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When fifty-fifty isn't fair: The preference for English during Spanish language arts in a two-way dual language bilingual education classroom

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**When fifty-fifty isn't fair: The preference for English during Spanish
language arts in a two-way dual language bilingual education classroom**

by

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When fifty-fifty isn't fair: The preference for English during Spanish language arts in a two-way dual language bilingual education classroom

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The present study analyzed the writing of emergent bilingual second grade students enrolled in a two-way dual language bilingual education program. Writing samples were analyzed holistically and cross-linguistic strategies were documented that support the claims that the process of developing biliteracy is dynamic and singular. In addition, Spanish language arts classes were observed and teacher interviews were conducted in order to contextualize the emergent bilinguals' writing process. A preference for English was documented during classroom observations as well as in the writing samples collected. Of the 16 emergent bilinguals second graders, only four Spanish-dominant students chose to write in both languages. The teacher's stated concerns over the Spanish proficiency of her English-dominant students led her to alter her instruction during Spanish language arts, deferring to English. The implications of this shift to English for the developing biliteracy of emergent bilinguals are discussed.

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Introduction

Prior research has found that students who learn in and through more than one language often experience linguistic, cognitive, academic, and social advantages (Bialystok, 2002; Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010; Howard, et al., 2003; Slavin & Cheung, 2005). However public ambivalence regarding the value of bilingualism as a student outcome remains. This neutral, if not negative, perspective is reflected in the politics of English-only advocacy groups and policymakers who pursue an English-only agenda. The resistance to bilingualism as a desirable educational outcome disproportionately affects the growing number of K-12 public school students who enter school speaking a language other than English. These potential bilinguals, students whose first language is not English, and who are in the process of learning English, are often labeled Limited English proficient (LEP) or English Language learner (ELL)¹ by the schools. These labels reflect a deficit perspective preoccupied with what they are perceived to lack, English.

The majority of programs designed for emergent bilinguals, such as Sheltered English Immersion, ESL pullouts, or early-exit transitional bilingual education, do not aspire to develop bilingualism or biliteracy, but rather focus on English acquisition as the means to

¹ In education literature and policy the term English Language Learner (ELL) refers to a student identified by the school system as requiring linguistic support services in order to benefit from content area instruction, with the end goal of receiving instruction entirely in English. While an improvement upon the previously used term Limited English Proficient (LEP), ELL still privileges English language acquisition over the potential to become bilingual. A growing number of scholars have stated their preference for the term “emergent bilingual”, and unless discussing policies or statistics where the published term is ELL, I will follow their lead, choosing to highlight these students’ potential as opposed to their perceived handicaps.

academic success (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). Scholars have criticized this approach, arguing that a focus on English prioritizes language acquisition over high-quality content area instruction (Callahan, 2005) attributes bilingual students' poor academic performance to cognitive deficits rather than position developing English proficiency (Reyes, 1991), and comes at the expense of students' native language proficiency and deleteriously affects their identities as students (Fillmore, 2000).

Dual language bilingual education (DLBE) exemplifies an alternative approach to addressing the specific cultural and linguistic needs of emergent bilingual students. While DLBE programs have been in place in the United States for over forty years, there has been a recent increase in interest over the last decade (Howard et al., 2003) in response to the criticism directed at English proficiency focused programs as well as an appreciation for the benefits of language maintenance for emergent bilinguals (Fishman, 2013; Hornberger, 1997). The present study investigates the academic and linguistic processes of emergent bilinguals enrolled in a DLBE program designed to develop students' bilingualism and biliteracy. All educational programs designed to address the needs of emergent bilinguals are based on educational research, a requirement that stems from landmark court cases (*Castañeda v. Picard*, 1981, *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974) and protects emergent bilinguals' right to access to an equitable education (Hakuta, 2011). With this history in mind, this study's investigation into the manner in which biliteracy develops in a DLBE classroom is designed to expand upon the current body of research.

The focus on emergent bilinguals' academic performances, and consequently on English acquisition, is motivated in part by the existing achievement gap: emergent

bilingual students consistently perform below their native English speaking peers on institutional assessments (NCES, 2012) are more likely to drop out of high school (Callahan, 2013; Fry, 2008), are less likely to enroll in academically rigorous coursework (Callahan, 2005), and are disproportionately identified for special education services (Ovando et al., 2006). Adding greater urgency to the issue is the relatively rapid growth of the emergent bilingual population; from 1990 to 2000, the number of students labeled as ELLs enrolled in K-12 public schools doubled, up to 10.5% of the overall population from 5% (Kindler, 2002). Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Fry and Gonzalez (2008) calculated that of the 10.2 million of people who spoke a language other than English at home, 78.7% spoke Spanish. In addition, within the Hispanic student population 70% spoke a language other than English in the home. While Hispanic and ELL are separate labels, there is significant overlap. This demographic intersection is important for policymakers and educators since according to US Census Population Projections (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009) the Hispanic population in the US is estimated to grow from 16% of the total population to 30% in the next 35 years. Thus the combination of current population growth rates and historically poor academic outcomes presents a challenge for policymakers and educators.

In order to combat the achievement gap between emergent bilinguals and their monolingual peers, policymakers and educators have looked to bilingual education to ensure access to the curriculum. The heading bilingual education covers a range of instructional programs, from DLBE models that promote the development of language

minority emergent bilinguals' native language to Sheltered English Immersion models that promote modified instruction in English according to the emergent bilinguals' level of English proficiency. The principles upon which programs centered on English language instruction and acquisition are based compared with programs that value and promote emergent bilinguals' first language, such as the DLBE program examined in the current study, are addressed through Ruiz's (1984) analysis of language policy and planning, which in turns serves as a framework for this investigation.

Theoretical Framework:

Language Orientations in Education Policy for Emergent Bilinguals

In his analysis of education policy and planning, Ruiz (1984) identifies three orientations toward minority languages in the schooling of emergent bilingual students. Ruiz defines orientations as a “*complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society*” (Ruiz, 1984, p.16) and delineates three possible perspectives: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. In the United States, when languages other than English are viewed as problems, they are assumed to interfere with or impede emergent bilinguals’ academic progress in English. Current educational policies that advocate an English-only approach at the expense of content area development, such as the four-hour Structured English Immersion (SEI) program in Arizona, reflect this orientation (Gándara & Orfield, 2010). Ruiz (1984) traces the language-as-problem orientation in U.S. education policy back to the late 1950s, when languages other than English were linked to problems associated with disadvantaged populations – poverty, educational failure, and the elusiveness of social mobility. Policies that emerged during the “War on Poverty” and “Great Society” initiatives of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency, such as the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968, reflect the belief that minority languages present obstacles to students’ academic achievement.

