce (sweet bread) at the beginning of her lesson. The following is an excerpt from the field notes:

Teacher begins lesson by asking students if they have ever seen a piece of sweet bread before. She then takes out a piece of sweet bread from a brown paper bag to show the students.
Teacher asks them where they have seen a piece of sweet bread like this before. The name of this bread is conchita (shell)
One student responds in the ocean
One student says at a bakery in Austin
Another says that they have seen them in Wal-Mart
The students’ reactions to the incorporation of this were that of excitement and interest in what they were going to be learning. This addresses what types of materials a bilingual preservice teacher is using. Connected to my analysis of observation field notes and her lesson plan Marta discussed why she decided to use materials such as tangible objects as part of her engagement. She says: “Having something that they could see and be able to touch before starting to teach helps to grab their attention and it does more than just having a picture.” Marta makes the connection between the use of the *pan dulce* as an object to capture and retain students’ attention. In the section of her lesson plan labeled the *enfoque*/focus, Marta explains why she decided to use a piece of *pan dulce*/sweet bread to share with the students.

*Antes de que empiece la lección conectaré mi laptop y pondré el PowerPoint de la panadería. Para el enfoque les enseñaré un pedazo de pan dulce para llamar la atención.*

Before starting my lesson I will connect my laptop and show the students a picture of a bakery. For my focus I will show them a piece of sweet bread to capture their attention.

Through our analysis of this portion of her lesson plan, we are able to conclude that by bringing in a piece of *pan dulce* Marta was attempting to build upon the prior knowledge of her students to affirm their experiences in the classroom. In essence, the *pan dulce* was going to be used as a conversation starter between her and her students. This is also further connected to building upon prior experiences held both by her and by her students. We see in her lesson plan through her choice of selection of the children’s book: *The Runaway Piggy*, Marta was able to engage in the selection of culturally relevant literature for her bilingual students.

Similarly, Sophia in one of her lesson plan reflections writes:

“All throughout the PDS I have learned it is important to remember where you come from and what you stand for as an individual. One of my main goals was to help bilingual students overcome stereotypes and empower them as not only bilingual students, but as human beings”.

**Scholarly Significance**

Darling-Hammond, French, and García-López (2002) and Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) argue that the role of teacher education should be to help teachers learn to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to teach for social justice. Incorporating social issues related to race, class, gender, and ability in preparation courses for bilingual preservice teachers is of utmost importance. Providing guidance to bilingual preservice teachers in their preparation programs is critical in fostering growth so that they can shape their own identities as future bilingual teachers.

Engaging in practices where bilingual preservice teachers build a bridge between the theories that they are learning and the actual practices that they will engage in when they are in classrooms is important. Focusing more on critical self-reflection also enables the growth of bilingual preservice teachers. Sonia Nieto (2000) suggests examining the sociopolitical context of teacher education to better understand how educators can address and affirm diversity. By incorporating culture, language and heritage into bilingual teacher preparation courses, we are working towards social justice.
This research gives us the opportunity to examine the ways in which Latina/o bilingual preservice teachers’ are engaging with the reclaiming of their own identities through their teacher preparation program. We are interested in investigating how their reflections elicit (or not) new dispositions and identity among future bilingual teachers, and then how they integrate this into their own teaching style. We believe that by giving them opportunities to self-reflect upon their own experiences, we will be able to provide a contribution to the understanding of the need for such practices in bilingual preservice teacher preparation programs.

Presenting opportunities in class that allow preservice bilingual teachers to engage in dialogue about what teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students’ means to them is important. Formulating activities that allow for bilingual preservice teachers to engage in these types of discourse in their teacher preparation courses provides the stage for growth and development in issues surrounding social justice. This further extends upon what Ladson-Billings (2009) writes in her book *Dream Keepers* where she describes a component of culturally relevant teaching in literacy to be literature where: “Students’ real-life experiences are legitimized as they become part of the “official” curriculum” (p. 127). Through the use of culturally relevant teaching, students are given the potential to become academically and intellectually challenged; but, in addition to this, their teachers also give them dignity and respect. Culturally relevant teaching empowers students by using aspects of life that are important to them personally. Throughout their teacher preparation, interns in this Bilingual/Bicultural Education program have the opportunity to work with faculty and graduate students to increase their knowledge base in pedagogy and practice when working with bilingual students. Their coursework is reflective of current research trends in bilingual education ranging from biliteracy, bilingual and ESL instructional practices, second language acquisition, and evaluation and assessment in language education.

Engaging in practices where bilingual preservice teachers build a bridge between the theories they are learning and actual practices they will engage in when they are in classrooms is important. Focusing more on critical self-reflection also enables the growth of bilingual preservice teachers. Sonia Nieto (2000) suggests examining the sociopolitical context of teacher education to better understand how educators can address and affirm diversity. Nieto’s (1999) work suggests that as a result of the hostility and inequalities confronted in their own educational experiences, teachers of color can relate better to students of color. We see this in the case of Sophia when she reflected on her own position as a member of a marginalized group. Offering the opportunity for preservice teachers to engage in such discourse will allow them to flourish.

González and Moll (2005) in their research identify the importance of educators needing to take into account cultural resources found within the life experiences of children. González and Moll propose that by doing this, educators foster the abilities to make connections made outside of the classroom. The research also states that by understanding what students bring into the classroom and appreciating these “funds of knowledge” educators are more likely to view the strengths as opposed to cultural or cognitive deficits. Coinciding with this, the vision for the Bilingual/Bicultural Education program in which these interns were participating was to cultivate and allow their students to develop their own critical perspective, which would allow them to become advocates for their future students, families, and communities.

**Limitations**

This research case study focused on the particular experiences of sixteen bilingual preservice teachers. Given this, one of the limitations of the research was related to its potential generalizability because of the number of study participants. Compositions of self-identities are
complex and vary amongst individuals, when investigating bilingual preservice teachers it is important to take this into consideration. Although they may have similar backgrounds, their own unique experiences as members of marginalized groups are what make them who they are. We are individuals with similarities and differences that make our learning experiences unique and as individuals we should be given the opportunity to flourish and share our stories. Eisner (1991) reminds us that there is much to be learned from the colorful description of a single case study- “A vivid portrait of excellent teaching, for example- can become a prototype that can be used in the education of teachers” (p. 1999).

An additional limitation relates to the timing of this study. This study required fieldwork to be conducted during a period of one month’s time during the summer. As such, these preservice teachers were guests in the classroom where they presented their lessons.

**Further Study**

To further inform the field of bilingual preservice teacher, it would be beneficial to conduct study with a larger number of participants and in a classroom where they have been interning on a regular basis. Possibly looking at an entire cohort over the course of their program will provide insightful information to the field related to bilingual preservice teachers in a variety of realms: identity formation, preservice teacher preparation programs, preservice teaching practices. One could possibly take this research further and investigate how these perceptions shift and change over time as preservice teachers’ transition into the field as novice bilingual teacher educators. Engaging preservice teachers in this process of self-discovery promotes one of the principles of transformative education as defined by Ada (2003): “Every child needs to reclaim and revitalize his or her sense of self” (p.8). We would like to extend this concept and also apply it to bilingual preservice teachers.
References


Maestros de secundaria y preparatoria, maestros de lenguaje: La importancia de propiciar el aprendizaje de la lengua a través de contenidos curriculares

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Resumen

El crecimiento en el número de programas bilingües de doble inmersión en los Estados Unidos supone sin duda alguna una serie de desafíos tanto para la comunidad docente de las universidades como para los maestros de secundaria y preparatoria. Uno de estos retos es la enseñanza de la lengua a través de los contenidos de cada materia. En este artículo se proponen algunas de las características que debería poseer un maestro de secundaria y preparatoria que imparte docencia en escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión (español-inglés). En concreto se sugiere que los maestros de distintas materias – geografía, historia, biología, matemáticas, arte, música, etc. – propicien el desarrollo de la lengua meta (en este caso el español) a través de sus respectivas asignaturas. Utilizando el concepto de literacidad como nexo de unión entre todas las materias de los planes de estudio, los autores consideran sumamente importante que los programas de formación docente enfaticen la idea de un maestro experto tanto en la enseñanza de contenidos curriculares de cada materia como el uso de las estrategias apropiadas y eficaces para fomentar el aprendizaje y dominio de la lengua meta.

