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Oral Language Interactions between Students and Teachers
in One-Way and Two-Way Immersion Programs

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Spanish

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Introduction

Language immersion programs are implemented as a way to teach a second language (L2) to students of a majority language (L1) in a classroom environment in which the L2 is used to teach curriculum content. Immersion programs are found worldwide, and the language in which students are immersed depends on a number of factors, including the location and the diversity of each country. In addition, the age at which students begin to learn a L2 is important; elementary ages are optimal for acquiring a second language due to the cognitive flexibility of the brain at this age (Meisel, 2011). In the United States, however, this skill is often postponed until the adolescent years. Worldwide, there is an increasing importance for the learning and use of multiple languages and thus there is an increased need for bilingual education that leads to competent bilingual speakers.

The norm of the majority of the world is bilingualism and even multilingualism, (Vince, 2016). As our society grows increasingly diverse and globalization reaches unprecedented heights, the United States' population needs to gain a better understanding of its role in the global society. Knowledge of multiple languages not only helps our society to communicate in the global marketplace, but it also assists us in better understanding various cultures. The most effective way to assume this role is to promote bilingual education (Christian, 1994). Bilingual education in schools can be expensive, and many believe that a focus on foreign language education will distract students from the purported more important subjects such as mathematics, science, history, and English. However, language immersion programs are the least expensive models of bilingual education, and research shows that bilingual students may even outperform monolingual

students in all areas of study (Met, 2008). Bilingual education is spreading throughout schools in our country, but the support of these programs must increase substantially in order to keep up with the growing diversity of our society.

Language Immersion Models

As of 2011, there were 488 language immersion programs in U.S. schools with varying levels and programs of immersion (Directory of Foreign Language Immersion Programs). There are two different approaches to language immersion. The first is one-way immersion, in which students of the country's majority language, or L1, are taught content and literacy through instruction in an L2. The second approach to language immersion is known as dual language immersion or two-way immersion. This is a program in which literacy and academic content are taught to L1 and L2 students through an integrated instruction of both languages. Both models of language immersion have been studied extensively, but less so in comparison to one another in regards to the language usage of students in both contexts.

One-way immersion programs seek to enrich students with an intercultural appreciation by teaching an L2 while simultaneously promoting academic achievement. In this immersion approach, students learn all content material in their L2, and teachers encourage the use of the L2 with peers (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Previous research on one-way immersion focuses on the varied use of a choice language in different contexts. In a setting in which the L2 was Spanish, students were more likely to speak in the L2 during teacher prompted activities and were less inclined to do so in social contexts (Ballinger & Lyster, 2011).

In comparison, two-way immersion programs aim to integrate the languages of two groups of students by means of equal instruction in both the L1 and the L2. This language immersion environment seeks to promote bilingualism for both groups of students, which is enhanced by the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the integrated students (Hollingsworth, 2013). Previous research has shown that having students of both languages together increases the motivation to learn and speak the L2. In many cases, no matter the L1 of the students, English seems to be the language of choice in non-teacher centered activities, with the L2 used exclusively for task-related purposes or communication with the teacher (Ballinger & Lyster, 2011).

Various studies (Ballinger & Lyster, 2011; Broner, 2001; Heitzman, 1994; Potowski, 2004) have examined oral language usage in different contexts; however, they do not directly compare the differences in language use between one- and two-way language immersion programs. Heitzman (1994) studied one-way immersion models and found that fifth and sixth graders of a one-way Spanish immersion program used Spanish primarily when conversing with teachers and with peers while completing academic tasks, and spoke English in more social contexts. This study, however, is limited by its small sample size of eight students and the narrow range of grade levels. Broner (2000), with an even smaller sample size of only three fifth graders in a one-way Spanish immersion program, confirms observations by Heitzman (1994) of increased Spanish usage by students when interacting with teachers and other adults and decreased Spanish usage with peers.

In a two-way immersion program, Potowski (2004) examined language use of four students in a fifth grade classroom and found no correlation between a student's L1

and the amount of Spanish spoken in the classroom. Ballinger and Lyster (2011) had contrasting results. With a greater sample size including students and teachers from grades one, three, and eight, it was concluded that although there was an overall preference for English, students with Spanish as their L1 spoke Spanish more frequently with both teachers and peers.

The current study seeks to compare one-way and two-way immersion programs to identify the following: the language of choice among students interacting with teachers and students interacting with each other in one-way and two-way Spanish immersion classrooms, the different situational contexts in which Spanish and English are spoken, and the ways in which teachers encourage and support students to speak the L2. This research is significant because it will help to inform the discussion in the field of education in the United States about language immersion and the ways in which it can enhance L2 learning and our society as a whole.

School Contexts

This qualitative, naturalistic study was conducted in a combination of classrooms ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade at two separate elementary schools in Massachusetts with one-way or two-way Spanish immersion programs. One of the elementary schools had a one-way Spanish immersion program in a small, suburban setting in which all students and teachers were native English speakers. At this school, language immersion classrooms were present along with general education classrooms. There was one Spanish immersion classroom per grade level, so students moved throughout grade levels together. According to one third grade teacher, this created a great sense of community within the classroom but it did isolate the students from the rest

of the school to some degree. Students of the one-way Spanish immersion program at this school began the program in first grade at an early immersion level and continued past elementary school through grade twelve. Although all classroom instruction was in the Spanish language at this school, specials like gym, art, library, and music were in English. All classroom teachers at the one-way Spanish immersion program at this school were native English speakers. Only one teaching assistant spoke Spanish as her first language. The administration of the school, along with the majority of teachers, did not speak Spanish.

