

The Interface of Language Proficiency and Identity: A Profile Analysis of Bilingual Adolescents and Their Writing

Robin L. Danzak

Lang Speech Hear Serv Sch 2011;42;506-519; originally published online Aug 15, 2011;

DOI: 10.1044/0161-1461(2011/10-0015)

The references for this article include 2 HighWire-hosted articles which you can access for free at: <http://lshss.asha.org/cgi/content/full/42/4/506#BIBL>

This article has been cited by 1 HighWire-hosted article(s) which you can access for free at:

<http://lshss.asha.org/cgi/content/full/42/4/506#otherarticles>

This information is current as of October 3, 2013

This article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:

<http://lshss.asha.org/cgi/content/full/42/4/506>



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Article

The Interface of Language Proficiency and Identity: A Profile Analysis of Bilingual Adolescents and Their Writing

Robin L. Danzak^a

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to explore how adolescent English language learners' (ELLs') language and literacy experiences impacted their identities as bilingual writers.

Method: Six students were randomly selected from a group of 20 Spanish-speaking ELLs, ages 11–14, who participated in a larger, mixed-methods study on bilingual writing (see Danzak, 2011). The participants produced 10 written journal entries in their language of choice (English, Spanish, or both) and were interviewed. Qualitative analyses were applied to the participants' writing and interviews, both individually and cross-case. Findings were integrated to some extent with the outcomes of quantitative measures applied to the students' writing.

Results: Three patterns emerged: ethnic differences, language discrimination, and language preference. Also, the students' self-identification as monolingual or bilingual was reflected in

their attitudes toward language learning and their outcomes on writing measures. Three portraits of emerging bilingual writers are discussed: struggling emerging, dominant emerging, and balanced emerging. Language and literacy learning strategies are recommended for each.

Conclusions: Qualitative profiles of adolescent ELLs offer an understanding of students' experiences and identities that augments information provided by quantitative writing measures. Additionally, a mixed-methods profile analysis may aid in the identification of adolescent ELLs who may be struggling with undiagnosed language learning disabilities.

Key Words: English language learner, bilingual writing, adolescent literacy, literacy learning strategies, qualitative methods

During the final week of writing for our bilingual autobiography project, I beg Manuel, a tall, soft-spoken 8th-grade boy from Mexico, to keep working. "No puedo más" (I can't anymore), he tells me. Manuel, like the other students in his English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class, had spent the past 3 weeks composing 15 autobiographical, narrative and expository writing samples on various topics. I attempt to encourage him. "Come on, Manuel. You can do it. We only have three more topics to write. Just today, tomorrow, and the next day, and we'll be done, I promise."

Two days later, Manuel handed me his final text for the project, handwritten in Spanish, with a satisfied smile and a sigh of relief. "You told me I could do it and I did it," he exclaimed (in Spanish). For this particular personal reflection, Manuel had composed nearly a full page on the topic, "Three wishes," which proved to be a highly engaging prompt for the students in this class of 7th- and 8th-grade English language learners (ELLs). Manuel's text began, "Si yo tubiera una barita magica quisiera que volviera anaser"¹ (If I had a magic wand I would want to be born again).

Adolescent ELLs indeed experience a sort of rebirth as they face the social and academic challenges involved in acquiring English and acculturating to U.S. middle or high school life. These students do "double the work" (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007, p. 1) of their native English-speaking peers, learning a new language while

^aUniversity of South Florida Sarasota–Manatee

Correspondence to Robin L. Danzak: rdanzak@sar.usf.edu

Editor: Marilyn Nippold

Associate Editor: Jeannene Ward-Lonergan

Received March 11, 2010

Revision received July 2, 2010

Accepted January 7, 2011

DOI: 10.1044/0161-1461(2011/10-0015)

¹Segments from the participating students' writing, in both English and Spanish, are quoted verbatim, including errors. The English translations do not attempt to reproduce errors.

simultaneously managing demanding content and meeting assessment standards designed for native speakers. At the same time, adolescent ELLs, like all teens, walk the arduous path of developing social identity, self-esteem, and resilience (Benard, 2004; Garza, Reyes, & Trueba, 2004). For ELL students, the developmental tasks of adolescence are compounded by shifts in their sociocultural and language identity.

Across the nation, poor academic outcomes for adolescent ELLs (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007) and low graduation rates for Hispanic students in general (Kohler & Lazarín, 2007) serve as evidence that schools are failing many culturally and linguistically diverse teens. In the case of students like Manuel, a struggling language learner in both his first (L1) and second (L2) languages, increased support and engagement are needed. However, there is much more to be learned in order to better serve these students.

Over the past decade, research on ELLs in Grades K–12 has flourished. Large-scale and longitudinal studies (Lafrance & Gottardo, 2005; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009), as well as major research reviews on the education of ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006), have explored areas such as vocabulary and literacy development (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007), cross-language interactions in academic language learning (Ordóñez, Carlo, Snow, & McLaughlin, 2002; Simon-Cerejido & Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2009), and instructional strategies and program models for ELL students (Carlo et al., 2004; Graham & Perin, 2007).