Introducción

“Don’t forget that school is a unique place where every teacher is a language teacher and every student is a language learner.”

– Margot Gottlieb

Desde el año 2011, momento en que el Sello de Biliteracidad es aprobado en California, un total de catorce estados – Texas, Nueva York, Illinois, Nuevo México, Washington, Luisiana, Minnesota, Washington D.C., Virginia, Indiana, Nevada, Hawái, Utah y New Jersey – se han sumado a esta importante iniciativa. Este crecimiento y apoyo hacia el valor que supone graduarse como alumno de la preparatoria, demostrando un dominio del inglés y de otra lengua meta (p. ej., español, mandarín, coreano, vietnamita) han originado una serie de retos que los distritos y escuelas que adoptan este programa han de afrontar. Uno de estos retos es contar con maestros altamente cualificados para impartir docencia en alguna de las lenguas mencionadas anteriormente o en otras lenguas objeto de los programas de doble inmersión. Dentro de las cualidades que los maestros deben poseer, una que se presenta como fundamental es la de saber apoyar y fomentar el desarrollo de la lengua, no sólo cuando ésta se enseña como materia en sus dimensiones lingüísticas y funcionales (comprensión auditiva, comprensión escrita, gramática, etc.) sino también cuando los alumnos la aprenden como parte de las materias curriculares – matemáticas, historia, biología, etc. – que los maestros están enseñando en el aula.

Propiciar el aprendizaje de la lengua y de las literacidades disciplinares que cada materia contiene, como elementos que contextualizan y enriquecen las mismas, varía dependiendo del grado en el que el maestro imparten docencia. Los maestros que imparten niveles de kindergarten a sexto grado suelen enseñar todas las materias. La progresión de las dos lenguas – inglés y la lengua meta (español) – en estos niveles varía según el tipo de programa que se esté

1. http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2015/03/response_every_teacher_is_a_language_teacher.html

2. “El Sello de Biliteracidad es un reconocimiento otorgado por una escuela, distrito escolar o oficina de educación del condado en reconocimiento a los estudiantes que hayan alcanzado un alto nivel de competencia lingüística en dos o más idiomas al finalizar sus estudios de preparatoria”

http://sealofbiliteracy.org/faq#n15
Los programas bilingües de doble inmersión pueden utilizar un modelo 50-50 o un modelo 90-10. En este último modelo, la lengua que se enfatiza y a la cual se dedica mayor tiempo en los primeros grados, desde kindergarten a segundo, es la lengua meta en la que se enfoca el programa de doble inmersión (p. ej., español, mandarín, etc). Gómez, Freeman y Freeman (2005) señalan que este énfasis en la lengua meta tiene como objetivo equilibrar el dominio del inglés sobre otras lenguas y equiparar el estatus lingüístico de todas ellas. El modelo 50-50 se construye con la premisa de que las dos lenguas se van utilizar de una manera equilibrada a lo largo de la jornada escolar. Én términos generales, sea cual sea el modelo implementado, el maestro de grados primarios tiene la posibilidad de ser el modelo para desarrollar y apoyar la lengua en todas las materias a lo largo y ancho del currículo escolar.

El reto que se presenta a los maestros que enseñan materias en español en la escuela secundaria y preparatoria es que no están con los estudiantes todo el día y a veces, como apuntan Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix y Chu Clewell (2001) y Fernández y Carlino (2010) en sus investigaciones sobre las escuelas secundarias y preparatorias, la organización de las materias por departamentos tiende a crear barreras a la hora de incorporar la lengua como parte del aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Si a esto se añade la percepción y valoración de los estudiantes acerca de la lengua meta en relación con el inglés, es fundamental cerciorarse que el desarrollo de la lengua meta se implemente de una manera explícita cuando se está enseñando y que los maestros, teniendo en cuenta el nivel de competencia lingüística de cada estudiante, adapten, modifiquen y diferencien las actividades del aula (Tomlinson, 2014).

En este artículo se postula la necesidad de examinar con detalle cómo los maestros de las escuelas de secundaria y preparatoria que enseñan materias en la lengua meta, en este caso en español, integran el desarrollo de la lengua como proceso con el contenido de la materia (Hakuta, 2011). Un ejemplo de esta integración en la asignatura de ciencias sociales sería garantizar que los estudiantes no sólo adquieran conocimientos para enumerar hechos históricos sino también elaborar y exponer sus argumentos, explicando la interrelación entre estos hechos y utilizando al mismo tiempo los conocimientos disciplinares y el vocabulario académico y conceptual específico de la materia (Krashen y Lee Brown, 2007). De igual importancia es cómo los maestros establecen un tiempo y emplean las estrategias necesarias para trabajar con aquellos estudiantes que necesitan un apoyo más individualizado a la hora de exponer sus argumentos como historiadores, explicar sus hipótesis como científicos, demostrar la lógica de los conceptos matemáticos, analizar un cuadro como un experto en artes plásticas o documentar los resultados de sus investigaciones (Marucco, 2011; Rodríguez-Valls y Ponce, 2013).

En los siguientes apartados se analizan tres áreas clave en el trabajo de los maestros de secundaria y preparatoria en programas de doble inmersión en español (ver figura 1): (1) cómo abordan los maestros la enseñanza-aprendizaje de literacidades disciplinares; (2) cuándo y por qué los maestros trabajan con el vocabulario académico y el conceptual; y (3) qué perfil lingüístico se espera del estudiante que se gradúa de la preparatoria con el Sello de Biliteracidad.
Dos preguntas guían el análisis de estos tres temas: (1) ¿cómo deben apoyar, en el caso que nos ocupa, el desarrollo de la lengua española los maestros de secundaria y preparatoria que enseñan otras materias? Y (2) ¿cuál debe ser el nivel de biliteracidad – vocabulario, comprensión lectora, comprensión auditiva y comprensión escrita – que los alumnos deben obtener una vez se gradúen de sus estudios de preparatoria? El objetivo de este artículo es iniciar un diálogo que abra las puertas a una reflexión acerca del apoyo y la formación que los maestros de secundaria y preparatoria necesitan para desarrollar y mantener programas bilingües de doble inmersión de calidad sostenibles.

**Lenguaje académico y literacidad disciplinar**

Students need to be engaged in continuous and strategic practice of listening, reading, and writing in all courses; not just in language arts.

–María Montalvo-Balbed

Aunque por lo general aquellos que se capacitan para ejercer la profesión de docentes de secundaria no reconocen el desarrollo del lenguaje y de la literacidad como tareas fundamentales en la enseñanza de asignaturas y contenidos curriculares (Roepke y Gallagher, 2015; Constantino, 1994; de Jong y Harper 2008; Tan, 2011), tal y como lo avalan Halliday (1993) y Rodríguez Diéguez y Gallego Rico (1992), es innegable que el nivel de rendimiento académico de un alumno se encuentra supeditado al grado en el que éste pueda realizar ciertas tareas comunicativas dentro de su programa educativo. Es por ello que, en este contexto, es necesario que los educadores comprendan la importancia de la literacidad en el desarrollo del lenguaje académico.

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3 [http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_berlazzo/2015/03/response_every_teacher_is_a_language_teacher.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_berlazzo/2015/03/response_every_teacher_is_a_language_teacher.html).

4 En este trabajo hemos decidido emplear el término “educación secundaria” aunque somos conscientes de que ésta también se concibe como educación preparatoria, polimodal, media o bachillerato según el país del que se trate (ver Lomas, 2014, pág. 12).
y fuera del aula. Estas tareas poseen un carácter multidimensional que, para realizarse adecuadamente dentro de un contexto académico, requieren conocimientos disciplinares y competencias de uso lingüístico que van más allá del aprendizaje y del uso del vocabulario disciplinar. Por ende, este trabajo aboga por una educación bilingüe en la que los docentes asumen la responsabilidad de promover la literacidad disciplinar como propuesta pedagógica (López-Bonilla, 2013) que favorece tanto el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de conocimientos de contenidos curriculares como el desarrollo de competencias comunicativas académicas en español e inglés.