The two-way immersion school was a two-way Spanish immersion elementary school located in an urban setting in which students and teachers were either native English or Spanish speakers. The majority of teachers who taught content in Spanish were native Spanish speakers. The school principal spoke Spanish as her second language, and much of the office staff was bilingual. Unlike the school in which the one-way immersion program took place, this school had a school-wide Spanish immersion program. The school's mission statement had language that encouraged Spanish usage and celebrated the diversity of the school community. This mission was lived via bilingual signs throughout the school, the bilingual fliers and newsletters in the office, and the Spanish greetings from the office secretaries. The immersion program in kindergarten and grade one was self-contained, meaning students remained in the same classroom throughout the day and received instruction in both languages by the same teacher. The kindergarten classes followed an 80:20 model in which 80% of instruction was in Spanish and 20% of instruction was in English. Grades 1 through 5 followed the 50:50 model. Grades 2 and 3 switched from English to Spanish weekly, and grades 4 and

5 switched from English to Spanish halfway through the day. Content taught in English and content taught in Spanish for grades 2 through 5 were taught by separate teachers.

Participating Classes

One-Way Immersion

The grade 1 class at the one-way immersion program was taught by a native English speaker who spoke both Italian and Spanish with native-like fluency. She was assisted by a native Spanish speaker from El Salvador. Out of the twenty-three students, 13 were girls and ten were boys. Students were between the ages of six and seven. One student's father was from Mexico but only English was spoken in the home.

The grade 2 class at the one-way immersion program was taught by a native English speaker who spoke both Greek and Spanish with native-like fluency; however, she had never traveled to a Spanish speaking country. Out of the 20 students, 11 were girls and nine were boys. Students were between the ages of seven and eight years old.

The grade 4 class at the one-way immersion program was taught by a native English speaker who gained fluency in Spanish by studying in Granada, Spain. The fourth grade class was made up of 13 girls and 12 boys. Students were between the ages of nine and ten.

Two-Way Immersion

The kindergarten classes were taught by two female teachers and one male teacher, all of whom were native Spanish speakers. One female teacher and the male teacher were from Latin American countries, and the other female teacher was from Barcelona, Spain. Kindergarten classrooms had between 15 and 20 students per classroom, and approximately three to four students from each kindergarten class were

native Spanish speakers. Although native Spanish speakers were present in the classrooms, many of these students did not speak completely in Spanish at home. Students were between the ages of five and six.

The second grade classes were taught content in Spanish by a native English speaker with native-like Spanish fluency and taught content in English by a different native English speaker. She was assisted by a native Spanish speaking paraprofessional from Argentina. The two classes totaled less than 50 students, with less than ten native Spanish speakers. Students were between the ages of seven and eight.

The third grade classes were taught content in Spanish by a native Spanish speaker from Puerto Rico and taught content in English by a native English-speaking teacher. The two classes also totaled less than 50 students and also had less than ten native Spanish speakers. Students were between the ages of eight and nine.

The fifth grade classes were taught content in Spanish by a native Spanish speaker from South America and taught content in English by a native English-speaking teacher. The two classes totaled less than 50 students, and only five students were native Spanish speakers. Students were between the ages of ten and 11. In this study, all names of students and teachers in both programs have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Methodology

In this study, I used multiple data collection methods, including classroom observations, detailed field notes, audio recordings of student interactions, teacher and student interviews, transcriptions of audio recordings and interviews, and student questionnaires on language usage and history.

The classroom portion of this study was conducted during two weeks, beginning

at the end of May. I spent one week in each school, completing forty-five hours of non-participant observations in total at both schools. I circulated around the classroom and collected field notes recording details of the activity as well as making detailed descriptions of oral language use by both students and teachers. All audio of language interactions were also recorded. These audio recordings were then transcribed. Midway through each week at both schools, once I gained rapport with the students, I administered student questionnaires to gain further information on student language usage outside of the classroom, their language history, and their involvement in their immersion program. Along with these questionnaires, I conducted interviews with teachers and students relating to their history in the program, language learning background, and the teachers' professional background. I took notes and digitally recorded these discussions, which were later transcribed.

After conducting these observations, I transcribed all data in English and in Spanish. I then analyzed the data and triangulated codes, which were then used to identify similar instances of data as patterns and themes emerged. I coded sixty-seven pages of field notes and thirty-eight pages of student and teacher interviews. I used content analysis and the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to analyze the data and to look for themes in the data with my mentors.