Despite the increasing variety and depth of research in this area, there has been little investigation into the area of ELL writing, even though this is an area of concern due to the general poor quality of ELL written work (Geva, 2006; Geva & Genesee, 2006). Additionally, and notable for the purposes of the present study, one group of adolescent ELLs has been largely overlooked: those with language-learning disabilities (LLDs). Investigations regarding ELL children with language impairment are scarce (Gutiérrez-Clellen, Simon-Cerejido, & Wagner, 2008; Kohnert, Windsor, & Yim, 2006; Paradis, 2008). These have generally centered on children in preschool and the elementary grades, and often focus on oral language skills. It is clear that there is a need for research on ways to identify and academically support adolescent ELLs who are struggling to learn English as an L2 and also may have experienced obstacles with their own native oral language, L1 literacy, and social interaction throughout the school years.

The present article reports on the qualitative aspect of a mixed-methods study that used bilingual autobiography as a medium to encourage Spanish-speaking, middle school ELLs to write about their lives. The quantitative portion of the study is reported in Danzak (2011). Although there is some integration of the quantitative results for specific students, the emphasis here is on the qualitative analysis that

was carried out on the written journals and interviews of six focal students who were randomly selected from the larger study's 20 participants. In conjunction with quantitative outcomes, qualitative interpretation led to student profiles that provide an enriched understanding of the participants' language identities and abilities. This type of profile analysis has the potential to open a window into the identification of ELLs who, like Manuel, possibly appear to be struggling with undiagnosed LLDs.

Language and Literacy Learning as Cultural Processes

How can we improve literacy outcomes for adolescent ELLs? In addition to effective instructional strategies, successful acquisition of English language and literacy must be supported by social and cultural access as a means for these students to increase their engagement in language learning and develop their social identities as competent bilingual and biliterate individuals (Norton Peirce, 1995). Gee (2004) argued that literacy learning is only effective when it is acquired as a cultural process and not just an instructed process. Communities ensure that highly valued, cultural processes are acquired by scaffolding these behaviors with supportive environments, appropriate tools, and feedback. In the case of literacy, children who develop social identities as competent learners also achieve membership in the educational community that shares and values being literate.

For adolescent students, social identity and literacy practices mutually influence one another. As Gee (2004) highlighted, one product of cultural acquisition is social identity: The learner comes to identify him- or herself as a skilled practitioner of literacy. However, in order to participate in literacy learning, children must also be invested in the cultural process and have access to related tools (Norton Peirce, 1995). For adolescent, Latino students, Moje (2009) cited the critical roles of knowledge, interests, and identities in their process of literacy acquisition.

Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) carried out a large-scale, ethnographic study of the literacy practices of adolescents in a large, urban school district (> 70% were Latino/a). The primary findings that emerged from more than 1,000 surveys and 100 interviews were: (a) Adolescents did read and write outside of school; (b) these students' literacy activities were often based on social networks or affinity groups (i.e., informal social groups whose members shared a common activity or interest, such as Yu-Gi-O!), which constituted social identities (often involving race and gender); and (c) reading and writing provided teens with social capital, which Moje and colleagues described as information and/or experiences that supported social networks, self-improvement, or identity. Ironically, struggling ELLs (e.g., students with LLDs) may lack the social capital to confidently participate in classroom literacy events (Danzak

& Silliman, 2005). Their need for social capital and their challenges with language and literacy may place these students in a vicious circle, impeding their attempts to succeed in both social and literacy-based interactions.

Adolescent ELL Literacy: Rethinking Identity and Engagement

Social interaction is indeed an important component of literacy learning. In a research review of adolescent ELL literacy, Meltzer and Hamann (2004) determined that three classroom practices supported motivation and engagement for language-minority teens: (a) connection to students' lives and, therefore, to their background knowledge; (b) responsive classroom environments that encouraged student voice and provided literacy choices; and (c) student interaction during literacy practice that promoted questioning, predicting, and summarizing.

Funds of knowledge. One way to make connections and increase ELLs' investment in learning is to incorporate their funds of knowledge (i.e., culturally acquired background knowledge and skills) into literacy activities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). This may involve reading or writing culturally relevant texts. For example, Cummins et al. (2005) described how elementary and middle school ELLs' production of bilingual "identity texts" (p. 40) promoted literacy engagement and cross-language transfer as well as encouraged collaboration among students, teachers, and parents. Student-developed identity texts can take the form of fictional stories, autobiographical books, posters, or presentations, and may integrate interdisciplinary standards and technology.

Flores-Dueñas (2004) explored students' responses to reading culturally relevant texts with a small group of fourth-grade Mexican American students who had completed a transitional bilingual program for ELLs. The author found that the participants engaged more with literature that was written by Mexican American authors than literature from the U.S. culture. In fact, dominant-culture literature evoked text-based written responses that were shallower, shorter in length, and offered little interpretation. On the other hand, because of their funds of knowledge, the students were more likely to identify with the characters and experiences expressed in the culturally familiar texts, and thus were able to provide responses that included increased reflection on feelings, deeper interpretation of the text, and higher level writing.