Saber que hacer cosas con las palabras (Austin, 1962) dentro de un contexto de comunicación académico y disciplinar implica el acceso a las herramientas lingüísticas y discursivas que permitan al alumno de secundaria y preparatoria adecuar su expresión oral y escrita al contenido, finalidad y contexto del acto de comunicación que se precisa realizar, siempre teniendo en cuenta las características discursivas de las distintas disciplinas académicas (Lemke, 1990). De tal manera, se califica como imprescindible que todo maestro de secundaria y preparatoria tome en cuenta las denominadas ‘demandas lingüísticas’ de cada acto de comunicación, que se desprenden no sólo de los estándares curriculares (v.g., CCSS; NGSS), para fomentar el desarrollo fluido y adecuado del uso oral y escrito de la lengua para fines disciplinarios (Parodi, 2008; 2010). Promover una educación secundaria que permita al alumno aprender a hacer cosas con las palabras (Lomas, 2014) implica apostar por una educación lingüística fundamentada en una orientación comunicativa de la lengua (Ibid); metodología que va más allá del estudio de la gramática y que permite al estudiante adquirir las herramientas necesarias para poder realizar actos de comunicación que denoten no sólo de los estándares curriculares (v.g., CCSS; NGSS), para fomentar el desarrollo fluido y adecuado del uso oral y escrito de la lengua para fines disciplinarios (Parodi, 2008; 2010). Promover una educación secundaria que permita al alumno aprender a hacer cosas con las palabras (Lomas, 2014) implica apostar por una educación lingüística fundamentada en una orientación comunicativa de la lengua (Ibid); metodología que va más allá del estudio de la gramática y que permite al estudiante adquirir las herramientas necesarias para poder realizar actos de comunicación que denoten no sólo de los estándares curriculares (v.g., CCSS; NGSS), para fomentar el desarrollo fluido y adecuado del uso oral y escrito de la lengua para fines disciplinarios (Parodi, 2008; 2010).

De la misma manera, e íntimamente relacionada con la tarea de enseñar el contenido curricular, está la responsabilidad que tiene el docente de crear oportunidades para que el alumno continúe desarrollando una competencia lectora que le permita ir más allá de “la automatización de la descodificación” y así propiciar el acceso a “nuevas formas de leer” e interpretar los distintos significados de la variedad de textos que se emplean como material disciplinar y didáctico en el aula (Solé 2014, pág. 88). Asimismo, el maestro de secundaria y preparatoria debe propiciar el desarrollo de una competencia escrita que esté acorde con la modalidad que requiere el contenido disciplinar que se trabaja (Daniels, Zemelman, y Steinke, 2007; Halliday y Martin, 1993; Moreno, 2014; Zwiers, 2014). Estas nuevas formas de interpretar y de hacer cosas con las palabras permitirán que el alumno pase de ser sólo consumidor de información a ejercer un papel activo y dinámico en la construcción de conocimientos y en la expresión de saberes desde un contexto disciplinar y de género académico (Parodi, 2008; 2010).

Desde la perspectiva expuesta anteriormente es importante recalcar que la enseñanza de contenidos curriculares en educación secundaria y preparatoria llevan aparejadas una serie de responsabilidades y oportunidades para el docente. Responsabilidades y oportunidades que confirman el principio de que todo maestro escolar es también, inevitablemente, un maestro de lengua (Gottlieb, 2015; Zwiers, 2014, 2015). De aquí la necesidad y el deber de los programas de formación de maestros bilingües de dotar a los futuros maestros de las destrezas y conocimientos necesarios para así propiciar el aprendizaje de competencias lingüísticas y el desarrollo de la literacidad y de literacidades disciplinares de manera coordinada y simultánea.

Es decir, tanto la integración lingüística del alumnado en escuelas secundarias bilingües o de doble inmersión como el aprendizaje de conocimientos y el desarrollo de destrezas que permitan
al estudiante saber hacer cosas con las palabras con fines académicos, dependen en gran manera del buen y amplio manejo del repertorio de herramientas discursivas que caracterizan el “lenguaje académico” y la “literacidad disciplinar”. Por ello a continuación se proporcione una breve definición de estos conceptos enmarcados dentro de una concepción multidimensional del quehacer pedagógico del docente de secundaria; un quehacer que no puede disociarse de la estrecha relación que existe entre el contenido disciplinario y el lenguaje académico, ya que éstos actúan como anverso y reverso de una misma moneda que propicia la construcción de saberes disciplinarios por medio del uso funcional del lenguaje académico y viceversa.

El lenguaje académico y el lenguaje social comparten un mismo sistema lingüístico. No obstante, a diferencia del lenguaje social, el lenguaje académico admite distinciones más allá del ámbito léxico. Según señala Ibarra (2012) “sabemos que la lengua utilizada en contextos académicos suele ser bien diferente de la lengua de comunicación empleada en situaciones sociales de la vida cotidiana [y que] en contra de lo que se puede pensar, la diferencia entre la lengua académica y la lengua de comunicación no es solo una cuestión de léxico” (pág. 16).

Desde este planteamiento, Ibarra (2012) resalta que, más allá del vocabulario, “hay todo un conjunto de recursos verbales y no verbales que se utilizan para la transmisión del currículo educativo” (pág. 16). Asimismo, y citando a Villalba y Hernández (2005), indica que estos recursos incluyen “los esquemas de conocimientos que se activan, la forma en que se procesa la información, los roles que desempeñan los distintos participantes, los textos que se manejan y el modo en que se utilizan las diferentes destrezas lingüísticas” (pág. 16). Aunque este artículo no se centra en estos últimos aspectos del lenguaje académico, se enfatiza el hecho de que el docente de secundaria debe estar capacitado para fomentar el desarrollo de las competencias lingüísticas de sus alumnos más allá del vocabulario disciplinar, permitiéndoles así realizar tareas funcionales en la lengua meta o vehicular, tales como “comparar y contrastar informaciones para describir, explicar, analizar, definir, identificar, evaluar tareas y aprendizajes” (Villalba, 2008, citado en Ibarra, 2012, pág. 17).

Todos estos conocimientos y competencias comprenden un marco multidimensional desde el cual el estudiante puede desarrollar su literacidad disciplinar o alfabetización académica – destrezas correspondientes a la literacidad especializada de disciplinas como la historia, las ciencias, las matemáticas, la literatura u otra asignatura curricular (Shanahan y Shanahan, 2008).

Enseñar vocabulario académico y vocabulario conceptual

En la sección anterior se ha analizado la importancia de reforzar y trabajar cada una de las literacidades disciplinares. Como comenta Bonilla, (2013) “ la literacidad disciplinar … [tiene] el propósito de instrumentar prácticas escolares que garanticen la participación exitosa de los estudiantes en las actividades de lectura y escritura que las disciplinas académicas demandan” (pág. 387). Asimismo, Cassany (2010) enfatiza la importancia de la literacidad disciplinar como el vehículo para poder controlar “los géneros escritos, el conocimiento de la función del discurso y de los roles que asumen el lector y el autor” (pág. 1). En este sentido, el alumno bilingüe del programa de doble inmersión ha de poseer un control y dominio del vocabulario de cada disciplina para participar competentemente en los procesos de aprendizaje y para poseer un conocimiento elevado del discurso académico.

Por esta razón es importante diferenciar dos categorías de vocabulario que el maestro debe trabajar con los estudiantes para que éstos puedan, por ejemplo, emitir razonamientos fundamentados en álgebra o extraer conclusiones basadas en evidencias en biología. La primera categoría de vocabulario se refiere al vocabulario académico que los estudiantes deben usar para
evaluar, aplicar, sintetizar y crear los conceptos que se manejan en cada disciplina. La segunda categoría es el vocabulario que constituye lo que Calsamiglia Blancafort y Tusón (2015) definen como el corpus conceptual de cada disciplina. Ambas categorías son necesarias para que el estudiante tenga altos niveles de literacidad en matemáticas, historia, química o cualquier otra disciplina. El objetivo en el caso que se analiza en este artículo, alumnos bilingües de programas de doble inmersión, es que el estudiante consiga unos altos niveles de biliteracidad en cada una de las materias que se enseñan en la lengua meta (figura- 2).