Results & Discussion

Language Choice in One-Way Immersion

When analyzing what language students chose to speak when conversing with teachers and peers, the language choice varied between both programs and was dependent on the expectations of each individual teacher. That is to say that if a

classroom rule was to speak Spanish at all times and the teacher enforced this rule, students would comply and speak in Spanish. If students did not follow the rule consistently and were not always prompted by the teacher to speak in Spanish, it was unlikely that students would speak in Spanish at all times. In the one-way immersion program, students were more likely to respond in Spanish when spoken to in Spanish by the teacher. Whether the teacher was speaking to a student during whole class instruction or individually, the student was more likely to reply in Spanish when spoken to by a teacher in Spanish. An example of this oral language interaction is as follows:

2nd Grade Teacher: Sandra tiene cuatro bolsas de canicas en total. En cada bolsa, hay cuatro canicas. ¿Cuántas canicas tiene en total?

Student: Dieciséis.

2nd Grade Teacher: Dime la oración, señor.

Student: Sandra tiene dieciséis canicas en total.

In this example, a second grade teacher was reciting a math word problem that required the student to multiply four times four. The student that was called upon answered the question correctly in Spanish, but the teacher was looking for an answer in a complete sentence. The student was then able to revise his answer with ease. Interactions such as these, where a teacher spoke to a student in Spanish and the student replied in Spanish, made up the majority of all oral language interactions in the one-way immersion program.

Within the classrooms of the one-way immersion program, the differing expectations of language usage between the teachers led to differences in language choice by students when conversing with teachers. So although students of the one-way immersion program were more likely to respond in Spanish than in English, English responses were still observed in some classrooms, like the first grade classroom. First

grade was the year during which students began Spanish immersion at the one-way immersion program of this school. When the first grade teacher spoke to students in Spanish, responses were either in English or in Spanish. In one instance, the teacher reminded a student to put the date on her paper.

1st Grade Teacher: No olvides poner la fecha.
Student: I did it!

In this example, the teacher told the student in Spanish, “Do not forget to put the date [on your paper],” and the student replied in English, saying that she had already written the date. In this example, the teacher said a reminder in Spanish, and the student understood, yet he responded in English.

Although some responses to a teacher speaking in Spanish were in English, some responses were in Spanish. In another instance, students were sitting at the rug during reading time and the teacher was discussing comparisons between two things. She invited two students to stand in front of the class in order to make comparisons between the two students. She asked students to compare the hair of the two boys who are at the front of the room.

1st Grade Teacher: Comparemos el pelo.
Student: Michael tiene más pelo que Steven.

In Spanish, the teacher says, “Let’s compare the hair [of the two boys]” and the student was able to use a complete Spanish sentence to say that one boy had more hair than the other. In this example, the teacher gives a statement in Spanish, and the student is able to respond in Spanish.

When students of the first grade classroom approached the teacher to speak to her, students always began the conversation with English, unless it was a simple Spanish

greeting, such as “hola.” One morning, a student approached the teacher to explain that she would be walking home in the afternoon.

Student: Today I’m a...

1st Grade Teacher: ¿Qué?

Student: Today I’m a walker because I’m going home with...

1st Grade Teacher: No entiendo.

Student: So today I’m a walker. I have a note in my backpack...

1st Grade Teacher: No. No entiendo. ¿Adónde vas a ir? ¿A la casa de mami o la casa de papi? ¿Mami o papi?

Student: La casa de mami.

In this excerpt, the student was trying to explain that she would be walking home because she was going to her mother’s house. In an effort to prompt the student to speak in Spanish, the teacher replied in Spanish saying that she did not understand. The student continued to speak in English to the first grade teacher until the teacher provided more vocabulary for the student to use in her last response, which said she was going to her mother’s house. Other instances of English input by students included asking for page numbers, asking to return books at the library, or commenting about how easy or hard a task was.

In the second grade classroom, the teacher held very high expectations of Spanish language usage in the classroom. The teacher held students accountable for their language usage, and students also held each other accountable. Notes also went home to parents weekly that tallied any instances of English usage in the classroom. This resulted in Spanish usage by students at all times. Every time the teacher spoke to a student in Spanish, students responded in Spanish. When asked if students ever spoke in English in the classroom, the second teacher responded, “My students are expected to speak in Spanish in the classroom at all times. The only time they don’t speak in Spanish is during Open Circle, which is a social, emotional behavioral program that we have for

twenty minutes each week to talk about how to deal with certain issues. But other than that, the students are speaking in Spanish unless they don't know a word. Then they know to say, 'Cómo se dice...' and ask how to say a certain word in Spanish." This rule was evident during every observation in the second grade classroom. During one observation, students were seated on the rug facing the screen. The second grade teacher had examples of sentences on the screen and the students had to tell whether the sentence was a fact or an opinion and had to provide the reason why it was fact or opinion.

2nd Grade Teacher: ¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre el mejor deporte? Quiero oír tu opinión y por qué. Cada uno de mis opiniones aquí tiene una razón.

Student: Mi opinión de mi deporte favorito es béisbol.

2nd Grade Teacher: El mejor deporte es...

Student: El mejor deporte en mi opinión es béisbol porque es divertido jugar.

In this example, the teacher first asked the class, "What is your opinion about the best sport? I want to hear your opinion and why. Every one of my opinions here has a reason (referring to the opinions and reasons on the board)." The student replied in Spanish, but with incorrect syntax. The teacher then provided a sentence starter for the student and she was able to communicate her opinion and reason correctly. All oral language interactions with the teacher in this second grade classroom at the one-way immersion program included Spanish responses by students to Spanish input by teachers.