When viewed in this light, educational interventions such as transitional bilingual education allow space for emergent bilinguals’ native language, as a temporary solution

and often prioritize students' eventual graduation into mainstream, English-only classrooms. In opposition to the language-as-problem orientation, the language-as-right orientation recognizes the potential for discrimination and exclusion from meaningful participation in society when minority languages are prohibited. While showing how the language-as-right approach has resonated with minority communities, Ruiz also describes the orientation's limits when "terms like 'compliance', 'enforcement,' 'entitlements,' 'requirements,' and 'protection' create an automatic resistance" (1984, p. 24) at times leading to non-compliance of laws and regulations.

The third orientation, language-as-resource, may help bridge the shortcomings of the two previous orientations. I include Ruiz's predications for the promise of the language-as-resource orientation to shape the theoretical framework of the present study. Ruiz argues that the language-as-resource orientation in planning and policy,

can have a direct impact on enhancing the language status of subordinate languages; it can help to ease tensions between majority and minority communities; it can serve as a more consistent way of viewing the role of non-English languages in U.S. society; and it highlights the importance of cooperative language planning (1984, p.25).

By shifting the focus from English language and literacy acquisition to bilingualism and biliteracy, DLBE programs are oriented toward a language-as-resource view and propose a unique set of goals for emergent bilingual students. Based on the premise that languages are valuable assets, DLBE programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence, in addition to high academic standards (Howard & Christian,

2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2004). Using Ruiz's theoretical frame, this study situates the developing biliteracy of emergent bilinguals' in a school and classroom that are each influenced to differing degrees by these three orientations. In the next chapter, I examine changes in the ways researchers, policymakers, and educators have viewed bilinguals, bilingualism, and biliteracy, and how these evolving perspectives shape the education of emergent bilinguals.

Literature Review:

Biliteracy and the Education of Bilinguals

Reframing Biliteracy

Historically, researchers in the second language acquisition field attempted to classify bilinguals as either sequential or simultaneous according to the age of second language acquisition (Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 1980; MacSwan, 2000). However, for a growing segment of bilinguals in the United States, the terms first and second language are arguably irrelevant (Dworin, 2003). With increasing frequency emergent bilingual students are either born in the United States or arrive prior to age five (Capps et al., 2005) and as a result are exposed to more than one language in their formative years (Baker, 2001). These students often develop language and literacy in both languages, the degree of which is determined by their specific environments and fellow participants (Reyes, 2006). Emergent bilinguals often come of age in regions and contexts where more than one language is present (García, Bartlett, & Kleifgen, 2007). These distinctions are important, and the diversity within the student population given the generic label ELL should be taken into account when designing appropriate educational programming.

In order to account for this linguistic and social diversity, research regarding the education of emergent bilinguals must consider the social and cultural factors that contribute to emergent bilinguals' learning processes. Vygotsky (1978) explored the relationship and interdependence of bilinguals' two languages in his work on the social and cultural underpinnings of the learning process; this sociocultural theoretical frame

serves as a foundation for an investigation of the linguistic and biliteracy processes of emergent bilinguals. The consideration of emergent bilingual's language use in respect to the different demands of different spaces allows researchers and teachers to comprehend more fully the guiding forces behind students' language decisions.

Grosjean's (1989) delineation of opposing perspectives on bilingualism draws attention to the sociocultural influences on emergent biliteracy. A parallel monolingual perspective maintains that languages are independent and misleadingly frames bilinguals as two native speakers in one brain. Grosjean uses a track and field metaphor to demonstrate that bilinguals with their "unique and specific linguistic configuration(s)" (Grosjean, 1989, p.6) are as different from monolinguals as high hurdlers are from sprinters or high jumpers. He argues for the implementation of a holistic framework that views bilinguals' and multilinguals' abilities across all their languages. According to Grosjean, languages are more than just resources as imagined by Ruiz (1984); they are an inextricable part of a bilingual's cognitive makeup. Bialystok (2002) also argues that it is ill-advised to ignore the relationship between bilingualism and the acquisition of literacy in emergent bilinguals; bilingualism clearly influences literacy acquisition in complex and multiple ways. As an educational model, DLBE attempts to address the specific linguistic needs of emergent bilinguals by developing literacy in both dominant language and societal language, framing the languages as valuable resources to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.

Studies investigating the developing literacies of emergent bilinguals that assume a holistic perspective have found that the process of becoming biliterate is dynamic,

flexible, and mediated through both languages (Bialystok, 2002; Dworin, 2003; Edelsky, 1982). Countering the parallel monolingual view that equates bilingualism with a balanced native-like proficiency in both languages (Grosjean, 1989), Hornberger (1990) defines biliteracy as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (p. 213) and stresses the changeable and fluid nature of biliteracy and bilingualism (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000; Hornberger, 1989). Hornberger’s definition allows researchers to investigate the constellation of factors that contributes to biliteracy development; a sociocultural lens highlights the dynamic, relative, and particular nature of bilingualism and biliteracy. The question then becomes, in a given context, how do emergent bilinguals’ languages interact during the process of biliteracy acquisition, and what factors shape these interactions?

Multiple Paths to Biliteracy

The progression to biliteracy is complex and varied; to understand its development one must always consider the context. In her work documenting the multiple paths to biliteracy, Reyes (2006) studied the literacy practices of emergent bilingual preschoolers both in the classroom and at home. Even at this early stage of language development, Reyes found that children use tools and resources available in both English and Spanish to make sense of and understand the written world. Moll, Saez, and Dworin (2001) used case studies to illustrate how emergent bilingual elementary students use their linguistic resources to construct meaning through both environmental

and interpersonal interactions. Examining multiple stages in the literacy development of two emergent bilingual kindergarteners and a third grader, the authors argue that

Learning how to read and write is not unilinear; there is diversity in how the children progress and develop. This diversity is particularly evident among bilinguals, for many factors can influence how they learn, how the languages interact, especially if both are fostered equally or if one language is privileged over the other. (Moll, et al., 2001, p. 442).

Further demonstrating variability in the process of literacy development, Gort's (2006) study of emergent bilingual first graders' literacy practices documents that students who had only received literacy instruction in their home language applied what they knew toward the L2 writing development. Similarly, in a longitudinal study of the effects of a literacy intervention in DLBE classrooms in Colorado and Texas, Soltero-González, Escamilla and Hopewell (2012) found that emergent bilinguals employed multiple strategies in their writing, drawing on knowledge of different discourses, syntactical structures and phonemic awareness from both languages to construct meaning. The emergent bilinguals in their study transferred knowledge cross-linguistically, using knowledge in their second language to express themselves in their first and vice versa. For example the student who wrote the following sentence "and we slep at twelf of the nithe" (*and we sleep at twelve of the night*) demonstrates an understanding of English semantics and phonology, while utilizing a Spanish sentence structure, or syntax. (Soltero-González et al, 2012, p. 12). In a separate study using the same longitudinal data, Escamilla and Hopewell (2009) found that by third grade, students who began

receiving simultaneous literacy instruction in first grade outperformed their peers who began the intervention later. The multiple ways that literacy develops in emergent bilinguals illustrates the recursive nature of accessing knowledge across both languages and the factors that combine to influence the writing process (Edelsky, 1982). Keeping this multiplicity in mind requires the contextualization of emergent bilinguals' writing process - an integral component of the holistic evaluation of emergent biliteracy.