Figura 2- Componentes de biliteracidad

En otras palabras, para que los estudiantes puedan leer, escribir, hablar y entender cada disciplina en dos lenguas, español e inglés, y además maneje de modo competente los vocabularios de cada una de éstas y a la vez pueda aplicar y usar estos vocabularios para entender el mundo que les rodea requiere un trabajo específico por parte del maestro en cada uno de estos bloques de vocabulario (Freire y Macedo, 1987; Rodríguez-Valls, 2011). El trabajo con los bloques de vocabulario señalados debe iniciarse con una revisión y práctica por parte de los estudiantes del vocabulario académico antes de abordar el trabajo con el vocabulario conceptual (Gibbons, 2014). Por ejemplo, en una clase de biología, el maestro debe primero revisar y evaluar si los estudiantes entienden y son capaces de utilizar palabras como tesis, hipótesis, conclusiones, resultados, probar, ensayo, prueba-error, etc. La práctica de este vocabulario académico debe ir acompañada de una explicación en el uso y el valor del mismo (Brownley, 2009). El maestro tiene que ser explícito en la importancia de este vocabulario académico. Para ello tiene que reforzar y modelar la idea que cualquier concepto necesita de un envoltorio académico para magnificar su significado (Calderón, August, Slavin, Duran, Madden y Cheung, 2005). No es lo mismo saber la definición de la palabra célula que poder explicar y conversar sobre el concepto de una célula en un debate en el salón de clase o al escribir un ensayo sobre cómo los productos tóxicos afectan el estado de las células. La definición es necesaria pero el poder aplicar esa definición eleva el nivel de [bi]literacidad del estudiante (Hernández, Costa, Fuentes, Vives y Sebastián-Gallés, 2010).

Al trabajo con el vocabulario académico le sigue el trabajo con el vocabulario conceptual como por ejemplo: célula, gen, ácido desoxirribonucleico, enlace, genotipo. El análisis y estudio
de estas palabras se hace utilizando el marco lingüístico que proporciona el vocabulario académico. Dentro de este bloque se enfatiza la idea del vocabulario conceptual como núcleo de conocimiento que se habla, escucha, escribe y lee a través del vocabulario académico. El trabajo que cada maestro hace del vocabulario conceptual en su materia debe estar reforzado por un apoyo interdepartamental cuando se habla de vocabulario (Brisk y Zisselsberger, 2011). Los maestros de diferentes materias deben trabajar juntos para identificar los vocablos que tienen diferente significado. Así tomando como ejemplo la palabra que se mencionó anteriormente, célula, el maestro de biología debe trabajar con el maestro de historia para explícitamente señalar dos de los significados que tiene esta palabra: 1) un elemento constitutivo de los seres vivos y 2) grupo dentro de una organización que funciona de manera independiente.

Este trabajo cooperativo en el diseño de planes de estudio debe darse no solo entre diferentes disciplinas sino también entre las lenguas vehiculares de la escuela. Todos los maestros, ya enseñen en inglés o en español, deben trabajar de una manera conjunta para que el estudiante aprenda los diferentes significados que las palabras tienen en cada materia y cómo los significados difieren o se transfieren entre lenguas. En este apartado el trabajo de los cognados y falsos cognados clarifica los posibles errores semánticos y sintácticos que el alumno pueda cometer al utilizar estas palabras. Este tipo de trabajo interdepartamental e interlingüístico – español e inglés – beneficia a los estudiantes y proporciona a todos los docentes de una escuela bilingüe de doble inmersión, independientemente de la lengua vehicular que utilicen al enseñar sus materias, herramientas para incrementar y apoyar el valor y peso específico de la biliteracidad en su escuela (figura- 3).

Figura 3- Biliteracidad Interdepartamental e Interlingüística

Teniendo en cuenta lo que se ha propuesto en esta sección en términos de trabajo de bloques de vocabularios y cómo se deben trabajar éstos en el ámbito interdepartamental e interlingüístico, queda por definir los rasgos que definen el grado biliteracidad que un estudiante debería tener al completar sus estudios de preparatoria.
Biliteracidad

Si bien la integración curricular de lengua y de contenido en un sólo idioma supone un desafío para todo maestro bilingüe de educación secundaria y preparatoria, no cabe duda de que el desarrollo de competencias lingüísticas de uso y de literacidades disciplinares en dos idiomas (inglés y español, por ejemplo) supone mayores esfuerzos y conlleva una mayor complejidad didáctica. Por lo tanto, para propiciar de una manera adecuada el *saber hacer cosas con las palabras* en dos idiomas dentro de un contexto académico-disciplinar, el maestro bilingüe de secundaria y preparatoria tiene que adquirir estrategias pedagógicas y conocimientos fundamentados en las propuestas teóricas y pedagógicas que sustentan y promueven el desarrollo del bilingüismo y de la biliteracidad de los estudiantes.

Según indica Hornberger (2009), “la esencia de la educación [...] bi/multilingüe se puede captar en la idea de la biliteracidad, que también se podría denominar la multiliteracidad ya que se trata de literacidades en dos o más lenguas” (pág. 97). Partiendo de este enfoque, la autora define la biliteracidad como “toda instancia en la cual la comunicación se desarrolla en dos (o más) lenguas en giro a un texto escrito” (Hornberger, 1990, pág. 213). Para los fines que se persiguen en este artículo, es clave entender el quehacer pedagógico del docente de secundaria bilingüe desde las perspectivas multidimensionales que ofrecemos (Figuras 1, 2 y 3) y cuya articulación permite entender el trabajo de docente desde la enseñanza y aprendizaje coordinado de una *biliteracidad disciplinar* que tome en cuenta el desarrollo de contenidos curriculares; vocabulario académico; vocabulario conceptual, así como las herramientas discursivas que permitan al estudiante interpretar, discurrir y escribir más allá del nivel oracional (Aquino-Sterling, 2014) y en función de los objetivos curriculares. Asimismo, es también necesario que el docente pueda valerse de técnicas que hagan posible la implementación de actividades pedagógicas que aprovechen la relación transferencial que existe entre los sistemas lingüísticos de cada idioma (Beeman y Urow, 2012; Escamilla, Hopewell, Butvilofsky, Sparrow, Soltero-González, Ruiz-Figueroa y Escamilla, 2013).

El maestro debe trabajar estas relaciones transferenciales con sus estudiantes. Por ejemplo, como explica Cummins (1991), el estudiante debe ser capaz de poder transferir el concepto que adquirió en una lengua a la otra lengua y a la inversa. En el mismo marco, el estudiante que aprende a usar organizadores gráficos, memorizar fórmulas; y comparar y contrastar en español tendría que poder usar estas herramientas en inglés y viceversa. Por último, es importante que el maestro muestre explícitamente las simetrías lingüísticas entre las dos lenguas al leer y comprender textos. A los lectores y escritores dentro del aula bilingüe de doble inmersión se les supone la habilidad de poder utilizar claves grafo-fónicas, semánticas y sintácticas en ambas lenguas. Como apunta Rodríguez-Valls (2009) el maestro y los alumnos deben analizar el porqué de los errores comparando la claves de cada lengua. Por ejemplo, si un alumno escribe en un ensayo, “el pianista ... pasará por México con una serie de conciertos en la Orquesta Nacional”, el maestro debería analizar con el estudiante el porqué de esta estructura y la elección de palabras que hizo el alumno para así poder guiarle para que este pueda escribir “el pianista irá a México como parte de su gira de conciertos en la Orquesta Nacional”. Del mismo modo, el maestro de inglés debería preguntarse y preguntar al alumno acerca del porqué de una frase en inglés como “The backpack of Pedro is red”.

La biliteracidad en el aula bilingüe de doble inmersión potencia la epistemología de las lenguas. Los estudiantes y el maestro aprenden el porqué de la lengua, cuándo y cómo se aplica y se crea y cómo evaluarla. Ser capaz de hablar, escuchar, comprender, leer y escribir en dos lenguas es una tarea diacrónica en la cual el maestro y los estudiantes analizan cómo las lenguas
evolucionan para luego poder utilizarlas de una manera sincrónica, reflejando sus reglas y usos gramaticales en un momento y tarea concretos (Rodríguez, Carrasquillo y Soon Lee, 2014).