When students of the second grade class began the conversation with the teacher, they also did so in Spanish. While the students were working at their seats writing stories, one student approached the second grade teacher to explain in Spanish that the student next to him was copying his paper.

Student: Katie está copiando.

Teacher: Katie, es más importante escribir tu cuento para saber cómo se escriben estos.

Students were also able to ask the teacher in Spanish when they needed assistance. The second grade students were also able to hold significantly longer Spanish conversations than any other grade level observed. This speaks to the level of comfort in speaking the language in this classroom environment.

Similar to the first grade classroom, the fourth grade students were observed responding in either English or Spanish when spoken to by the teacher in Spanish. It is important to note, however, that in the fourth grade, students learn English phonics. Because of this, there were times in which instruction was in English, and thus student responses at this time were in English. The oral language interactions taken into account during this study did not include such conversations as the focus was on speaking the target language when spoken to in that language. When spoken to in Spanish by the teacher, whether the scope included whole class, small group, or one-on-one, students were observed responding in both Spanish and English. During one observation, students were practicing for reader's theater. The fourth grade teacher circulated around the room to watch students. She approached one group who did not have enough scripts.

4th Grade Teacher: ¿No hay suficiente?
Student: I'm sharing with him.

The teacher asked if there were not enough scripts, and the student responded by saying in English that she was sharing hers with another student.

Fourth grade students were also observed responding in Spanish when spoken to in Spanish. After much practice of the readers theater presentations, the students all came together to present their plays. During one of the plays, the teacher interrupted the students to make sure they all understood a vocabulary word.

4th Grade Teacher: ¿Ustedes entienden qué es “ferrocarril?”

Students (in unison): Sí.

4th Grade Teacher: ¿Alguien puede explicar qué es?

Student: Es algo para los trenes.

In this excerpt, the teacher asked students about the Spanish word for *railway*. In order to make sure they knew what it meant, she asked a student to explain. The student explained that it was something for trains.

When fourth grade students began conversations with the teacher, students spoke in Spanish. Instances such as these either occurred when a student approached the teacher to ask a question or when a student raised his or her hand to ask a question or make a comment. During independent reading time, one student asked the fourth grade teacher if he could read with another student.

Student: ¿Vas a leer juntos?

4th Grade Teacher: No. Todos solo. Buena pregunta. No están trabajando juntos.

Although the student in the preceding example used incorrect Spanish grammar, he used Spanish to ask the teacher his question. The teacher responded by saying no, and that even though it was a good question, all students were working independently.

Students in the one-way Spanish immersion program were also more likely to speak to peers in Spanish than students in the two-way Spanish immersion program. Aligning with the outcome of high expectations of the teachers when speaking to the teacher in Spanish, the likeliness of a student to speak to a classmate in Spanish was dependent on the expectations of the teacher. This meant that some teachers required students to speak in Spanish at all times, whether they were speaking to a teacher or a classmate, or if it was during instruction or during snack time. Other teachers allowed students to speak to peers during times like snack. Contexts in which students were speaking to one another included before school, snack time, partner work, and group

work. In the first and fourth grade classrooms, both English and Spanish were heard when students spoke to one another. In the second grade classroom, students were not allowed to speak in English, so when students spoke to one another, they did so in Spanish at all times.

Language Choice in Two-Way Immersion

Similar to the one-way immersion program, the expectations of each individual teacher in the two-way immersion program impacted the language choice by students. When analyzing what language students chose to speak when conversing with teachers in the two-way immersion program, students were more likely to respond in English when spoken to by a teacher in Spanish. Although students were observed responding in either English or Spanish when spoken to by a teacher in Spanish, the majority of recorded conversations between teachers and students included English responses. Some responses by students also included code switching, or instances in which a speaker alternates between speaking in English and a second language in the same sentence or conversation. Although my study did not focus on code switching, this would be an area for further research. An example of the common oral language interaction of an English response to Spanish was seen in a kindergarten classroom. The teachers of the kindergarten classes followed a model of immersion where Spanish and English instruction were not as structured. This fact, along with kindergarten being the first year of Spanish immersion for students, led to more relaxed rules regarding language usage by students. Students were encouraged to speak in Spanish as much as possible, but it was not strictly enforced. During one observation in a kindergarten classroom, the teacher and all students were sitting at the rug at the front of the class, and the teacher was asking

students about different sea creatures they were learning.

Kindergarten teacher: ¿Cómo se llama un pez que es de color blanco, anaranjado, y un poquito de rojo o negro?
 Student: Clown Fish!

In this example, the kindergarten teacher provided a description of a type of fish in Spanish and the student had to name it in Spanish. The student, however, gave the correct answer, but in English. Although this could have been a situation of a lack of vocabulary knowledge, this oral language interaction was also seen in instances where the students used Spanish even though they were equipped with the Spanish vocabulary knowledge. Kindergarten students were also observed responding to teachers in Spanish when spoken to in Spanish. During the same instance in which the previous example was captured, there were also Spanish responses. The kindergarten teacher asked students more questions about sea creatures.

Kindergarten Teacher: ¿Cómo se llaman con lo que nadan los peces? ¿Cómo se llaman estas partes?
 Student: Las aletas.
 Kindergarten Teacher: Las aletas. ¿Cómo se llama un animal que tiene ventosas?
 Student: Pulpo.