Autobiographical writing. As a literacy learning tool, autobiographical writing lies at the intersection of multiple literacies, students' identities, and engagement. With this in mind, Armon and Ortega (2008) reported on the collaboration of university students and ELLs in elementary school in the creation of autobiographies that integrated drawing, speaking, and writing during a 3-week fine arts course, *Letras y Arte* (translated by the authors as *Literacy & Art*). This course provided the university students with opportunities

for mentorship and afforded the ELL students numerous instructional opportunities as well as an alternative means of language assessment apart from standardized literacy measures. Finally, and relevant to the project described here, Armon and Ortega highlighted the participants' investment in this literacy event: "In *Letras y Arte*, children's and college students' eagerness to express who they are and hope to become confirms that the energy to communicate meaningfully emanates from images and inks as well as spoken and written words" (p. 118). That is, the participants engaged in multiple modalities and media to speak, write, and illustrate their life stories in bilingual autobiographies for an authentic purpose and audience.

The use of structured, autobiographical writing with ELL students shifts literacy learning from an instructed to a cultural process by encouraging students to incorporate their funds of knowledge, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and social identities into meaningful writing events. The present investigation capitalized on this framework by inviting middle school ELL students to produce a series of written texts about their own lives. Additionally, the mixed-methods design of the larger, original study provided opportunities for (a) linguistic analyses of the students' written compositions at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels (quantitative methods) and, highlighted here, (b) a qualitative analysis of the content of the journal entries and interviews of six focal students, which offered an in-depth and holistic understanding of them as language learners and writers. The research question addressed how previous and current language and literacy learning experiences and/or practices influenced the six participants' identities as bilingual writers, including their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about L2 writing.

METHOD

As previously noted, the results reported here were part of a larger study with an embedded, mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and analyzed sequentially (quantitative first). The qualitative analysis provided a wealth of rich information that allowed for enhanced understanding of the six focal students and their language learning experiences, language proficiencies, and identities.

Participants

The six focal students who participated in the qualitative component of the larger study all attended the same middle school in an urban area of West Central Florida. They were randomly selected from a group of 20 ELL participants in Grades 6–8. The focal students included two girls and four boys and ranged in age from 12 to 14 years. These

students were sequential bilinguals in that they acquired Spanish at home as an L1 and English at school as an L2. Four of the participants were of Mexican origin, two were Puerto Rican, and all six had attended most of the elementary school grades (K–5) in their families’ home countries. All six had arrived in the United States within 2 years before the study. Like the rest of the participants in the larger study, the focal students met the following criteria: (a) continuous instruction through the current grade level; (b) no previous or current record of disability or special education services; (c) eligibility for the ESOL program at their public middle school (determined in Florida by below-proficient results on the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment [CELLA; Accountability Works, 2005] in either listening/speaking or reading/writing components); and (d) ability to write in both Spanish and English. Additionally, all of the students were participating in the free/reduced lunch program. The participants are summarized in Table 1.

The public middle school that the participants attended had a diverse enrollment of ~600 students. The school provided an ESOL–Language Arts class for ELL students in Grade 6 and another for students in Grades 7–8. Each class met daily for two periods of 50 min each. The ESOL teacher was an English–Spanish bilingual of Puerto Rican heritage. A bilingual aide from Puerto Rico also assisted in the classroom. The author is also an English–Spanish bilingual.

Data Collection

Qualitative data from the following three sources were triangulated in the present study: (a) student writing samples, (b) participant interviews, and (c) a participant questionnaire. Additionally, the participants’ global scores on a quantitative assessment of the students’ written texts (described below) were incorporated to some extent in the interpretation of the results.

Writing samples. For the bilingual autobiographies, the participants developed a series of eight formal writing samples (two narrative and two expository texts, each written in English and Spanish; used for the quantitative analysis and

not reported on here) and 10 journal entries (described below). Before data collection, the ESOL class had collaboratively brainstormed topics for the bilingual autobiography project. These ideas were categorized by the students, with the guidance of the ESOL teacher and researcher, into broader themes such as school, family and friends, personal experiences/feelings, and home country. These themes were used to develop the writing prompts for the compositions that were produced during data collection.

All of the texts were composed in the ESOL classroom over a period of 1 month, and one class period was devoted to the production of each writing sample. To elicit each text, carefully constructed prompts were presented in both English and Spanish, and the prompts were briefly discussed with the class before the students began writing. For example, for the journal topic, “Happy moment,” the prompt read: *Remember a very happy moment in your life. Tell the story of this happy time. Who were you with? Where were you? What happened? How did you feel at the time? Why is this moment a special memory for you?* Table 2 outlines the topics used for the journal entries.

Participant interviews. Interviews were conducted individually with each of the six students. The purpose of the interview was to provide insight into the participants’ language and literacy learning experiences and practices, as well as their attitudes and feelings toward these experiences and bilingualism in general. The interviews were semistructured in nature in that they were organized around a predesigned interview guide (Bernard, 2002) that included specific questions to be addressed (see Appendix A for the interview guide). However, a flexible approach to questioning was assumed, and additional, relevant material was welcomed. At the onset of each interview, the researcher established a bilingual language mode (Grosjean, 1998), making it clear that the student was welcome to respond in English, Spanish, or a combination of the two languages. All six students elected to conduct their interviews in Spanish.