**Recomendaciones**

En las diferentes secciones de este artículo se han analizado tres áreas relacionadas con el apoyo al desarrollo de la lengua española en cada materia del currículo. Este apoyo es fundamental para que los estudiantes de las escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión adquieran altos niveles de biliteracidad. Para poder asegurar este nivel se proponen tres recomendaciones que serán examinadas en futuros proyectos de trabajo.

La primera recomendación sería hacer un análisis de los programas de formación de los futuros maestros que van a enseñar en español en escuelas de doble inmersión, con mención especial a los que van a trabajar en escuelas de secundaria o preparatoria. Es importante subrayar la necesidad de que estos futuros docentes posean las herramientas necesarias para impartir las materias en español al mismo nivel que si la clase se impartiese en inglés en términos de literacidad, vocabulario académico y vocabulario conceptual. Los profesores de estos programas de formación tienen que considerar e implementar las diferentes dimensiones analizadas en este artículo. También han de enseñar y modelar de una manera explícita cómo éstas determinan el porqué, cuándo y cómo diferenciar, modificar y adaptar los procesos de aprendizaje en función del nivel de literacidad de sus estudiantes. Así mismo deben de explicar el porqué, cómo y cuándo la instrucción varía dependiendo el nivel de conocimiento de los estudiantes y la habilidad que éstos tienen para el uso y aplicación del vocabulario académico y vocabulario conceptual.

Una segunda recomendación es que los distritos escolares y oficinas del condado de cada estado proporcionen apoyo a los maestros titulados que están trabajando en las escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión. Como cualquier otro programa educativo, las escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión necesitan que el cuerpo docente que trabaja en las mismas sepa lo que se espera de ellos. Los maestros deben tener una idea clara sobre cuáles son las expectativas en términos de biliteracidad según el modelo utilizado en la escuela (50-50 o 90-10). Estas expectativas deben ir acompañadas del apoyo de los administradores educativos, directores, coordinador de estudios, especialistas. Éstos tienen que transmitir de una manera efectiva cuáles son las directrices educativas y expectativas académicas en cada materia y en cada grado. Un punto importante en el tema de apoyo es el trabajo que la escuela debe hacer con los padres. Si los padres entienden las expectativas que la escuela tiene en los temas analizados en este artículo, literacidad, vocabularios y biliteracidad, ellos también podrán apoyar de una manera activa a conseguir los objetivos en términos de biliteracidad. La biliteracidad no debe ser una responsabilidad única de la escuela. La biliteracidad debería ser una tarea en la cual los padres, estudiantes y escuela trabajan juntos en adquirir el mismo nivel de competencias lingüísticas en ambas lenguas (en este caso el español y el inglés).

La tercera recomendación se refiere al tipo de colaboraciones y sinergias que deben crearse entre las diferentes entidades educativas para poder asegurar una formación de calidad del profesorado y su posterior trabajo en el aula. Las universidades deben trabajar con los distritos, oficinas del condado y organizaciones educativas como Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) o California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) y crear redes de apoyo continuo para el personal docente de las escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión. Este apoyo debe estar basado en un acuerdo entre todas las organizaciones en el que se plasme un marco teórico y práctico en los tres temas centrales analizados en este artículo. Un acuerdo: 1) en los elementos que constituyen la idea de literacidad en el aula dónde se enseña en español; 2) cuáles son las
estrategias necesarias para el desarrollo del vocabulario académico y cómo éste es la base para que los estudiantes puedan usar de una manera competente el vocabulario conceptual; y 3) el nivel de biliteracidad que los estudiantes tienen que alcanzar. Un acuerdo así concebido reforzaría el crecimiento y auge de los programas de doble inmersión.

El presente y el futuro de la biliteracidad son brillantes. Cada vez hay más familias que quieren que sus hijos estén escolarizados en escuelas bilingües de doble inmersión. Por otro lado, el número de futuros maestros que decide formarse para enseñar en esas escuelas se multiplica cada año. Ahora solo queda que todos los participantes de este proceso, estudiantes, padres, maestros, administradores, profesores de universidad, trabajen juntos para que la doble inmersión sea el referente en términos de inclusividad lingüística, cultural y social.
Bibliografía


A Lifetime of Apprenticeship: The Role of History and Lived Experiences on One Teacher’s Pathway to Bilingual Education

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Abstract

Recent efforts in teacher education programs have focused on providing teacher candidates with experiences that help them to prepare for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Many pre-service teachers are exploring issues of diversity and bilingualism for the first time. As a result, there is a need to design effective ways to guide them in examining the influence of their own personal histories on their developing classroom practices and beliefs. This case study analyzed the experiences of one teacher, Carlos, as he described events throughout his life that eventually led to bilingual teacher certification. Findings suggest that Carlos’ stories, examined within a larger social and political context, illuminate the importance of realizing teacher perspectives beyond the mainstream lens. The discussion highlights an approach to guiding pre-service teachers in analyzing their own lived experiences, alongside the experiences of others, to engage in critical conversations about diversity, bilingualism, and culturally responsive teaching.

Introduction

All children deserve and need teachers who realize and embody the rich diversity of our nation. Teacher education programs have responded to this need by fortifying their certification offerings, redesigning coursework, and re-envisioning fieldwork as an important and early part of the certification process. A primary intent of these programs is to prepare all teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Recent changes in teacher preparation are grounded in the awareness that many pre-service teachers are confronting issues such as diversity and bilingualism for the first time and already have established beliefs that are representative of mainstream schooling (Smagorinsky, 2010). As a result, much effort has been given to providing teacher candidates with experiences that can help them to develop their knowledge and confidence as they enter into diverse classrooms (Marx, 2006; Chou & Sakash, 2008).

Although this movement is essential and certainly trending in the right direction, it must be inclusive of the needs of all teacher education students. It cannot be assumed that diverse populations of pre-service teachers have had the means by which to explore their own personal histories and developing dispositions in education. Specifically, it is important to recognize the match (or mismatch) between current reputable bilingual practices and the early educational experiences of bilingual teacher candidates. Many experiences will align with effective practices; however, it is also likely that these early experiences may have been influenced by deficit and/or English-centric ideologies that have shaped their framework for future teaching.

I suggest that it is necessary to seek out highly effective and credentialed teachers to share their stories of their early learning experiences that unfolded as they discovered their bilingual teacher identity. Few studies have invited these salient voices of expertise in the quest to understand the bilingual teacher experience and gain insight into how bilingual candidates, who are urgently needed, conceptualized their entrance into teacher education. In this case study I explored how one teacher, Carlos, perceived the influence of his own lived experiences as he chose the pathway to bilingual teacher certification. In doing so, I paralleled his experiences with U.S. sociocultural/political events related to bilingual education to provide a context from which to understand how the lives of people exist along a continuum—past, present, and future—that is embedded in a larger social narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It should be noted that Carlos was chosen for this paper as a representative of a larger study conducted on the experiences of exemplary teachers of bilingual learners.
Theoretical Framework

This exploration is guided by the sociocultural (Moll, 2013; Vygotsky, 1986) and constructivist (Cole & Cole, 2001) perspectives that provide a lens from which to understand the influence of history and lived experiences on teachers’ pathways to bilingual education. The framework of this study reflects García’s (2005) interpretation of sociocultural theory. He states, “Social experience is inseparable from thought. Moment by moment we construct reality. That process of construction and the understanding it generates depend on our previous understandings and our social experiences” (p. 31). Studying bilingual learning environments requires an orientation that acknowledges that the socialization of teachers begins in childhood. The work teachers do with the children in their classrooms is powerfully anchored to their past lived experiences (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000).