In this example, the teacher asked for the name of the part of the fish that helped it to swim and the student was able to respond with “fins” in Spanish. The teacher echoed the student’s response and then asked for the name of a sea creature that had suction cups and another student was able to respond with “octopus” in Spanish. Spanish and English responses to teachers by students were often observed during the same conversation.

When kindergarten students began the conversation with the teacher, they did so in Spanish. Spanish input by students was common amongst all kindergarteners, no matter the first language. In one kindergarten class, students had been learning about

different types of animals. As they were learning, they were to create a book about a different animal. In one observation, the teacher instructed students to take out the animal books that they were working on and one student raised his hand and explained in Spanish that he had already finished his book. Oral language interactions such as these in which the kindergarten student spoke to the teacher in Spanish were a common occurrence.

In the third grade classroom, students were observed responding in both English and Spanish when spoken to by the third grade teacher in Spanish. The third grade Spanish teacher constantly prompted students to speak in Spanish, but did not always receive Spanish responses by students. During an interview with the third grade teacher, she discussed her expectations of language usage in the classroom:

At the beginning of the school year I was trying to be strict and consistent in trying to have them talk in Spanish while working, and it was a battle that I was losing because it was creating a lot of tension with them. If I said to switch to Spanish, they would not talk. For me it was a lot of tension so the rule is when we are participating in the class and we are doing things together, it is in Spanish. But if they ask questions to each other in English, I let them.

Although the third grade teacher expected students to speak in Spanish when participating in whole-class instruction, students were observed responding in either language. During the first observation, the teacher explained in Spanish that they would all be attending a concert in the school gym, but she could not recall who would be performing in the concert. She paused to think and two students shouted out to finish her sentence, but in English.

3rd Grade Teacher: Vamos a ir a un concierto, creo que de los niños de...
 Student 1: Oh! I know!
 Student 2: The seventh grade!

Third graders were also observed responding in Spanish. During one observation, the

teacher reviewed the Spanish vocabulary words for “numerator/numerador” and “denominator/denominador,” which were also English cognates. In order to point out this fact, the teacher asked, “¿Qué tipo de palabras son?” and a student was able to respond in Spanish that the words were cognates. This type of oral language interaction aligned with the teacher’s expectation of Spanish usage by students during whole-class instruction.

When third grade students began conversations with the teacher, they did so both in English and in Spanish. During one observation, the teacher taught students about technical words. After discussing many examples of technical words in the books they are reading, the teacher instructed students to take a Spanish nonfiction book from her shelf and search for the technical words in the book. One student picked up a book called “Venus” and asked in English if he could use the book.

Student: It’s “Venus.” It’s a book called “Venus.”

3rd Grade Teacher: Pero el libro es muy fácil.

Student: Yeah but I got the words.

3rd Grade Teacher: Sí, pero es un libro muy fácil.

In this example, the student told the teacher what book he wanted to use to find technical words. The teacher responded by saying in Spanish that the book was too easy for him. The conversation continued with the student speaking in English and the teacher responding in Spanish. Although much of the time students began conversations with the third grade teacher in English, they also were observed doing so in Spanish. During the same lesson, one student raised his hand to ask the third grade teacher, in Spanish, what a word meant. He asked, “¿Qué es carbonero?” and the teacher responded by saying, “Carbonero es algo que tiene carbón.”

The fifth grade teacher of the two-way immersion program, similar to the second

grade teacher of the one-way immersion program, held high expectations for Spanish language usage in her classroom. Although the expectation was evident, there was one recorded instance of an English response to Spanish. After reading a chapter of “Esperanza Renace,” which was the Spanish version of “Esperanza Rising,” the class had a discussion about the chapter.

5th Grade Teacher: ¿Dónde estaban las rosas en este capítulo?

Student: I think she watered them.

5th Grade Teacher: ¿Tú piensas que le echaba agua?

Student: Sí.

In the preceding example, the teacher asked where the roses that have been mentioned in previous chapters were because she could not recall them being mentioned in the chapter they had just read. One student replied in English and said she thought the main character, Esperanza, watered the roses during the chapter. The teacher then recast the student’s English phrase into Spanish. The rest of the questions asked about the chapter were answered by the students in Spanish. The majority of responses to the fifth grade teacher were in Spanish, and every time a student spoke to the teacher, he or she spoke in Spanish.

When students conversed with one another, students at the two-way immersion program were more likely to use English. In the kindergarten and third grade classes, no instances of Spanish social usage were recorded. During transitions, partner work, and group work, all oral interactions recorded between students were in English. One kindergarten teacher explained why she does not force students to speak to one another in Spanish at all times and says, “...Sometimes that’s the thing that when they are so little you want them to develop the social emotional skills, and for me, if its in English, you know, it’s okay. I want them to become friends and play with each other. So in that

sense, for me, Spanish is not that important. Because I know that it will come.” Not all teachers held this same belief, and thus held differing expectations.

In the fifth grade class, students only spoke to one another in Spanish when prompted, but the language of conversation quickly turned back to English. During an interview with the fifth grade teacher, she explained this type of oral language interaction:

It’s when they start working amongst themselves is when the English starts to dominate because it’s the social language...it’s the social aspect of it that you can’t really control because I think they identify each other socially as English speakers. And I don’t have enough native speakers for [the social language] to become another language.