Participant questionnaire. All participants completed a written questionnaire that was provided in both English and Spanish. The questionnaire gathered information about

Table 1. Demographics of the six focal students in the qualitative analysis.

<i>Name^a</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Schooling outside the United States</i>	<i>Schooling in the United States</i>
Diego	6	12	Florida, US	Grades K–4 in Mexico	Grades 5–6
Carolina	7	13	Puerto Rico	Grades 2–6 in Puerto Rico	Grades K–2, 7
Edgar	7	13	Mexico	Grades 1–5 in Mexico	Grades 5–7
Sara	8	13	Mexico	Grades 1–5 in Mexico	Grades 6–8
Manuel	8	14	Mexico	Grades K–5 in Mexico	Grades 6–8
Juan	8	13	Puerto Rico	Grades K–6 in Puerto Rico	Grades 7–8

^aPseudonyms were used to protect the students’ identities.

Table 2. Journal topics and genres.

<i>Journal entry</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Genre and structure (type of expository)</i>
Journal 1	Intro to journal	Expository, description
Journal 2	Happy moment	Narrative
Journal 3	Sad moment	Narrative
Journal 4	A problem or conflict	Narrative
Journal 5	The languages I speak	Expository, compare–contrast
Journal 6	Sports and hobbies	Expository, description
Journal 7	Goals	Expository, cause–effect
Journal 8	Family/cultural traditions	Expository, description
Journal 9	My dream vacation	Narrative
Journal 10	Three wishes	Expository, explain

each student’s family, heritage, place of birth, and schooling. The English version of the questionnaire is provided as Appendix B.

Analysis

The participants’ interviews and handwritten journals were transcribed, resulting in 72 double-spaced pages of interview transcripts and 30 double-spaced pages of journal texts. Two levels of qualitative analysis were applied to the data: (a) a within-case analysis (profile) of each student and (b) a cross-case analysis that explored the students’ attitudes toward bilingualism. At each of these levels, Spradley’s (1979) domain and taxonomic analyses were employed with the support of XSight qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2006).

Domain and taxonomic analyses. A domain analysis results in the identification of domains (categories), their included terms (members in each category), and the hierarchical connections between them (Spradley, 1979). Each domain is made up of various included terms linked to that domain based on semantic relationships such as strict inclusion (X is a kind of Y), attribution (X is an attribute of Y), and cause–effect (X is a cause/result of Y), among others (Spradley, 1979). Taxonomic analysis is an effective partner of domain analysis in that it provides a holistic review of the data to determine the relationships among the domains and their included terms. Thus, in this case, the established domains, included terms, and supporting journal and interview texts were connected through the taxonomic analysis. To illustrate these linkages, data displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were also developed.

Category development. The domains (categories) were based on the topics of the journal entries and the interview questions. Therefore, they were established a priori by the author (with some input from the students, who participated in choosing topics for their autobiographies; Constan, 1992). Thus, the five cover terms for the domains, which were

similar for all students, included (a) coming to the U.S.; (b) language learning; (c) bilingualism; (d) goals and wishes; and (e) traditions, family, and friends. However, for each student, the included terms varied according to the content of the journal entries and interviews.

Data displays. Throughout the qualitative analysis, data displays were created for each profile as well as for the cross-case analysis (see Figure 1 for an example). Based on Spradley’s (1979) model and Miles and Huberman’s (1994) description of cognitive mapping, nodes and connecting lines were used to create taxonomic maps that diagrammed the domains, their included terms and supporting texts, and the relationships among them. Inspiration 8 (a concept mapping program; Inspiration Software, 2008) was used to develop the data displays.

Quantitative integration. Finally, the students’ global ratings on a discourse-level measure were incorporated to some extent into the qualitative analysis. To rate overall text quality, the Analytic Scales for Assessing Students’ Expository and Narrative Writing Skills (Quellmalz & Burry, 1983; referred to hereafter as the Analytic Scales) were applied. This measure was selected because it provides similar decision rules and scoring systems for both expository and narrative texts. In each case, various features of the text were rated on a scale of 1–6 based on a rubric. A global text-quality score was also assigned to each composition, ranging from 1 to 6. Based on Quellmalz and Burry’s (1983) guidelines, scores of 1–3 were considered *nonmastered/not competent*, and scores of 4–6 were considered *mastered/competent*.