This research also draws from existing scholarship focused on meanings of history theory that recognizes history as central to studies of human experience. Enciso (2007) reasons that meanings of history help us to examine the unconventional ways that are not always perceived as sociocultural archetypes of teaching and learning. Historical accounts of teachers’ lives provide a framework that can move us beyond the dominant American narrative that may overshadow our exposure to the bilingual education experience. Teacher stories in narrative research acknowledge that teachers’ experiences exist along a continuum of broader social issues that have played out over time. This current work has its roots in Dewey’s theory of experience and continuity (1938). He proposed that experiential knowledge informs new experiences in a particular context. In turn, that process creates a newly developed knowledge base from which contextual interactions are continually shaped. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain “there is always a history, it is always changing, and it is always going somewhere” (p.2). The sociocultural-constructivist perspective illuminating the meanings of history and experience is a theoretical match for this study that sought, through story, to gain insight into one teacher’s lived experiences on his journey to becoming a teacher of bilingual learners.

Review of Literature

Teacher Stories

Teacher narratives are powerful to both the storyteller and the receiver of the story. Bruner (2002) suggests that when we tell and listen to stories, it is a process of shaping and transforming. The stories we tell about our lived experiences are ways of knowing that inform ourselves and others about who we were in the past, who we are in the present, and what we intend for the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Mattos, 2009). In revealing an account, the story author works at making sense of the world.

Nieto (2013), in her examination of the experiences of 32 teachers, provided an example of an approach to documenting the stories of teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse children. She specifically focused on “thriving” teachers who continually found joy in teaching despite the challenges of education reform and deficit external ideologies that permeated their classrooms. In order to tell the teachers’ stories, Nieto first addressed the national context in which the teachers’ lived experiences occurred. She stated:
I tell the stories of these teachers within the context of an educational system that, in too many cases, has gone terribly wrong: a system that has substituted test scores for learning, rigid standardization for high standards, and punitive accountability for social justice. (p. xv)

Through the work of Nieto (2013) and others, we have discovered that the narrative of American education is often told from a mainstream position that does not place the stories of particular groups at the forefront (Delgado-Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2015; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Stories that counter conventional perceptions help to diminish deficit ideologies that may exist in the mainstream culture, and these stories play an important role in challenging misperceptions in social systems (Craig, 2010). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) describe counterstories, or counternarratives, as a method of telling the stories of individuals who are too often disregarded and frequently misrepresented. This current study values the accounts of teachers that are often overlooked in the traditional institutional paradigm that consistently resists the authority of experiential foundations of knowledge.

**Teachers in Apprenticeship**

Teacher education programs have long understood the importance of apprenticeship learning wherein pre-service teachers are assigned to work in field or student teaching placements under a credentialed experienced teacher (Aldrich, 1991). The intent of this mentoring model is to provide novice teacher candidates with opportunities to develop the skills and dispositions needed for their own classrooms.

In addition to this deliberate apprenticeship, scholars have also theorized that teachers are strongly influenced by their own experiences as learners for many years. This type of apprenticeship was first described by Lortie (1975) as *apprenticeship of observation* in his sociological study of teaching. Lortie surmised that teachers’ “preconceptions of teaching, grown firm from many years in public schools, hold the strength to weather the undergraduate experience with little change. They are carried into and even verified by the workplace of teaching” (Schempp, 1987, p. 2). Many researchers have revisited Lortie’s work and have refuted his claim that teacher education programs have a limited effect on teachers’ practices (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Mewborn & Tyminski, 2006; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014). They caution that Lortie’s theory relies on dated results with an inclination toward conservative influences.

Instead, the more recent revisions of the apprenticeship of observation framework propose, “If a model is to be useful, it should also explain how good teaching gets replicated and how the cycle of replication of poor teaching can be disrupted” (Mewborn & Tyminski, 2006, p. 31). Pre-service teachers may indeed assert their histories and early experiences into who they become as teachers. Researchers and teacher educators have reasoned that experiences that have socialized us in our years of early learning can be used as an instrument to analyze assumptions and critique deeply entrenched beliefs. In doing so, highly effective, responsive teaching can be fostered and supported (Feimen-Nemser, 2001). The re-envisioned notion of *apprenticeship of observation* is moored in the framework of history and continuity (Dewey, 1938; Enciso, 2007) guiding this study.
Method

This single instrumental case study explored the experiences of Carlos through a narrative inquiry approach. Pavlenko (2001) describes narrative research related to language teaching and learning as a “unique source of information about motivations, experiences, struggles, losses and gains” (p. 231) that are not easily accessed through other exploratory means. Studying teacher experiences requires a method that realizes the continuum of past, present, and future as it is situated in a particular context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey 1938). Narrative inquiry provides a framework from which to study experience, follow where it leads, and through the voice of another, imagine possibilities within our own personal and work lives.

Study Context

The findings in this case study were part of a larger project that examined the experiences of four teachers of bilingual learners. The method of choosing participants was one of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). I sought educators who had reputations as being exemplary in their practice. To accomplish this, I asked bilingual education administrators to nominate those teachers who best represented the following criteria: a) the teacher had worked in the bilingual education program for at least two years, b) the teacher had demonstrated a solid research-oriented knowledge base with regard to bilingual education and second language acquisition, and c) the teacher had a reputation for being highly effective in his/her instructional practices employed with learners in a bilingual education program. For this article, one teacher, Carlos is highlighted as an illustrative example.

At the time of the study, Carlos was teaching in a fifth grade classroom at Goodall Elementary School (GES) in his 29th year of teaching in bilingual education. GES is located in a Midwestern urban city, and approximately 400 students attend the dual language program. The demographics of the school include a population that is 22% Black, 59% Hispanic, and 17% White. The English language learner population (recorded as Limited English Proficient in school reports) was 27%, and 87% of the total school population was identified as having a low socioeconomic status.

Data Collection and Analysis

I began this narrative exploration by first building a relationship with Carlos, whom I had not met prior to the study. Carlos chose the public library near his home for our first meeting. This 90-minute initial interview was used to confirm the nomination process, and it was also used to build a certain level of comfort that I felt was important to delving into his experiences. I introduced myself as a teacher educator and university researcher. I also revealed my own history as a Spanish second language learner and literacy teacher in bilingual education for over a decade. The initial interview served as a conversation in which we shared stories from the field, and I began to learn about Carlos.

Following this initial interaction, I engaged in a series of classroom observations and subsequent interviews with Carlos. Observations in this study took place in the natural school setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I observed him twice during the data collection period. After each observation, a 90-minute follow-up interview occurred within that week. I asked semi-structured open-ended questions to create a comfortable environment. I also provided him with an
opportunity to document his thoughts through journal reflections that we would share in our face-to-face meetings. All of the observations and interviews were audiotaped.

Throughout the analysis, Carlos’ stories remained the heart of the interpretation. For the purpose of this article, I focused primarily on the responses that I coded as biographical/narrative experiences in the larger project. All interview, observation, and field note transcriptions were revisited, and the narratives were reorganized to chronicle the stories told by Carlos (Creswell, 2007). I took particular care to highlight key critical incidents within the findings that he believes were important to his personal and professional trajectory. To extract deeper meaning from Carlos’ stories, as they were analyzed, I considered concurrent historical events significant to bilingual education in the United States as the backdrop.

The credibility of this work was established throughout the study. Triangulation of data was achieved through using multiple forms (observation, interview, and reflection journal) to clarify meaning and strengthen the confidence in the narrative inquiry approach (Stake, 2005). In addition, I engaged the participant in the method of member checking (Glesne, 1999) at the end of the data-gathering period to ensure the truth of the data, and I enlisted peers whom I consider expert auditors to provide feedback on the accounts I documented (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, I consistently acknowledged the inquiry and analysis process as one of interpretation and subjectivity. At the forefront, my research remains a reflective work, as I continue to interrogate and examine my own experiences as a teacher/learner.

Findings

I spent many hours talking with Carlos. We spoke about his childhood, background in education, and experiences as a teacher. He proudly spoke about his 29 years in bilingual education. He explained that his entrance into the field was “kind of by accident” (April 30, 2012), yet I chose to focus on Carlos’ stories because I quickly learned that his childhood landscape was clearly the beginning of his socialization into teaching.

Through his accounts, I moved backward and forward in time. I looked closely at the details of his life, and I also explored his narratives through the wider meanings of history lens. To accomplish this, I paralleled the stories of Carlos with the sociocultural/political events related to bilingual education along the same period of time as his experiences.