Although the two-way model of language immersion ideally consists of half native English speakers and half native Spanish speakers, this makeup was not present at this school and may be a factor in the language of choice by students. The overall language of choice for students speaking to teachers and peers in the two-way immersion program the majority of the time was English.

The differences in student language choice in both the one-way and two-way Spanish immersion programs were very dependent on the expectations of each individual teacher in both programs. That is to say that if the teacher held high expectations of Spanish usage at all times in the classroom, the students would speak mostly Spanish. If the teacher only required Spanish usage during instruction time and not during social times like snack time, then the students would only speak in Spanish when the teacher expected it.

Impact of Context on Language Choice

There were many instances in which context, or the situation, affected the

language choice of students in both the one-way and two-way immersion programs. Emotions such as excitement and frustration led to English usage in both programs. In the one-way program, only one instance of English usage due to excitement was recorded. This instance was captured in the first grade classroom during a compare and contrast lesson in which the teacher chose two students to stand in front of the class to compare and contrast the students. Students became very engaged by this activity, and were talking amongst each other in English, citing similarities and differences with the students sitting near them on the rug. English usage due to frustration in the one-way program was also only observed in the first grade class. This often occurred with frustration in being unable to express his or her thoughts in Spanish. English usage due to excitement or frustration were not observed in the second or fourth grade classrooms.

In the two-way immersion program, these oral language interactions occurred more frequently. English usage due to excitement was observed in kindergarten, second grade, and third grade. During an interview with one kindergarten teacher in the two-way immersion program, the teacher explained that even one of his native Spanish-speaking students spoke in English when she was excited. During one observation in the third grade classroom, the teacher was explaining the agenda for the day in Spanish, but as she was doing so students were whispering to each other in English at the rug. One student in particular seemed to be very distracted. The teacher noticed this, and got the student's attention:

3rd Grade Teacher: Erin. Erin. Tranquila. Estás muy contenta hoy. Demasiada contenta.

Student 1 (Not Erin): It's because she got her braces off!

3rd Grade Teacher: Sí. Escuchen.

Student 1: No, for real!

3rd Grade Teacher: Escuchen. Escuchen. Yo sé. Yo sé.

In this instance, the third grade told the student to calm down, and in return received a response from a different student explaining why Melina was so excited that day. The teacher tried to regain the focus of the students by telling them to listen, and the student responded with another English comment. Finally, the third grade teacher was able to regain the attention of all students by saying, “Listen. Listen. I know. I know.”

In the two-way immersion program, there were many recorded instances of English usage due to frustration. Students often became frustrated due to an inability to express his or her thoughts in Spanish. During one observation in the third grade class, the students were in the library working on writing about rocks and minerals using a variety of texts in both English and Spanish. One student sat with the librarian while he worked.

Student: I need help.

Librarian: Te ayudo. Podemos usar este libro en inglés y te ayudo en español.

¿Es inglés o español?

Student: It's in Spanish.

Librarian: Te ayudo.

Student: Can I write it in English and you can say it in Spanish?

Librarian: No. Puedo ayudarte con el vocabulario en español. No te preocupes.

Student: It has to be in Spanish.

Librarian: Okay. Pero yo te ayudo.

Student: What are you saying?

During this conversation, the student used English to express that he wanted to complete his assignment in English. The librarian told him over and over that she will help him, but the student continued to use English. English was not used in cases of excitement or frustration in fifth grade.

In both programs, English was used in the case of unknown vocabulary for all students. In the second grade class of the one-way immersion program, one instance of

this oral language interaction occurred during math. The students completed a word problem together that involved bags of marbles, known as *canicas* in Spanish. The second grade teacher checked for vocabulary by asking the class what they are.

- 2nd Grade Teacher: ¿Qué son canicas? Caroline, explique en español.
 Student 1: ¿Son...um...peda...cómo se dice “sticky?”
 2nd Grade teacher: ¿Pegajosos?
 Student 1: Pegajosos y um...
 2nd Grade teacher: Estos son calcomanías. La pregunta dice canicas. ¿Qué son canicas? (Calls on a different student).
 Student 2: Canicas son como...como...um...
 2nd Grade teacher: ¿Son comida? ¿Qué son?
 Student 2: Como juguetes.
 2nd Grade teacher: Como juguetes. Dime su forma tridimensional.
 Student 2: Esfera.
 2nd Grade teacher: Esfera. ¿Dura o suave?
 Student 2: Dura.
 2nd Grade teacher: Dura. ¿Grandes o pequeños?
 Student 2: Pequeños.
 2nd Grade teacher: Puedes jugar solo con una canica o necesitas más que una canica? ¿Alguien piensa que sabe cómo se llaman canicas en inglés? (Calls on another student)
 Student 3: Marbles.
 2nd Grade teacher: Marbles.

In the preceding example, the first student confused the Spanish word for marbles with the Spanish word for stickers, which was *calcomanías*. The teacher cleared up the confusion, and then asked scaffolding questions guiding students toward the answer, such as “are they hard or soft? Are they big or small? Can you play with only one of them or do you need more than one?” This finally led students to the correct definition of *canicas*.