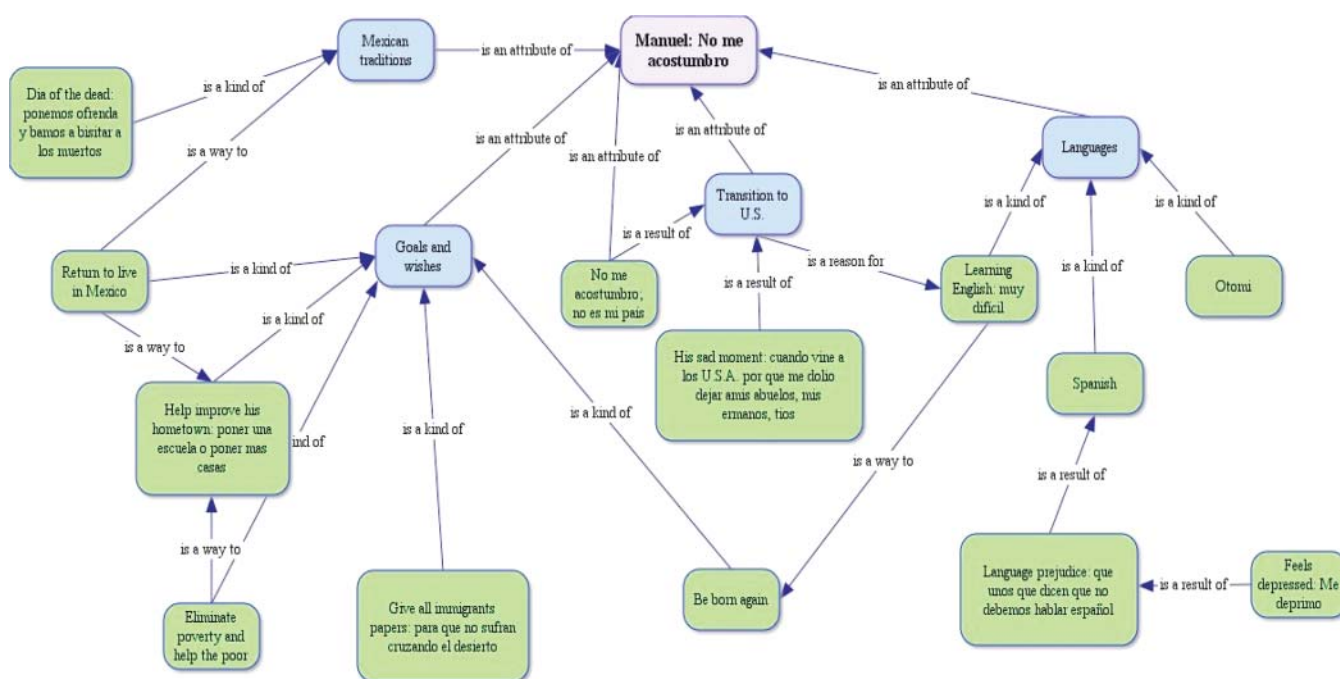
RESULTS

Overview of Individual Profiles

The profile analysis provided an inside view of the six students that explored beyond their scores on the quantitative writing measures to encompass three interrelated categories: (a) background; (b) coming to the U.S.; and (c) language learning, language usage, and bilingualism. The individual profiles that resulted from the qualitative analysis uncovered much variety among the participants with regard to their educational backgrounds, transitions to the United States, language learning experiences, and perceptions of bilingualism. As might be expected, their writing also evidenced diverse proficiencies across Spanish and English. Overall, three general patterns emerged from the profile analyses: ethnic differences, language discrimination, and language preference. These three patterns integrate the findings from the three broad categories listed above.

Ethnic differences. The first pattern distinguished the students based on their families’ country of origin. Diego (Grade 6), Edgar (Grade 7), Sara (Grade 8), and Manuel (Grade 8) came to the United States from Mexico, and none

Figure 1. Data display for Manuel.^a



^aEnglish translations of green cells from left to right: *Day of the dead: We make an offering and go visit the dead; Help improve his hometown: Build a school or build more homes; Give all immigrants papers so they don't suffer when crossing the desert; I can't get used to it, it's not my country; His sad moment: When I came to the USA because it was painful to leave my grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles; Learning English: Very difficult; Language prejudice: Some say that we should not speak Spanish; Feels depressed: I get depressed.*

of them had received any English language instruction before attending school here. Among these four students, varying strengths emerged. Diego had a positive outlook on learning and using English in school. However, his writing in Spanish generally scored slightly higher on the Analytic Scales than his writing in English.² Edgar and Sara, who were less enthusiastic about learning English, demonstrated a similar pattern, with writing scores that were consistently higher in Spanish than English. Edgar displayed some sophisticated vocabulary choices in his writing in Spanish. However, his scores on the Analytic Scales in English were, for the most part, in the range of not very competent. Sara, on the other hand, used similar structures in her writing in both languages. Finally, Manuel (Grade 8), who was not happy in the United States and felt that learning English was “very difficult,” achieved ratings of not at all competent to not very competent on his writing in both Spanish and English.

In contrast to the students from Mexico, Carolina (Grade 7) and Juan (Grade 8), who grew up in Puerto Rico, had experienced consistent English language instruction before moving to Florida. In fact, Carolina had attended Grades K–2

²References to higher/lower scores on the Analytic Scales reported here are qualitative observations and are not statistically significant.

in Kentucky. She felt comfortable using both Spanish and English and demonstrated this in her writing, which, for the most part, scored in the adequately competent range on both Spanish and English texts. Juan, who also expressed that he felt proficient as a bilingual, achieved similar scores on the Analytic Scales in both languages.