“I Never Spoke to Them Until I Had To”

Carlos was born in the mid 1950s. He is a third-generation Mexican-American. His maternal and paternal grandparents fled Mexico, because “they did not want to be part of the Mexican Revolution” (May 24, 2012). They put down their roots in Laredo, Texas, along the Rio Grande. Both of his parents were born in the border town, and they later moved to start their own family in Midwestern America. The home language of Carlos’ family was Spanish. Carlos explained, “Both of my parents always spoke Spanish to me—all the time. I never spoke to them [in Spanish] until I had to” (May 24, 2012).

García and Díaz (1992) discuss the phenomenon of the third generation shift that is a consequence of the assimilation process that happens in the United States. They observed that by the third generation, most speakers cease to speak in their native language. Without deliberate efforts at language maintenance and revitalization, the heritage language diminishes and is at risk for loss (Baker, 2006). Carlos was born in a time when many parents believed the best approach
to schooling was English assimilation, and school systems were designed for mainstream enculturation. Yet it was also an era primed for a civil rights agenda.

In the decade prior to Carlos’ birth, the U.S. District court case of *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) established that the segregation of Mexican-American schoolchildren by national origin was arbitrary and discriminatory. The case is described as a powerful antecedent to the Civil Rights Movement (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Carlos came into the world during a period that is highlighted by the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision. This ruling overruled the separate-but-equal doctrine that had been segregating races for over a half a century. At this point in history, there were significant and brewing civil rights issues related to language and the rights of children in school.

Carlos, a grandchild of Mexican immigrants, had deliberately chosen to push against the linguistic shift that was happening in his family. He was a young child with a keen awareness about the capacity of language:

My parents spoke Spanish, but I spoke English to them and understood some of the things that they would say to me. It was not until my mom’s family came from Texas that I felt a need to know more Spanish—mostly for defense against my cousins. I had 18 cousins that all came at the same time from Texas. They spoke Spanish. When they came, I wanted to learn how to speak it and read it and write it. I would talk to people to try to increase my vocabulary. I would read whatever I could—novelas, newspapers, whatever. This is when I was only seven or eight years old. (April 30, 2012)

Young Carlos took it upon himself to preserve his home language. It was the early part of the 1960s, and there was no bilingual education program in place for him. The first U.S. two-way dual language program had just been implemented in 1963 in Coral Gables, Florida to meet the needs of a wave of Cuban immigrants (Baker, 2006). It would be years before bilingual education programs would begin to materialize in many other parts of the nation. With the birth of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it was also a time like no other. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of color, race, or national origin (Baker, 2006), and has played a critical role in protecting the educational rights of students whose first language is one other than English. It has served as eminent precedence for many other legislative cases with regard to the schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse children (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

This was the sociopolitical environment in which Carlos experienced his years as an emergent bilingual learner. He believes those early elementary school years were instrumental in forming his ideologies about bilingual education. He remembered:

In the middle of my elementary school experience, my Spanish-dominant cousins came up from Texas. They went to the same school. The teachers would use me for a translator. They would sit me next to them in class, so I could tell them what they had to do and help them with their work. (May 24, 2012)

Carlos spent many days in school sheltering the English for his cousins, acting as a language broker, and guiding their assimilation. All of his early schooling was in monolingual English classrooms, and he remembered interactions with his teachers as being very positive. Even so, his desire to become connected to his Spanish-speaking cousins was an immense force in his motivation to learn the Spanish language. Young Carlos’ linguistic repertoire was revitalized as
he observed and became a student of the Spanish language. Through his experiences with his cousins, he developed an identity as a bilingual learner.

This happened in the early 1960s, in an era when teachers’ methodologies and practices were not yet influenced by the pedagogical movements of culturally responsive teaching, the language as a resource ideology (Ruiz, 1984), and the decades of scholarly research that have informed current bilingual education practices (Cummins, 2000; García, 2005; Moll, 1998; 2013). This is the context that began shaping who Carlos was as a learner. It is a time that foreshadows the educator that he would become—the teacher that I observed valuing peer mentorship, small group projects, strong language models, and above all, a maintenance and vitalization of the [Spanish] home language.

“I Wished Someone Could Hear My Grandfather Talking to Me”

Carlos described his early years as “quite an experience and very formative.” As his interest in the Spanish language continued, he also became increasingly curious about his family’s heritage. He explained:

I wanted to know more about my family. I wish I would have heard more. I’m inquisitive by nature, but it was a cultural thing. I was taught not to ask questions. I always told my family, “I’m not judgmental. I don’t care. I want to know what happened.” My grandparents died before I had the opportunity to start investigating and asking. (May 24, 2012).

The strength of Carlos’ family relationships appears to have deeply influenced his beliefs about language and education. He told me about the frequent conversations he had with the parents of his students regarding the value of learning in both languages. He stated, “If they’re going to teach Spanish at home, that’s even better, because they’re maintaining a sense of pride in their home language. That’s even better than a teacher” (April 30, 2012). Carlos remembers always having a great love for words, writing, and reading. As a teenager, he always knew he would go to college. When I asked him what influenced him in his desire to pursue a degree in higher education, he smiled and described an incident he had as a 14-year-old:

My grandfather never talked to anybody other than my grandmother. He never talked to his kids. I don’t know if he even talked to my dad, because my dad never talked about it. My grandfather was a grouchy old man. Everyone was afraid of him. Nobody wanted to be around him. My grandmother was totally opposite…loving and kind. One day, my family made me stay with him, because they were all going to the cemetery. I really didn’t want to, but I did. He went outside and sat under the shade of a tree in the backyard. To keep him company, I went and sat next to him in a chair. Out of nowhere he started talking to me. I was shocked and nobody believed me when they came back. I wished someone could hear my grandfather talking to me. He actually asked me how I was doing in school and what I planned to do when I got out of school. I told him that I was thinking about going to college. He encouraged me to do that. I told him that I liked to read a lot and write a lot. He didn’t criticize me. He didn’t judge me. I was surprised, but it never happened again. (May 24, 2012)
I could see in Carlos’ face that this event in his life had a profound effect on him. There was a generational and cultural connection made with his grandfather that afternoon. He told me there were words he wished he would have said and parts of his history he wished he would have explored. Enciso (2007) remarks that our memories “express the ways the past and all of its forgetting, erasures, and silences continue to haunt [our] present lives” (p. 54-55). Carlos holds his past close as he tells me that his Spanish continued to strengthen, and when he went to high school, he became more active in the Latino community.

As Carlos moved through his secondary schooling, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), was passed by Congress in 1968 as part of the monumental Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1965). The BEA reflected the national sentiments of that era. Although this legislation held promise for many people, the first authorization was based on a poverty criterion, designed for children with “limited English-speaking ability in the United States” (Section 702). Furthermore, it had a defined intent of urging a hasty acquisition of English.

Critiques of the initial BEA included the arguments that the attempt to protect the rights of bilingual learners was “relatively weak and vague” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 123), and the implementation was delivered with ambiguity and did not particularize the role of native language instruction (García, 2005). In addition, a home language other than English was looked upon as a deprivation and something for children to overcome. As Carlos became more active in his community, so too were parents, educators, and community leaders across the country who began to advocate for bilingual education that utilized children’s home language as the medium for instructional progress. The seeds of activism and advocacy were planted for Carlos during this time, and it’s not surprising that his decades of teaching that followed were filled with advocacy for home language maintenance, effective dual language programming, and equitable resources and practices.

Carlos headed to a state university after high school. He first began as a psychology major because he was very interested in “understanding and figuring people out” (April 30, 2012). Feeling unsettled, he tried business courses, but “it became tedious, and something felt like it was missing” (April 30, 2012). He turned to his passion for reading and writing, and he changed his major to English literature. Although a career in teaching had not yet occurred to Carlos, the need to support himself and pay for his studies led to a decision that changed his academic and professional trajectory.