Dynamic Bilingualism

As research has clearly documented the different ways bilingualism and biliteracy develops, the notion of dynamic bilingualism informs how languages interact during social interactions, examining why emergent bilinguals make the language choices they do. Martinez-Roldan and Sayer (2006) illustrate this complexity in their description of a bilingual third-grade classroom. In their study, bilingual students use both languages to retell and comprehend texts, even when directed to use one language or the other. As part of an ethnographic investigation of emergent bilinguals' language and literacy attitudes, preferences and practices, Worthy, Durán, Hikida, Pruitt, & Peterson (2013) focused on read-aloud discussions in a fifth grade classroom. The authors found that students used both languages dynamically, switching between them in response to the text, the teacher, and their peers. When emergent bilinguals' literacy practices are viewed holistically, across both their languages, and contextually, grounded in their specific locations and experiences, their literacy trajectories are unique to the learner and

complex. Emergent bilinguals' literacies do not progress in a unilinear fashion (Edelsky, 1982)

The dynamic nature of bilingualism evinced in the studies discussed above runs counter to many of the organizational components of some highly structured, commercially available DLBE programs. In these programs, educators are required to separate languages during instruction (García, 2009), although the amount of time dedicated to each language is depends on the model. Some of the models promote a 90/10 division of the native and target languages and others attempt a balanced 50/50 split (Shin, 2012). Unfortunately, an artificial separation of languages not only ignores the complex ways that bilinguals communicate, but also fails to capitalize on the fluid and dynamic nature of emergent bilingualism (García et al., 2006). According to a sociocultural frame, the particular manner in which languages interact depends on the participants. Recognizing how interpersonal dynamics shape language usage is crucial in the design and implementation of DLBE programs; especially when programming that was initially designed with a certain population in mind is employed with another. DLBE programs were initially developed to capitalize on emergent bilinguals' language resources, but over time their directive has evolved to include providing a foreign language enrichment context for dominant language speakers (Valdés, 1997)

When considering emergent bilinguals' literacy development, researchers, educators and policy makers would benefit from taking into account the many different ways literacy develops, the malleability inherent in these processes, and the sociocultural dynamics at play. An essential component of a holistic and sociocultural perspective on the academic

development of emergent bilingualism is the ability of schools and teachers to authentically assess the progress of emergent bilinguals in a sociocultural context that privileges monolingualism in English (Escamilla, 2006). The following section examines authentic assessment for emergent bilinguals, especially as it concerns the development of biliteracy.

Authentic Assessment

Ensuring the linguistic and cognitive development of emergent bilinguals requires that teachers and researchers can authentically and accurately assess students' language acquisition. Unfortunately, many of the assessments designed to evaluate the progress of literacy acquisition either are based on a monolingual framework, or look to English literacy research for their standards and benchmarks (Escamilla, 2006). Not only do these assessments often incorrectly measure emergent bilinguals' achievement, the presence of biases within assessments may also have serious educational repercussions. For example, the over-representation of students labeled as ELLs in special education has been linked to cultural and linguistic biases in assessments (Ovando et al., 2006). Even when bilinguals are tested in both languages, educators focus only on students' English score, painting an incomplete picture of the students' abilities and "perpetuating the cognitive-deficit view of language minority students" (Reyes, 1991, p.22). In research that examines the positive literacy trajectories of emergent bilinguals, the instruments designed to measure emergent bilinguals' progress draw from monolingual frameworks and privilege the acquisition of English over the development of bilingualism or

biliteracy (Howard et al., 2003; Reyes, 1991; Serrano & Howard, 2007). Escamilla & Coady (2001) discuss the problems that arise when Spanish writing is assessed according to English writing standards. The authors call for “authentic assessment practices...that include forms, functions and discourse patters of each language...one size does not fit all” (p. 56). Authentic assessments not only distinguish typical grade level development from specific L1-L2 interactions (Escamilla, 2006), but rather consider contextual factors that influence evaluation, such as the teachers’ training or beliefs (Hernandez, 2001). In a professional development designed to train DLBE teachers in holistic writing assessment, Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla & Hopewell (2012) documented a disparity between researchers’ and teachers’ interpretations of emergent bilinguals’ writing. The authors found that even after participating in professional development designed to train them in the use of a holistic lens, the teachers identified far fewer examples of cross-linguistic strategies than the researchers. The authors argue that teacher training programs and professional development opportunities should include a contrastive linguistic component in order to allow teachers of emergent bilinguals to develop a holistic lens. The development of a holistic lens is crucial because it determines the degree to which teachers are accurately able to assess students’ progress. (Soltero-Gonzalez et al., 2012). By employing a holistic lens in the assessment of biliteracy, this study seeks to add to the knowledge of biliteracy development with the end goal of equipping teachers with the tools necessary to assess their students’ progress authentically and accurately.

In conclusion, in order to gauge emergent bilinguals' biliteracy development, future research must consider the following:

- The many forms of biliteracy development
- How emergent bilinguals' languages interact throughout the process
- What sociocultural factors shape the process
- Whether the instruments used to assess emergent bilinguals' abilities are designed holistically with previous considerations in mind.

The Present Study

Specifically designed to examine emergent bilinguals' developing biliteracy within a DLBE context, the present study draws from both Ruiz's (1984) language-as-resource orientation and Grosjean's (1989) holistic perspective of bilingualism. As most children learn to read and write in their first language, literacy research has historically focused on monolinguals' learning processes resulting in a "paucity of research on becoming literate in two languages, or more" (Moll et al., 2001, p. 436). The present study aspires to contribute to research on the acquisition of literacy in emergent bilinguals. In order to investigate the issue of emergent biliteracy, I observed language arts lessons in a second grade DLBE classroom and analyzed emergent bilingual students' writing. My guiding questions are as follows:

1. *What kinds of cross-linguistic strategies do emergent bilingual students employ in their writing?*
2. *How is language use structured during*
 - a. *instruction*
 - b. *peer interactions?*
3. *How are emergent bilingual students' languages used in the classroom?*

Given research on the process of literacy development in emergent bilinguals (Dworin, 2003; M. Reyes & Costanzo, 2002; M. Reyes, 2001), I hypothesize that emergent bilingual students in a DLBE classroom will draw on their knowledge of both languages when constructing their writing. In addition, given the research investigating the

influence of sociocultural factors on the academic progress of emergent bilinguals (Martínez-Roldán, 2003; M. Reyes, 2001; Worthy et al., 2013), would suggest that peer and teacher interactions have the potential to shape bilingual students' biliteracy acquisition. I hypothesize that the manner in which peer interactions influence biliteracy acquisition will be affected by the composition of this particular program. I hypothesize that the classroom composition will influence the relative dominance of each language, which in turn will be reflected in students' language preferences for writing and speaking.