Language discrimination. A second pattern that arose from the qualitative analyses related to the students’ common experience of language prejudice for speaking Spanish at school. This theme was addressed in Journal 5, “The languages I speak,” and it was also discussed in the interviews. All six students revealed that at some point, they had heard someone remark that they should speak only English in this country; however, their responses to this evidence of language discrimination varied. Although most of the students, perhaps influenced by their ESOL teacher, rationalized these experiences as based on the other person’s ignorance or envy, Manuel stated that these comments made him feel depressed. Juan further described language prejudice as playing a role in racial conflicts he observed at school, including gang activity involving African American and Mexican students.

Language preference. Finally, all six students opted to hold their interviews in Spanish, with the exception of Carolina, who selected “both” as her language of choice, but

still spoke predominantly Spanish during the interview. The students also wrote the majority of their journal entries in Spanish. These observations highlighted that these ELLs continued their preference to use their L1 when given the choice, regardless of their perceived status as a bilingual or monolingual. This finding is similar to the experience of Dworin (2006), whose Latino students in Grades 4 and 5, in collaboration with their parents, wrote the majority of their family stories (15 of 18 texts) in Spanish when given the option.

The students' language choices can be explained by the fact that, as previously noted, these participants had arrived in the United States within 2 years before data collection. Hence, they most likely felt more confident using Spanish in an academic context (Cummins & Schecter, 2003). Yet, in spite of their relatively recent integration into schooling in English, these ELLs demonstrated varying levels of proficiency in their writing in both Spanish and English. These differences were likely influenced by many factors, including their previous educational experiences and, as is revealed in the following section, their identities and perceptions of L2 learning and bilingualism.

Cross-Case Patterns

The cross-case analysis of the focal students' perceptions of bilingualism revealed two patterns of language identity. The first pattern, *bilingual identity with positive views of bilingualism*, was exhibited by Carolina and Juan (from Puerto Rico) and Diego (from Mexico). From the participants' perspective, *bilingual* was understood as having a certain level of (oral) language proficiency in both Spanish and English. These three students reported that they regularly spoke and felt confident using both languages, enjoyed/valued both languages, and felt happy living in the United States. Despite their self-identification as bilinguals, these participants elected to write or speak in Spanish when given the option, as discussed above. Also, although the overall quality of their formal writing samples on the Analytic Scales varied, these students (particularly Carolina and Juan) tended to receive fairly consistent scores across their Spanish and English texts.

The second pattern, *monolingual (Spanish-speaking) identity with negative views of bilingualism*, was demonstrated by Edgar, Sara, and Manuel (all from Mexico). *Monolingual* was defined by the participants as lacking proficiency in English and, consequently, depending on Spanish as the primary means of communication. These students felt that they did not speak enough English, English was difficult, they did not want to learn English, and they were not happy or comfortable living in the United States. Additionally, all of these students expressed a desire to return to live in Mexico. Like the self-identified bilingual students, Edgar, Sara, and Manuel elected to write and speak Spanish when given the option for the journal writing and

the interview. However, in contrast to the bilingual group, the quality of their formal writing samples was generally rated as higher in Spanish texts than English texts.

Overall, the results of the qualitative analyses offer several layers of convergence and divergence with regard to the participants' experiences of bilingualism and biliteracy, as well as their attitudes and identities. The students' self-perceptions as bilingual or monolingual speakers and writers varied (along with their writing outcomes on the Analytic Scales). However, all of the ELL students had arrived relatively recently to the United States (within 2 years of data collection) and preferred to conduct their oral interviews in Spanish when given the option. They also all expressed similar experiences of language prejudice in their school or community. Overall, the profile analysis led to the emergence of three portraits of bilingual writers, which are described in the next section.

DISCUSSION

Three Portraits of Bilingual Writers

The qualitative profiles illuminated the participants' perceptions of themselves as either bilingual (proficient user of Spanish and English) or monolingual (lacking skills and/or interest to communicate in English). These identities, shaped by their previous language and literacy learning experiences and attitudes, also influenced their current language and literacy learning experiences and attitudes. The relationship between identity construction and literacy learning is further illustrated through the emergence of patterns of regularity and variance (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006) among them.

Generally speaking, these students might be viewed as emerging biliterate writers whose strengths and abilities varied depending on their experiences and attitudes toward L2 learning. In this way, their writing proficiencies can be assessed across a continuum from struggling in both languages to competent in Spanish and English. Along this continuum, three portraits of adolescent ELL writers were developed based on the text-level ratings (Analytic Scales) and the qualitative findings: (a) struggling emerging: ELL students who wrote poorly in both languages; (b) dominant emerging: ELL students whose writing was at least marginally proficient in either Spanish or English, but not both; and (c) balanced emerging: ELL students who demonstrated marginal to adequate proficiency equally across both languages. Each of these portraits has instructional-clinical implications related to the unique linguistic, social, and academic needs of the students who fit these profiles.