English usage due to a lack of Spanish vocabulary also occurred at all grade levels in the two-way immersion program. During one observation in the third grade class, they were about to go to a concert in the gym that would alter their morning schedule. One student attempted to make a comment in Spanish that they would need to “go with the

flow” that morning, but he did not know exactly how to say the phrase in Spanish.

Student 1: Necesitamos ir con el flow.

3rd Grade teacher: ¿Ir con el qué?

Students (in unison): Go with the flow!

3rd Grade teacher: Go with the flow? ¿Cómo diríamos “go with the flow” en español?

Student 2: Va con el...flow?

3rd Grade teacher: ¿Con el qué?

Student 3: Véte con el río.

3rd Grade teacher: ¡Cerca!

[Students giggle and chatter amongst themselves about what the translation could be]

3rd Grade Teacher: No mis amores, escuchen un momento. Con la marea, puede ser. Diga “marea.”

Students (in unison): Marea.

In this excerpt, the students tried many different translations to mean, “go with the flow.”

After many attempts, the teacher provided the correct answer and instructed students to repeat the answer. When a student lacked the correct Spanish vocabulary in either program, English was used for the word. Situations such as these impacted the language of choice for many students as a way to best communicate his or herself when he or she could not do so in Spanish.

Strategies that Encourage and Develop Spanish Usage

In order for teachers to encourage and help to develop Spanish language usage in the classroom, teachers used a variety of strategies, such as modeling, recasting, providing sentence starters, using guided repetition, singing, animation of speech, visuals, and wait time. Strategies such as these were used throughout instruction and across all scopes. Strategies such as modeling, recasting, and providing sentence starters were ways in which teachers encouraged Spanish usage. Guided repetition, singing, animation, and visuals were often used to develop Spanish language and teach new vocabulary. They allowed for Spanish development without the use of English to define words or explain

concepts. The most frequently used strategy in both programs was modeling and recasting. If a student were to say a phrase or ask a question in English or in Spanish with incorrect grammar, the teacher would recast the sentence into correct Spanish grammar in order to model for the student how the phrase or question should be said. Teachers in both programs used this strategy in order to correct the student without explicitly telling the student they were wrong. The following was an example of modeling and recasting of a phrase said by a student that included incorrect Spanish grammar:

Student: Yo no sabe.
1st Grade Teacher: Yo no sé. Diga.
Student: Yo no sé.

In the preceding example, the student tried to say “I don’t know,” but he conjugated the verb “saber” incorrectly. The teacher recast the phrase into correct Spanish grammar, which the student repeated. This allowed for the teacher to point out the incorrectness of the student’s statement while providing him with the structure necessary to be able to say the statement correctly on his own with practice. Modeling and recasting was also used when a student spoke in English rather than Spanish. The following example was captured from a second grade class of the two-way immersion program:

Student: Can I clean my desk?
2nd Grade Teacher: ¿Puedo limpiarlo?
Student: ¿Puedo limpiarlo?
2nd Grade Teacher: Sí.

In this example, the teacher recast the English question into Spanish, which was then repeated by the student. Many times, the teacher would recast the entire sentence as shown before. Sometimes, however, the teacher would only recast the beginning of the phrase into correct Spanish in the form of a language frame. This occurred in the fifth

grade class at the two-way immersion program when a student asked where the stapler was.

Student: Where's the stapler?

5th Grade Teacher: ¿Dónde está...

Student: ¿Dónde está el grapador?

In this case, the teacher translated everything but the word for stapler when recasting the student's English question into Spanish.

Teachers of both programs also utilized guided repetition, scaffolding, engaging songs, and hand motions to teach unknown vocabulary. Guided repetition was a strategy consisting of a teacher saying a Spanish word or phrase to be repeated by students in order to engrain the new vocabulary. When the third grade class reviewed vocabulary for fractions, the teacher and students repeated the words *numerator* and *denominator* multiple times and in both languages. First she called on individual students, and then the class repeated the words in unison. The repetition of these words would lead to memorization of their definitions in both languages.

Teachers often used songs and hand motions to teach new vocabulary. The kindergarten classes of the two-way immersion program used songs daily during instruction. Using song also helped students with Spanish pronunciation of sounds and fluency. Hand motions were also helpful to students. In one kindergarten class, the teacher used hand motions to help a student think of the name for the part of the body through which a fish breathes, or its gills.

Kindergarten Teacher: ¿Cómo se llaman los pulmones de los peces?

Student: Pulpo.

Kindergarten Teacher: [shakes her head] Los pulmones. [She puts her hands in front of her chest and takes exaggerated breaths, moving her hands outward with her chest as she inhales and inwards toward her chest when she exhales to symbolize the action of lungs. She then provides approximately fifteen seconds

of wait time for the student, but he cannot think of the word.]

Kindergarten Teacher: Empieza con 'b.'

Student: ¡Branquias!

Teacher: Branquias. [She claps in acknowledgment]

After a student incorrectly guessed the word, the teacher acted out breathing in order to signify gills, branquias, in order to help the student think of the word. When the student still could not find the answer, the kindergarten teacher continued to support the student by providing the first letter of the word. Then, the student was finally able to answer the question.