Setting: Mountainview Elementary School

The study was conducted in a second grade DLBE classroom in a small public school, Mountainview Elementary², in a mid-size city in the Southwest. The Mountainview school district actively promotes DLBE, with the intention of ultimately offering some form of the program at all schools in the district that provide bilingual services. The Mountainview district elected to implement a commercially available DLBE model following an initial pilot run with ten schools in the 2010-2011 school year. Currently 64 elementary schools offer the program, with implementation beginning in the early grades as transitional models are phased out. Mountainview Elementary first implemented DLBE in the 2010-2011 school year as one of the ten pilot schools. Previously, the school offered a transitional bilingual education program focused on early exit into mainstream English-only classrooms. Mountainview Elementary is one of nine schools in the district that currently offer two-way DLBE, i.e. include English speakers in

² All names are pseudonyms

the classroom as learners of Spanish, and allow transfers from outside the school's attendance zone. As a result of the adoption of a DLBE model, the school's population has grown and changed. While Latino students are still the majority, white student enrollment increased from 5.7% in 2002 to 20% in 2012 (NCES, 2013). According to the school's website DLBE is described as the following:

...an academic program that enhances the development of bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy so that students will graduate ready for college, career, and life in a globally competitive economy. Two-Way Dual Language supports "two language" groups of students to become bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate.³

While Mountainview Elementary's official goals for the DLBE program reflect a language-as-resource orientation, this study examines how languages interact within the classroom to discern whether and how this orientation manifests in classroom instruction and interactions. Mountainview Elementary's official policy, while promoting bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy, also mandates the separation of languages as charged by the model purchased by the district and installed in the designated schools.

As sociocultural factors such as students' language histories and backgrounds will shape how they interact, there is the possibility that a DLBE model designed with a certain population of emergent bilinguals in mind, will not result in the same outcomes when implemented with different populations.

³ The information comes from the official Mountainview school website.

Model Specifications The authors of the DLBE program purchased by Mountainview Elementary’s district initially designed their model for the emergent bilingual student population of the Rio Grande Valley, an area along the U.S.-Mexico border in the southern tip of Texas. The area is predominantly Mexican American, and as a result the schools enroll a significant proportion of emergent bilingual students. The border region is characterized by a predominately Latino population with varying degrees of bilingualism; the line between native English and native Spanish speakers is hazy and difficult to define.

In order to address the needs of the emergent bilingual student population in the border region, the authors developed a DLBE model with specific structural guidelines, and this is the version adopted in the Mountainview district. The model specifies that learning occurs through social interaction and students are expected to help one another according to their linguistic strengths. Students are labeled as English-dominant or Spanish-dominant upon entering kindergarten. They are expected to approach bilingualism as they progress through the program. The model pairs students by their dominant language (e.g., a Spanish dominant student would be paired with an English dominant peer).

DLBE teachers team teach, with one teaching the English language content areas and the other teacher teaching the Spanish language content areas. Instruction is evenly divided between both languages in a “50/50” division, with language of instruction determined by content area. The content areas are designated as follows: mathematics is taught in English and science and social studies are taught in Spanish. Literacy

instruction first occurs in a student's native language in prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade, then in both languages beginning in second grade (approximately one hour in each language). The "language of the day" for homeroom activities alternates between English and Spanish, and all electives (e.g., music, art, and physical education), are taught in English.

Participants

Teacher Ms. Andrews is in charge of the second grade Spanish language content areas, Spanish language arts, science and social studies. Originally from Houston and a native Spanish speaker, Ms. Andrews is a graduate of the local state university where she studied bilingual education and earned her certification. She has taught second grade at Mountainview elementary for six years, initially under a transitional bilingual education model, only moving to DLBE the previous school year. In addition, Ms. Andrews' son is enrolled in the DLBE program at Mountainview.

Students The second grade is divided into two groups that switch between the English classroom with Ms. Voss and the Spanish classroom with Ms. Andrews. I observed the group "*Los vencedores*." There are 8 boys and 8 girls in "*Los vencedores*"; half were identified as Spanish dominant and half English dominant, with language divisions falling approximately along ethnic lines. The Spanish-dominant students Latino and the English dominant students were a mix: Anglos, Latinos and one African-American student. Most of the students had been enrolled in the DLBE program at Mountainview

since kindergarten and all were bilingual and biliterate to varying degrees. The reader will note that Mountainview's DLBE students differ in significant ways from the emergent bilingual students from the Rio Grande Valley who informed the original model design.

Data Collection

Observations Over the course of three months, I observed six Spanish ninety-minute language arts classes, taking notes while simultaneously video recording the instruction and activities. I observed whole class instruction, independent and group work, and the teacher working one on one with students. Occasionally, student work was documented to supplement observation. During observations I examined how language use was structured and how languages interacted (e.g., during teacher's instructions, whole class discussion, and bilingual pair conversations).

Artifacts At the end of the first semester an informal benchmark assessment of students' writing was collected. Although students were told that they could write in both English and Spanish, all written instructions were given in English. Writing samples from the Spanish dominant students were analyzed to address the research questions regarding cross-linguistic strategies in emergent bilingual writing.

Interviews I recorded and transcribed a semi-structured interview with Ms. Andrews at the beginning of the study, and informal conversations were noted throughout the data

collection in order to familiarize myself with the DLBE model, its reception, and perceived limitations. In addition, I conducted a final informal interview with Ms. Andrews following collection and analysis of students' writing samples in order to perform a member check regarding my findings.

Analytic Plan

Writing Samples

I analyzed students' writing samples following the linguistic strategy categorization previously developed by Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla and Hopewell (2012), whereby strategies were organized as follows:

Table 1 Cross-Linguistic Strategies

Cross-linguistic transfer at word level	Cross-linguistic transfer at sentence level	Cross-linguistic transfer at discourse level
Phonetic transfer	Syntactic transfer	Rhetorical structures
Within word mixed phonetic	Inter-sentential codeswitching	Punctuation
Loan words	Intra-sentential codeswitching	
Nativized loan words	Borrowing	
	Semantic transfer	

For example, one possible sentence-level strategy might be bidirectional syntax transfer. In an English sentence the omission of the subject is seen as an example of an emergent bilingual applying knowledge of Spanish syntax, in which the subject is implied in the verb conjugation. Because a holistic perspective views emergent bilinguals' abilities

across both their languages, I analyzed students' writing in both English and Spanish, when available, reviewing the writing multiple times in order to uncover strategies at all levels. As I documented strategies, I noted which language the emergent bilingual student drew on in his or her use of cross-linguistic transfer.