The struggling-emerging bilingual writer. This portrait is embodied by students like Manuel, from Mexico, who self-identified as a monolingual Spanish speaker and claimed he would never get used to living in the United States *porque*

siento que no es mi país (because I feel it's not my country). In his interview, Manuel expressed that learning English was very difficult and felt that it was like being born again because it was a different language.

In addition to his frustration with learning English in school, Manuel also noted that language prejudice had a negative effect on him: *Me he dado cuenta. . . que unos dicen que no debemos hablar español (I have realized that some people say that we should not speak Spanish)*. When asked how he felt when he heard these types of comments, Manuel responded, *No sé, me deprimó (I don't know, I get depressed)*.

All of Manuel's journal entries were written in Spanish. Manuel struggled during data collection to produce all of the texts and had difficulty writing in both Spanish and English. In fact, his formal samples were eliminated from the quantitative analysis because half of them did not meet the productivity criteria. His global scores on the Analytic Scales generally stayed between 1 and 2 points, that is, not at all competent to not very competent. However, he scored a 3 (almost competent) on Narrative 2 in Spanish. In this text, Manuel provided details about his first day of school in the United States and developed a more elaborate text with some examples of syntactic complexity.

For example, in Manuel's Narrative 2 text (My first day of school in the U.S.), the sentence, *Yo cuando llege a los EEUU y vine a la escuela el primer día estaba muy nerbioso por que no conosia a nadien (When I arrived in the U.S. and came to school the first day I was very nervous because I didn't know anyone)*, contains two subordinate clauses: an adverbial temporal (*When. . .*) and an adverbial causal (*because. . .*). Manuel also wrote in Expository 2 (Letter to a new student) in Spanish: *yo quisiera desirle a un estudiante de mi país que este país no es lo mismo porque I muchas cosa muy diferente aqui en los EEUU (I would like to say to a student from my country that this country is not the same because there are many different things here in the U.S.)*. Despite orthographic errors, this sentence also contains two subordinate clauses: a nominal object clause (*that. . .*) and an adverbial causal clause (*because. . .*).

Overall, Manuel was a struggling student in both L1 and L2. He was not happy living in the United States and felt that learning English was difficult. These challenges were reflected in Manuel's writing, which generally received low scores on the Analytic Scales. Indeed, Manuel was the type of ELL student who may have slipped through the cracks with a possible unidentified LLD (Danzak & Silliman, 2005; Wagner, Francis, & Morris, 2005).

The dominant-emerging bilingual writer. This portrait is embodied by students like Edgar, from Mexico, who self-identified as a monolingual Spanish speaker and wrote all of his journals in that language. In his interview, Edgar expressed disinterest and dislike for learning English at school, and he had plans to return to Mexico to attend university and law school. In contrast to Manuel, however,

Edgar wrote relatively well in his L1. In fact, his journals and formal samples provide evidence that Edgar has the potential to be a strong, persuasive writer. It is not surprising that Edgar earned higher global ratings (Analytic Scales) on the texts he wrote in Spanish than those he wrote in English.

Edgar's formal samples in Spanish were notable for the use of sophisticated, even metaphorical, lexical items. For example, in Expository 1 (A person I admire) in English, Edgar code-switched to include the Spanish words *ave fenix (phoenix)* and *polbo de estrellas (stardust)* in describing a friend he admired. Edgar's choice to code-switch to incorporate sophisticated lexical items in Spanish serves as evidence that his Spanish language skills surpass his growing abilities in English. Further support for this observation is that, in Expository 1 in Spanish, Edgar used the abstract words *pasion (passion)*, *destreza (dexterity)*, and *triumfos (triumphs)* in his description of Maradona, the famous Argentinean soccer player. This expository text also demonstrated Edgar's ability to write with descriptive supporting details, in the complex sentence, *Nacido en Argentina en un barrio muy pobre desde niño descubrio su gran pasion por el futbol (Born in Argentina in a very poor neighborhood since childhood he discovered his great passion for soccer)*. This sentence contains a fronted adverbial phrase (*Born in. . .*), which can be viewed as a stylistic option that is used by more mature writers to create thematic variety in a text (Perera, 1984).

Overall, Edgar seemed to have the lexical, syntactic, and text-level skills needed to write proficiently in his L1, Spanish. However, due to his inexperience with—and perhaps also his negative feelings toward—English, he had been unable to transfer these skills to his writing in English. Hence, Edgar had not yet acquired enough proficiency to achieve the same level of writing in English as Spanish, nor did he have the desire or confidence to do so.

The balanced-emerging bilingual writer. This portrait is embodied by students like Carolina, in Grade 7. Carolina attended the primary grades (K–2) in Kentucky and then continued her schooling in Puerto Rico before returning to Florida in Grade 7. She also experienced continuous English language instruction at school in Puerto Rico.

Carolina identified herself as bilingual and expressed a positive view of bilingualism, stating that she was fortunate to be able to speak two languages. When asked how she felt about being bilingual, she immediately responded, *¡Orgullosa! (Proud!)*. Similarly, although she recognized that language prejudice exists, she was confident that these behaviors resulted from the weaknesses of others: *Hay gente que piensa que. . . no, hay gente envidiosa. Sabes que como ellos no saben dos lenguas pués, son 'haters' (There are people who think that. . . no, there are envious people. You know, since they don't know two languages so, they are "haters")*. These haters didn't bother Carolina at all; in fact, her perception of other students at school was that they

thought, about her and other bilingual students, *¡Ay, tú tienes suerte!* (*Wow, you are lucky!*).