“Because of My Spanish, They Hired Me”

Just as Carlos was about to introduce himself to the world of bilingual education, the court case of Lau v. Nichols (1974) was decided in the U.S. Supreme Court. This landmark case continues to symbolize the establishment of language rights in the United States. The case was brought on behalf of a group of Chinese-American students against the San Francisco Unified School District. The Court ruled, “There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum: for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education” (483F. 2d 791, 1974). Baker (2006) commented that the Lau v. Nichols ruling promoted a broadening of goals in the field of bilingual education; however, the court offered no specific methods of instruction to meet the needs of emergent bilingual learners.

Carlos had yet to discover the implications of the Lau v. Nichols ruling, which he referred to as he told me about the scarcity of quality Spanish materials and the many hours he spends advocating for equitable resources for his students. At this time in history, however, Carlos was
negotiating school and part-time jobs as he continued to work toward the completion of his degree. To meet his financial obligations, he enlisted the help of a friend who worked at a career center. His friend suggested a bilingual teacher’s assistant position with the local school district. Carlos explained, “Working with kids felt like something I could do. I took the job, and I was an assistant for the school district for seven years. Because of my Spanish, they hired me” (April 30, 2012).

He found himself working with several brand new teachers who had recently graduated and had little to no experience working with bilingual students. Several of his colleagues recognized his initiative with tasks, his penchant for language and literacy, and his rapport with the students. They encouraged him to go back to school to become certified. He entered a 30-credit bilingual teacher licensure program sponsored by the state department of public instruction. He was issued an emergency license while he completed his certification. The principal was pleased with his work as a student teacher, and hired him for a bilingual education position to begin the following school year. I asked Carlos about the experiences that most influenced him as a teacher of bilingual learners. I was particularly interested in the role of his own teacher education program. He explained:

The foundation I received from [the university program] emphasized general education. It was those years working with so many teachers as an assistant…the kids, the teachers, the staff that really gave me the bilingual teaching experience, so that when I did have my own classroom, I knew what to do. (May 24, 2012)

Carlos believed that he had finally settled into the profession that was meant for him.

“With My Family, I Can Regenerate”

During the three decades following Carlos’ entrance into bilingual education, he has dedicated himself to advocating for the needs of emergent bilingual learners and their families. He has campaigned for equitable resources and materials, and he has become a leader in developing effective and quality dual language programming. Carlos understands bilingual education as complex, dynamic, and highly political (Nieto, 2002). He described the backlash against bilingual education that was vehement at times, especially in the 1990s when Proposition 187 denied undocumented immigrants access to public schools, hospitals, and social services. He remembered the English-only ripple effect of Proposition 227 and its intention to eliminate bilingual education in California. He spoke about the new millennium and the challenges of No Child Left Behind (2001), Read First, and Response-to-Intervention.

Throughout his tenure, there have been policy and administrative changes that influenced, and were influenced by, changes in the community. But he mostly reminisces about building a dual language program with his colleagues. He is proud of being a part of a program that was in its infancy when he first began teaching. He still talks about the work that needs to be done. He told me, “I want to create more of a Spanish environment. I want more Spanish visible…projects, writing samples, activities. I want people to see what the children are doing” (May 24, 2012). Carlos sees himself in his students. He remembered, “I was that kid…instead of going home, I went back to the classroom to spend some time—cleaning up and asking questions about things I didn’t understand. I want my class to be that sanctuary” (May 24, 2012).

I asked Carlos what advice he would give to novice teachers or teachers wanting to develop exemplary practices with their bilingual learners. He said:
I would encourage anyone to occasionally immerse themselves in Spanish during the summer, whether it’s Puerto Rico, Mexico, or Spain. Take that trip if possible, or enroll in a course where you can regenerate. I have my family. I go and I talk to my family. I can practice. When I go to Texas, there are times when I don’t use certain words…and my English starts to…I’ll realize that, and my cousins will catch it. They will say, “¿Qué dijiste?” [What did you say?]. With my family I can regenerate. (May 24, 2012)

When he says this, I am reminded of the seven-year-old Carlos reading the novelas and Spanish newspapers, reveling with the same cousins who a half a century later would still be inspiring him to use his Spanish words.

Discussion

According to Enciso (2007), “History is always there—available for analysis” (p. 63). What I learned from exploring and analyzing Carlos’ experiences begins in his earliest stories. Before he even took part in his observations and interactions within the walls of his school, he heard language, he lived tradition, and he was instilled with a capacity to build relationships. All of this for Carlos, however, cannot be described in isolation from the greater sociocultural and political context. Understanding Carlos’ experiences alongside a broader historical continuum highlighted the extent to which bilingual education today has been significantly impacted by the perseverance and passion of those who conceived and defended civil and legislative rights in this country. Situating Carlos’ stories alongside the challenges and victories in bilingual education has both expanded and deepened the construction of meaning in this examination by providing an authentic voice to the events that occurred throughout a specific period of time.

When we seek out the diverse voices of teachers and those preparing for teaching, we challenge traditional approaches to teacher development. The case of Carlos is a rich example of how stories and the context around the stories are inseparable. What I have learned is not meant to be generalized; rather, it is offered as an approach to working with pre-service teachers in explorations of early socialization into teaching. This approach involves guiding teacher candidates in telling their own stories of when they were young learners, and how early experiences influenced their growth and eventual entrance into teaching. When guiding this exploration, it is important to continue and not stop there. To stop at the boundaries of a story limits the potential of the narrative process to be critical and transformative. If observations about teaching are left unanalyzed, then notions about teaching may remain underdeveloped and vulnerable to the status quo (Mewborn & Tyminski, 2006).

What does this analysis of apprenticeship of observation look like? How can notions of teaching and bilingual education be valued, disrupted, and rebuilt to reflect genuine and respected perspectives? We can begin by guiding students in their own analysis of their early experiences by designing course content that incorporates relevant theoretical perspectives and authentic historical content.

According to Marx (2006), “One of the most important things a teacher education instructor can do is model the kind of teaching and classroom environment she or he is encouraging her or his own students to adopt” (p. 155). As teacher educators, we can be living examples by offering our own examinations of our work with diverse groups of students. I suggest a framework that includes a) modeling through critical questioning and reflection of what we remember through our own stories; b) offering students an example of how to contextual those experiences in
documented historical events of that same time; and c) articulating a clear and genuine interpretation that asks:

- What teacher practices fostered growth in me?
- What hindered my growth?
- What instructional practices were prevalent in that era?
- Who was best served by those practices?
- What was missing?
- What should have happened?
- What do I see in the field now that matches (or not) my own lived experiences and understandings?

Keys to this retrospective approach are collaboration, social exchange, and opportunities to both give and receive feedback. Designing the process so that students create the personal narrative alongside a sociocultural/political timeline will help them to further analyze the origins and influences of bilingual school practices. In telling stories, the pre-service teacher will re-experience and reshape the events. As a result, both the storyteller and those who listen will generate possibilities for developing new knowledge and countering dated viewpoints. Incorporating bilingual teacher stories in pre-service preparation can positively influence non-bilingual teacher candidates who may not have considered perspectives beyond the mainstream lens (Quirocho & Rios, 2000). These exchanges have the potential to reveal the plurality in society as students from the same generation may tell drastically different stories.

**Conclusion**

When we seek out diverse voices of teachers and those preparing for teaching, we challenge traditional approaches that may no longer serve as the model for teacher development. Bringing the voices of bilingual pre-service teachers to the forefront, as they discover and construct their beliefs about teaching, positively impacts individuals from all backgrounds. The stories teacher candidates tell can also help teacher educators identify ways to support their students’ professional development and cultural understandings. Additionally, bridging this retrospective classroom process to an abundance of rich and varied field experiences throughout the teacher preparation process (Chou & Sakash, 2008; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008) will connect teacher candidates of all backgrounds to diverse groups of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students. These are the same types of experiences that had significant impact on Carlos’ preparation for his own classroom of bilingual learners. They are opportunities that cannot be captured in a university setting alone. This research realizes that even though all pre-service teachers will not be prepared as bilingual educators, it is through the purposeful and critical work in teacher education programs that all teachers can learn the fundamental tenets of bilingualism, biliteracy, and culturally responsive teaching, which will ultimately optimize how all children experience school.
References


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Mendez v. Westminster, 64 F. Supp (C. D. Cal. 1946), 161 F. 2d 774 (9th Cir 1947).