Of the sixteen students, only four chose to follow Ms. Andrews' verbal suggestion that they write in both English and Spanish. As the English dominant students had only begun to receive Spanish literacy instruction upon entering second grade and none had chosen to write in Spanish, where there would have been an opportunity for transfer of knowledge of the English written system to Spanish, I chose not to analyze them, focusing instead on the Spanish dominant students. Of those eight students, four chose to write in both English and Spanish and four wrote only in English. Students' Spanish and English writing samples were examined together to gain a more complete picture of their overall writing abilities, while the English writing samples were analyzed for evidence of transfer from Spanish.

Classroom Observations

I noted impressions of classroom interactions and events in the moment and referenced them when reviewing the video record of the lesson, taking care to document if and when shifts between Spanish and English occurred. General trends of language use and social interaction in the classroom were also noted. I analyzed teacher-student, as well as student-student interactions for language preference ("dominant" or second language), fidelity to the model (separation of languages via content area instruction), and

linguistic strategy use. In addition, I took into account linguistic factors in the surrounding environment that students could look to as resources.

Teacher Interviews

Before beginning this study, I explained my goals and questions to Ms. Andrews, who had previously participated in studies with researchers from the local university and was familiar with the protocol. I asked for her impressions of the school and the program and whether she felt she was able to meet her students' needs. Throughout the project I kept Ms. Andrews abreast of my progress, asking for clarification on classroom procedures and program requirements. Once I had finished the classroom observations, collected the writing samples, and completed a first round of analysis, I reconvened with Ms. Andrews to in order to perform a member check and enhance the validity of my findings.

Findings

Linguistic Strategy Use

For the benchmark writing samples, only four students chose to write in both English and Spanish; the remaining 14 wrote only in English. Analyses of potential cross-linguistic strategy usage included only ‘Spanish-dominant’ students. As the English dominant students used only their native language and had only received Spanish literacy instruction for a few months, it would not have been meaningful include their writing in a cross-linguistic analysis.

I analyzed a total of eight writing samples for evidence of cross-linguistic strategies. The majority of students drew on knowledge of Spanish phonology in their English writing, and evidence emerged for sentence-, and word-, but not discourse-level strategy use. Students tended to rely on a number of strategies concurrently, with some students drawing consistently on the same strategy throughout their writing and other students alternating their strategies in their attempts to approximate the correct English or Spanish form. In the following section, I detail the types of strategies documented and give examples from the writing samples collected. Table 2 shows the distribution and frequency of strategies across all eight writing samples, in accordance with the following strategies.

Table 2:
**Distribution and frequency of cross-linguistic strategies in emergent bilinguals’
writing**

	Level	<u>Sentence</u>				<u>Word</u>			Language
	Strategy	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	S->E/E->S
Student									
<i>Miguel*</i>			0/1		1	15	4/2		S->E/E->S
<i>Adan*</i>			1			15	1		S->E
<i>Jennifer*</i>						8/3	2		S->E/E->S
<i>Wilfredo*</i>		1	2		2/1	16	2		S->E/E->S
<i>Pedro</i>				3	6	87	2		S->E
<i>Oliver</i>						8	1		S->E
<i>Fernando</i>			4	4		54	1		S->E
<i>Estrella</i>									
	Total	1	8	7	9/1	203/3	13/2		S->E/E->S

*Emergent bilinguals who chose to write in both English and Spanish

Sentence Level At the sentence-level, strategies involved the application of conventions or knowledge of syntactic structures from one language to another. Sentence-level strategies indicate an understanding that language is rule-governed and these rules occur across languages (Soltero-González et al., 2012). The first sentence-level strategy is bidirectional syntax transfer (#3), (e.g., subject omission, use of double negatives, reverse order of adjectives). Most instances of bidirectional syntax transfer documented

involved the application of syntax specific to Spanish in the construction of English sentences, as in the following example.

- *Fernando – wi. Fawnet bot is not seewreld lets go*
(we found it but is not SeaWorld let's go)

Here, Fernando is drawing of his understanding of the subject-verb relationship in Spanish, where the subject is inferred through the particular verb form, and so omits the subject (it) and the sentence (but is not).

While less common, students also drew on their knowledge of English syntax in the construction of Spanish sentences as in the following:

- *Miguel - mi favorito dia es cuando mi hermano nacio*
(my favorite day is when my brother was born).

The placement of the adjective “favorite” in front of the word “día” is a reversal of Spanish syntax, which requires the placement of the adjective after the noun, i.e. “*día favorito*.” Here Miguel applies English syntactical structure to his writing in Spanish, his dominant language.

In addition, students transferred semantic knowledge from one language to another. Semantic transfer (#4), the transfer of concepts across languages, includes literal translation such as:

- *Pedro - wi were meycing a pardi*
(we were making a party).

Pedro's draws from his knowledge of Spanish and translates the phrase “*estabamos haciendo una fiesta* (we were having a party)” literally as “we were making a party”, (*hacer* = to make).

Evidence of intrasentential codeswitching (#5), within sentence switching from English into Spanish or vice versa, is evident in the following selection:

- *Pedro - i den mi en may frends wi play vidiows geimes*
(y then me and my friends we play video games).

Pedro writes the Spanish word “y (and)”, spelled using the letter “i” as it also corresponds to the Spanish phoneme /i/, at the beginning of the sentence, but then three words later writes “en (and)”, using phonetic transfer from Spanish, and demonstrating his knowledge of the correct English vocabulary.

While instances of intrasentential codeswitching were documented, there was only one occurrence of what could be considered intersentential codeswitching, writing complete sentences in one language and then switching to the other language for the next sentence. One of the students who wrote in both English and Spanish switched languages halfway through the assignment, originating his story in English and finishing in Spanish, a strategy I am choosing to call intranarrative codeswitching (#2) for the purposes of this study.

All in all, sentence-level strategies formed the minority of strategies utilized by the emergent bilinguals. The next section discusses strategies that occurred at the word level and made up the majority of strategies employed in their writing

Word Level While students’ evidenced sentence level strategies, they relied much more heavily on cross-linguistic strategies at the word and especially phonemic level to make sense in their writing. As discussed above, Pedro’s example *i den mi en may frends wi play vidiows geimes* (and then me and my friends we play video games) shows his

understanding of Spanish phonology when he substitutes the letter “i”, the Spanish equivalent for the English phoneme /E/, in the words “mi (me)” and “wi (we)”. Here, his writing provides evidence of bidirectional phonetics transfer (#6) from Spanish to English. While not as common, transfer of knowledge of English phonology to emergent bilinguals’ Spanish writing was documented.