Particular to the one-way immersion program, students were responsible for keeping each other accountable for their language usage. For example, in the second grade class of the one-way immersion program, the teacher had small, red cards called "Blurt Alerts" or "Alertas" which she and/or the students would put on the desks of students who were speaking the inappropriate language. The second grade teacher explained that, "Mostly the students give them to each other, which sometimes can be hard because the students don't want to get their friends in trouble," but it was effective nonetheless. Teachers of the one-way immersion program also used clear and appropriate speech for the students' age and proficiency level. In order to engage the students in Spanish, the teachers would often be very animated during instruction. When teaching the weekly vocabulary to students during one observation in the second grade classroom of the one-way immersion program, the vocabulary word being taught was *alardear*, which meant *to boast*.

2nd Grade Teacher: Alardear. Es un verbo. Es una acción. Alardear es cuando tú dices a todos cuán importante y perfecto eres. Por ejemplo, yo soy tan perfecta en enseñar. Yo soy la mejor maestra en toda la escuela. Me estoy alardeando. O puedo mirar en un espejo [puts her hand in front of her face as if it were a mirror in her hand] y digo 'Oh, espejo, yo soy la más bella que todas las otras personas.'

Me estoy alardeando.

As the second grade teacher explained the definition of *alardear*, she enunciated certain words and spoke very clearly in order to define the word in a way for all students to understand.

The strategies for teachers in the two-way immersion program varied slightly. Teachers of the two-way immersion program often utilized more echoing and acknowledgement of correct Spanish answers, provided wait time to students to formulate answers, and provided more visuals for the students. Echoing and acknowledging correct Spanish answers was very common in the kindergarten classes of the two-way immersion school. In one observation in a kindergarten class, the students were at the rug and the kindergarten teacher asked students questions about tigers.

Kindergarten teacher: ¿Qué hacen los tigres para comer?

Student: Hunt!

Kindergarten teacher: Hunt! ¿Cómo se dice eso en español?

Students (in unison): ¡Cazar!

Kindergarten teacher: Cazar. ¿Y cuándo tú piensas que los tigres cazan? ¿En qué momento del día?

Student: Medio.

Kindergarten Teacher: ¿Medio día?

Students (in unison): ¡La noche!

Kindergarten Teacher: La noche.

The first question asked by the kindergarten teacher in this example asked what tigers do in order to eat. One student gave the correct answer, but in English. The teacher echoed the English answer because it was correct, but made sure to ask for the Spanish version of the word. When the students gave her the correct Spanish word that meant *to hunt*, she echoed the answer in order to acknowledge its correctness. The teacher did the same when she asks when tigers hunt.

Bilingual materials were also used throughout the two-way immersion school,

unlike in the one-way immersion program. Signs that reminded students how to walk in the hallways were posted in both English in Spanish. Fliers and other paperwork to be sent home with students were also provided in both languages regardless of the first language of the parents and guardians of the students. These strategies helped to promote and encourage Spanish learning within the schools.

Conclusion

One-way and two-way immersion programs are programs that vary greatly in their methods and expectations for language usage and development. In the one-way Spanish immersion program, students were more likely to respond in Spanish when spoken to in Spanish. With peers, however, students were observed speaking equally in Spanish and in English. These findings confirm those of Heitzman (1994) and Broner (2000) In the two-way immersion program, students were more likely to speak in either Spanish or English when spoken to by a teacher in Spanish. This speaks to the bilingual nature of the program. When students in the two-way immersion program spoke to each other, students showed a general preference for English. This finding is in consensus with previous studies on two-way immersion programs (Ballinger & Lyster, 2011; Potowski, 2004).

The greatest finding of this study that was not a primary focus of previous studies was the impact of the expectations of each individual teacher on the language usage of his or her students. If a teacher expected students to speak in Spanish at all times and the teacher consistently enforced this standard for language usage, then students would follow suit. If the teacher followed a more relaxed approach to Spanish usage in the classroom, students were observed speaking in either language.

Students were also observed speaking in the inappropriate language in different contexts, such as moments of excitement or frustration. When a student was unable to express him or herself in Spanish due to such emotions, English was often used regardless of the first language of the student. English was consistently used in both programs for unknown Spanish vocabulary.

In order to encourage Spanish usage and develop Spanish vocabulary and speaking, teachers used a variety of strategies. In both programs, teachers often used modeling and recasting in order to correct students and rephrase English phrases or grammatically incorrect Spanish phrases into correct Spanish grammar. Providing sentence starters to students was another way of encouraging students to speak in Spanish. Strategies such as guided repetition, songs, animation, and hand gestures were used by teachers in both programs to teach unknown concepts and vocabulary in Spanish. Strategies such as these assisted in the overall language and content instruction in both one-way and two-way immersion programs.

This study confirms findings of many other studies, and it shows the importance of best practices of teachers in immersion programs. The expectations for L2 language usage by students varied greatly between teachers in each type of program and overall. More research must be completed on the implications of differing amounts of L2 usage by students required by teachers and during which contexts the L2 is required. This study also analyzed several different strategies used by teachers to encourage L2 usage and develop L2 skills, but more studies need to be completed on which of these strategies are most effective for one- and two-way immersion programs. This study adds to previous research on language immersion programs, but more research must be done in order to

determine best practices for all models of language immersion as programs increase throughout the United States.

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