- Jennifer - *el amigo de mi Papa tenia hijos ejos acacharon pezes*
(my father’s friend had kids they caught fish).

Here Jennifer draws from the English /j/ when writing the Spanish word “ellos” as “ejos”. This sentence also demonstrates the mixing of phonetic codes within a sentence as Jennifer demonstrates both knowledge of the phonetic qualities of the letter “j” in Spanish in her correct spelling of the word “hijos”, as well as the English phonemic value of /j/ in ellos.

In addition to mixing phonetic codes within a sentence, emergent bilinguals employed within-word mixing of phonetic codes (#7) such as when Adan writes:

- Adan - *I wen to my Gremas hause*
(I went to my Grandma’s house)

The above example demonstrates the student’s knowledge of English spelling conventions, the silent ‘e’ at the end of the word “*hause* (house)”, and his reliance upon his knowledge of Spanish phonemes (“*au*” = “*ow*”) in the same word.

Interestingly, the students who relied the most on the transfer of phonology from Spanish into English during writing were the students who chose to only write in English, Fernando and Pedro. Unfortunately, because they did not choose to write in Spanish as well, in keeping with a holistic framework, a complete picture of their abilities as

emergent bilinguals is not available. One student who also chose to only write in English, Estrella, showed no evidence of drawing on cross-linguistic strategies in her writing. Estrella had been retained the previous year due to comprehension and recollection issues. As evident from the rest of the writing samples though, students drew on multiple strategies, within the same sentence and even within a word. The broad range of expression, in both Spanish and English provides evidence of dynamic bilingualism.

Biliteracy in Action

In keeping with a sociocultural framework, the exploration of developing biliteracy considers factors that influence instances of writing. In this particular instance, the teacher distributes an assignment with lengthy instructions and expectations in English and a verbal addendum to write in Spanish if they choose. The four emergent bilinguals who chose to write in English and Spanish used their languages in singular ways. As has been argued previously, the ways in which bilinguals use their languages depends on factors such as the purpose and functions requiring those languages, and the degree to which the languages are valued within different contexts (Grosjean, 1989, Dworin, 2003).

Direct Translation Perhaps least surprising is Jennifer's decision to write a story in English and then translate the content into Spanish. When examined side-by-side,

Jennifer's stories demonstrate her ability to translate her meaning in English correctly into Spanish, without relying on cross-linguistic strategies such as semantic transfer (#4).

- *I was slepe = yo tube seugo*
(I was sleepy) (yo tuve sueño)
- *we went suimeng again = nadamos hotrabes*
(we went swimming again) (nadamos otra vez)

Jennifer demonstrates knowledge of correct verb conjugation throughout both writing samples, and the majority of her cross-linguistic strategies occur at a phonemic level in both her English and Spanish writing. Jennifer's writing reflects a generally balanced distribution of abilities across both Spanish and English. While she is still developing an understanding of spelling conventions in both languages, she demonstrates an understanding of language specific conventions and syntax. Jennifer is considered by her teacher and peers to be a "bilingual expert"; during writing activities she was often called upon to translate from Spanish into English and was respected as an authority among her peers. The other three emergent bilinguals who wrote in English and Spanish offer different interpretations of biliteracy.

Intranarrative Codeswitching Wilfredo chose to tell his story in both English and Spanish, creatively interpreting his teacher's suggestion to write in both languages as permission to switch languages halfway through his story. Wilfredo tells the story of a favorite day by listing a series of activities beginning with:

- *My favorite ewas went we color a pichere*
(My favorite was when we color a picture)

and ending with:

- *Y en mi cumpleaños pusieron una piñata*
(and on my birthday they put up a piñata)

As in the majority of writing samples collected, Wilfredo relied on bidirectional phonetic transfer in his English writing: *cester* (sister), *yump* (jump), *slip* (sleep), *fait* (fight), *tu* (to). When viewed side-by-side, Wilfredo's writing shows that his understanding of verb conjugation within the past tense is further developed in Spanish than it is in English.

- *We go tu see a Tree. And was wet my Family.*
(We go to see a tree. And was with my family)
- *mi amigo sabia donde vibia. y posimos un pino de nabilidad*
(My friend knew where I lived and we put up a Christmas tree)

By viewing Wilfredo's writing in both his languages, we can see the full spectrum of his knowledge of writing systems and how he is drawing on the knowledge base he has developed in Spanish in order to express himself in English.

A Richer Story The final two examples of emergent bilingual writing demonstrate how important a holistic bilingual perspective is when considering the full range of emergent bilinguals' writing abilities. Adan and Miguel wrote in Spanish and English and their stories in both languages dealt with the same event. However, due to their proficiency in English and Spanish, the stories take on very different forms in each language. Miguel wrote about the day his younger brother was born. His story in English is almost twice as long as his story in Spanish but relies on the repetition of certain phrases and so while longer the story is less complex. Adan's writing tells the story of a fun day when he went to see the movie *Despicable Me 2*. Their writing is included in its entirety in order to

support the importance of viewing emergent bilingual's writing in both their languages in order to better gauge their abilities.

Miguel: *May favorit day*

May broder cam to my oparmints and my little broder camt rth and my broder was sleppeng and I cist hin on the Head and I was sou Happy and I didn't now that it was a boy and I was soprasd and I Love Him sow much and I slept with Him and He wos sow ceut and I thot I wos happy and I was Happy and I cudind stop looking at him I was Lonely and I felt Happy and I wos Happy Jesus Brot him and I was sow Happy and I felt super Happy gud Jesus Brot him and I felt sow I cudint slep cus I had to drinck milke and water and I wos Happy and I cud Help my broder and I wos sow I cud Help my good good Broder and I felt sow much and I felt sow Happe that I cudint stop ticoling Him sow He wos funny I help Him and wen I crad I gavn Him His Boatel And I went to Help

(My favorite day

My brother came to my apartments and my little brother came through and my brother was sleeping and I kissed him on the head and I was so happy and I didn't know that it was a boy and I was surprised and I love him so much and I slept with him and he was so cute and I thought I was happy and I was happy that I couldn't stop looking at him I was lonely and I felt happy and I was happy Jesus brought him and I was so happy and I felt super happy good Jesus brought him and I felt so I couldn't sleep cuz I had to drink milk and water and I was happy and I could help my brother and I was sow I could help my good good brother and I felt so much and I felt so happy that I couldn't stop tickling him so he was funny I help him and when I cried I gaved him his bottle and I went to help)

mi favorito dia es cuando mi hermano nacio y era muy bonito y cuando lloraba lo pusi en mis piernas y cuando mi hermanito estaba Jugando con migo estabamos Jugando BascetBoll y cuando era mi cumpleaños mi hermanito estaba Jugando conmigo y mi hermanito jugando BascetBoll y me iso feliz y mi hermanito estaba feliz y yo estaba feliz y estaba Jugando con el y estaba feliz

(My favorite day is when my brother was born and he was very beautiful and when he cried I put him on my legs and when my little brother was playing with me we were playing basketball and when it was my birthday my little brother was playing with me and my little brother playing basketball and it made me happy and my little brother was happy and I was happy and I was playing with him and was happy)

Adan: *My Favorite Day*

en The mornig I went to scoohl ten I wento it then I went to the Movie Terer en I se the Movie of Despicable Me 2 en we et Poc corn en ewas so funy and Asom. I was a lite scary en ewas Darck en then I wen to my hme en et then I wen to my Gremas hause en Play en I wach TV Then I reed a book Then I wen

(In the morning I went to school then I went to it then I went to the movie theater and I see the movie of Despicable Me 2 and we eat popcorn and it was so funny and awesome. I was a little scary and it was dark and then I went to my home and eat then I went to my Grandma's house and play and I watch TV then I read a book then I went)

Yo en la mañana me levante de la cama y me sepiye Los dientes y comi y Luego fui a la escuela y aprendi muchas cosas y Luego fui a comer en mi casa y Luego fuimos al cine y bimos la de DespicaBle Me 2 y comimos palomitas y nos divertimos mucho en toces Fuimos al parque y juge con mi mama en tonses fuimos a la tienda en tonses com pramos bejetales y un libro en tonces Fuimos a la casa de mi abuelita y juge en rato en tonses Fuimos a una Fiesta en tonses comimos pastel y Luego Fui a la casa y mire la tele un ratito y fuimos afuera a mirar las estrellas y Despues me sepiye los dientes y en tonses leei un libro y luego en ton ses es tu die mucho leei mucho ise my tarea limpie los cuartos y quedaron limpios entonses recogí mis juguetes y me fui a dormer

(In the morning I got out of bed and brushed my teeth and ate and then I went to school and I learned many things and then I went to eat at home and then we went to the movie theater and we saw Despicable Me 2 and we ate popcorn and we had a lot of fun then we went to the park and I played with my mom then we went to the store and then we bought vegetables and a book then we went to my Grandma's house and I played a while then we went to a party then we ate cake and then I went home and I watched TV for a little while and we went outside to look at the stars and afterwards I brushed my teeth and then I read a book then I studied a lot I read a lot I did my homework I cleaned the rooms and they stayed clean then I put away my toys and I went to sleep)

Adan's writing demonstrates a number of cross-linguistic strategies drawing from his knowledge of Spanish in order to convey meaning in English. In order to fully understand Adan's literacy abilities, his writing in Spanish is best viewed alongside his writing in English to show us a complete picture. While he applies knowledge of

phonology and syntax specific to Spanish in his English writing, he follows certain grammatical conventions in English that he does not in Spanish. For example, while he connects most concepts or actions in his writing using the conjunction *en* (and) or *y* (and), he employs a period in his English writing whereas he uses no punctuation in his Spanish writing. By comparing the two writing samples it is also apparent how much further Adan is able to develop his story in Spanish compared with English. In Spanish he is able to include many more details about the day and paint a more detailed picture.

Both Adan and Miguel's stories illustrate the importance of using a holistic framework for the evaluation of emergent bilinguals' writing; their literacy abilities are distributed across both their languages and their knowledge of the two written systems serves as a resource for the production of writing in both languages. This evidence is compelling when compared to the writing samples of the emergent bilinguals who chose to write only in English; as researchers and teachers our assessment of their literacy development is limited in that we are only offered a partial glimpse of their abilities.

All four writing samples support the idea that biliteracy development is a process that differs dramatically depending on the individual and cannot be described according to a unilinear, universal set of stages (Dworin, 2003; Edelsky, 1982). The next section discusses findings in regards to the manner in which languages interacted during the classroom sessions I observed, and how these interactions possibly influenced the emergent bilinguals' decision to compose overwhelmingly only in English for the benchmark writing assignment.

Interviews: “It makes it hard.”

During my initial interview with Ms. Andrews, we addressed her concerns with the current program model. As she had previously taught under a transitional bilingual education model, her classes were historically composed of native Spanish speaking emergent bilinguals and the onus was to develop their English proficiency via support of their native language. With the adoption of the DLBE model the school population had “doubled” according to Ms. Andrews, with the influx of native English speaking families who wanted their children to have an opportunity to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in English and Spanish. Mountainview’s current DLBE model mandates that students receive literacy instruction in their dominant language in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade and in both languages beginning in second grade. Ms. Andrews criticized this aspect of the newer model; she had concerns regarding the level of Spanish proficiency of her English-speaking students upon their arrival in her classroom. According to Ms. Andrews, the English dominant students have not received sufficient Spanish input their first two years in the program:

Ms. Andrews: “Because I don’t think by the time they get to second grade they’re quite ready to completely go into that Spanish language arts. So it makes it hard for us.”

While they had been receiving instruction in Spanish in the designated content areas, Ms. Andrews claimed, “the only time they got Spanish was Science and Social Studies for

seventy minutes”⁴. She felt that the English-dominant students had not developed Spanish to the degree that her native Spanish-speaking students had developed English. In the following section, I discuss how Ms. Andrews’ frustration with her English dominant students perceived lack of Spanish results in a choice to speak in English during a period designated for Spanish language in order to accommodate them.

Observations: A Clear Preference for English

Considering that three quarters of emergent bilinguals in the class demonstrated a preference for English on the collected writing sample, I analyzed the classroom observations in order to consider how the languages interacted. I looked at how language use was structured during instruction and peer interactions in order to understand what sociocultural factors may have influenced emergent bilinguals’ language choices.

During Spanish language arts, a time that according to the model should be devoted to Spanish, Ms. Andrews consistently spoke in English in order to accommodate the Spanish proficiency levels of the English dominant students. She used books that were written in English, when giving instructions in Spanish she translated immediately into English, and when students spoke in English she responded in kind. Her expectations for students during Spanish language arts allowed for the presence of English during a time allotted for the development of Spanish literacy. The following

⁴ While bemoaning the lack of exposure to Spanish for her English-dominant students, Ms. Andrews is actually being generous in her estimate. According to the model, students receive 45 minutes of Spanish content area instruction per day in kindergarten and first grade.

examples illustrate Ms. Andrews's tendency to shift to English during whole class instruction.

When reviewing the book *I Wanna Iguana* (Orloff, 2004) with the class, Ms. Andrews begins the discussion in Spanish, but when she does not receive the answers she is seeking she immediately switches to English.

Ms. Andrews: ¿Qué otras razones le dijo por que necesitaba una iguana? What other reasons did he give for needing an iguana?

Jenny: He's lonely

Ms. Andrews: He's lonely, right.

.....

Ms. Andrews: ¿Pudo convencer a su mamá a que se quedara con la iguana? Did he convince his mom to keep the iguana?

Class: Yes

Ms. Andrews: Yes, yes he did.

During a later class, when inviting students to share their final products for a writing assignment about their favorite season, Ms. Andrews switches to Spanish for her initial instructions. She had been chatting with the students in English prior to starting the activity, but quickly switches back to English.

Ms. Andrews: ¿Hay alguien que quiere compartir lo que escribieron? Is there somebody who wants to share what they wrote for their writing for their seasons?

The students then read their assignments in Spanish with varying degrees of fluency. After Julie, an English-dominant student, reads her Spanish writing, Ms. Andrews offers the following commentary and then continues in English:

Ms. Andrews: I like it when she said that the reason she likes summer is because there's not as many flowers so you can't get sick. Good job everyone. Elena did you want to do it? She's the last one.

Ms. Andrews's concerns for her English dominant students resulted in the prevalence of English in her interactions with the class.

During writing workshop the students rotated through four stations: read alone, read with a partner, listening, and composing. While students were expected to utilize Spanish language resources at each of these stations, during '*Leer solo*' (Read alone) students often read in English because the majority of books in the classroom were in English. When writing, while at the composing station or for assignments, English dominant students wrote their first drafts in English for later translation into Spanish. English dominant students would rely on their Spanish dominant bilingual pair for help translating words to Spanish, although often asking in English, for example "How do you say leaf in Spanish?" Students were also observed copying Spanish text from Spanish books in order to complete an assignment requiring them to describe the characteristics of the seasons.

As a result of Ms. Andrews's classroom language policy, English dominant students were observed speaking almost exclusively in English, while Spanish dominant students switched between both languages. In peer interactions, English was

overwhelmingly the language of choice. The majority of interactions between bilingual pairs occurred in English, with the native Spanish-speaking students accommodating their English dominant peers in keeping with the example given by Ms. Andrews.

While her concern for her English dominant students influenced her decision to rely on English during Spanish language arts, her concern over the wide range of writing abilities of her Spanish dominant students did not result in a similar shift back to Spanish. During our final interview, when discussing the results of my analysis of the writing samples, Ms. Andrews expressed frustration with what she saw as poor performance on the part of the Spanish dominant emergent bilingual students. But as previously discussed, four of the students only wrote in English, which from a holistic perspective displays only a portion of their literacy abilities.

Discussion

Consistent with the sociocultural framework guiding this study (Vygotsky, 1978; Hornberger, 1989), an analysis of classroom interactions documenting Ms. Andrews's preference, as well as that of her students, for speaking, reading, and writing in English suggests a context where English is privileged in contrast with the school's stated goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism. Privileging English has potential consequences regarding the design and implementation of educational programs for emergent bilinguals.

The systemic preference for English resulted in the majority of emergent bilinguals' choosing to compose their benchmark writing assignment in English. In my analysis of the writing samples from Spanish-dominant emergent bilinguals, I documented cross-linguistic strategies that reinforce previous research findings on the different ways emergent bilinguals utilize their knowledge in one language to make sense in another. Unfortunately, mitigating sociocultural factors made it impossible to analyze these strategies across both languages for all students; English-dominant students simply did not choose to write in Spanish. Further, Ms. Andrews' decision to use English during a time intended for Spanish development influenced her students' language choices as well. English-dominant students are not likely to develop high levels of Spanish literacy; nor are the Spanish-dominant students afforded the native language arts support and instruction that their English-dominant peers receive.

Policy Implications

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (Howard et al., 2003) , DLBE programs are growing in popularity across the nation. If these programs truly intend to develop bilingualism and biliteracy fully, measures must be taken to guarantee the equal status of both languages in the program. In the Rio Grande Valley where the current program was initially developed, a 50/50 division of Spanish and English makes sense, taking into account student, school, and community demographics. Whether the same model proves effective in a different context requires attention to existing sociocultural structures. In Valdez's (1997) cautionary note considering the growing popularity of DLBE, she argues that:

it is important for both policymakers and practitioners currently advocating the Implementation of dual-language immersion programs to examine and consider all factors that have been shown to contribute directly to the educational success and failure of linguistic-minority children. (1997, p. 395)

With the less privileged statuses of minority languages in the United States an even division of language instruction may be insufficient to counter the effect of the dominance of English. If the shift is inevitably toward English, the students most likely to suffer academically are the very emergent bilingual students for whom the program was purportedly designed.

The dynamics of language choice and the sociocultural factors that hold sway need to be considered when implementing policy or, as is the case in the second grade classroom observed, teachers will alter their instruction to address perceived

shortcomings in the program's design. Ms. Andrews alters her instruction in order to accommodate the perceived challenges faced by her dominant-English speaking students as opposed to accommodating the needs of her dominant-Spanish speaking students highlighting a crucial point: teachers are at the core of policy implementation, and to a large extent determine its success or failure (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

Teacher as policymaker

Ms. Andrews' decision to use English during Spanish language arts indicates that she views English as a more valuable resource than Spanish. Through such decisions, teachers communicate which languages students should value. As a result, students choose to showcase their academic progress in the valued language, English. Prioritization of the instructional needs of the English-dominant students and subsequent shift to English strongly indicate the inherent division of interest within two-way DLBE (Palmer, 2009; Valdés, 1997) and a potential complication with Ruiz's (1984) claim that a language-as-resource orientation in language planning is the solution. For Mountainview's English-dominant students, bilingualism and biliteracy are perquisites, advantages in an increasingly globalized society. For Spanish-dominant students, bilingualism and biliteracy are concessions, permission to maintain the native language when English is the language of the United States. The decision to privilege English reflects larger societal values. In his critique of Ruiz's language-as-resource orientation, Ricento (2005) argues that in order for the approach to work, policy makers and

practitioners must first examine the underlying ideologies and expectations regarding languages other than English; this research appears to support his argument.

Conclusion

There are two major limitations to this study. First, the amount of time spent observing in the classroom was limited; second, the relatively small number of writing samples collected for analysis. While the small scale limits the generalizability of the study, the findings confirm previous research on the nature of biliteracy development (Dworin, 2003; Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010; Gort, 2006; Sparrow et al., 2012). Moreover, findings are consistent with concerns articulated regarding the successful implementation of DLBE programs (Valdes, 1997). While the analysis of emergent bilinguals' writing demonstrated a wide range of cross-linguistic strategy use, a holistic assessment of their abilities was limited due to the demonstrated preference for English. The teacher's and students' observed preference for English, both in the writing samples and classroom interaction, presents an obstacle to program's pursuit of bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism.

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