Carolina demonstrated her bilingual identity through her attempts to mix both languages in the interview and journal entries (although Spanish was still dominant). In her formal writing samples, Carolina earned a score of 4 (*adequately competent*) on all of her expository texts (in both languages), and a score of 5 (*definitely competent*) on Narrative 1 (Special or funny family memory) in English. This is to say that Carolina's writing samples in both languages were clear and fairly well organized; provided adequate support; and contained only a few errors in sentence construction, spelling, and punctuation.

Carolina also displayed clausal complexity in her writing in both English and Spanish. For example, in Expository 1 (A person I admire) in English: *The person I most admire is my mother because she works really hard to give me and my brother everything she can.* This sentence contains four subordinate clauses: two relatives, an adverbial causal (*because...*), and an adverbial of purpose (*[in order] to...*). It is notable that the two relative clauses in this example do not contain relative pronouns (i.e., *whom* and *that*). In English, the relative clause structure without the pronoun is considered less sophisticated than the clause explicitly containing a relative pronoun (Hunt, 1965). However, Carolina's choice to omit the relative pronoun in her English writing demonstrates her acquisition of a differentiated syntactic structure: In Spanish, a relative pronoun (*que, that*) in this context would be obligatory; in English, it is optional.

In summary, Carolina exemplified the balanced-emerging portrait both in her strong identification as a bilingual person and through her successful use of both languages in writing. She also had language and literacy learning experiences to support bilingualism: early schooling in Kentucky, the upper elementary grades in Puerto Rico, and a move to Florida for middle school. Carolina appeared to be socially well adjusted and claimed to enjoy school. With continued support for further academic language development and motivation, Carolina's identity as a successful bilingual-biliterate will be realized.

Educational and Clinical Implications

It should be noted that the present study involved the analysis of only six students. Thus, the intent was not to seek generalizability of results, but, consistent with qualitative research, to generate new hypotheses in the area of adolescent ELL writing. For example, the qualitative approach that was used allowed for the generation of individual profiles of the participants, which is a promising new research direction for developing intervention-relevant diagnostic practices (for full discussion, see Silliman & Berninger, 2011).

For an ELL student, both the perceived L2 proficiency and the self-determined purposes for using both languages

contribute to investment in learning and using English (Norton Peirce, 1995). As Bloome et al. (2005) stressed, literacy learning entails much more than decoding symbols; rather, it is a complex sociocultural process that involves, among other components, enculturation, power relations, and identity production. Therefore, effective literacy instruction for ELL students must take into account their background experiences as well as the sociocultural and linguistic resources they bring to the classroom. The next section elaborates on some specific strategies that support language and literacy development while also promoting the expression of adolescent ELLs' identities. These suggestions are organized around the portraits of emerging bilingual writers discussed above and are followed by general conclusions.

When Literacy Becomes Personal: Bilingual Autobiographies

A personal literacy project such as the bilingual autobiography used in the present study is one way to integrate language and literacy instruction and assessment, learn about students' experiences and identities, and promote engagement. Although students can be encouraged to compose their autobiographies in both their L1 and English, it is not necessary that their teachers have proficiency in the students' L1. ELLs in the early stages of English acquisition can partner with more proficient students in translation activities or work with bilingual teacher aides when available. Consistent with best practices, teachers may also seek the collaboration of parents, who can support the children and their teachers as L2 consultants (Brisk, 2010).

As students brainstorm topics to include in their autobiographies, a list of key vocabulary will develop. The ELL teacher and collaborating speech-language pathologist (SLP) can incorporate direct instruction and structured practice targeted toward diverse students' abilities and needs. These strategies are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Support for the struggling-emerging bilingual writer.

Students like Manuel, who faced challenges composing written texts in both Spanish and English, may lag behind other students due to differences in educational opportunities in their home countries (e.g., inconsistent school attendance, quality of academic programs). It is also possible that a struggling ELL student may have an undiagnosed LLD. Indeed, ELLs with learning problems are often diagnosed late, as compared to their monolingual English-speaking peers (Wagner et al., 2005). This late identification certainly has deleterious implications for the language and literacy development of these students.

A discussion regarding the assessment of bilingual children who have an LLD is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is clear that struggling ELL teens require extensive academic support to strengthen their general language

and literacy abilities (see Kohnert, 2008) as well as to develop their specific English language proficiency. A safe and supportive classroom environment that allows new students of English to feel comfortable and encourages them to take risks is a critical component in this process.

With respect to building overall language skills for struggling learners, ideally, to maximize success, this should be done in both languages and in varied contexts (Kohnert, 2008). Developing common underlying proficiencies (i.e., linguistic and conceptual understandings that transfer across languages; Cummins, 2000) can strengthen the student's foundation of language and literacy in both languages. Strategies might include phonological awareness activities such as word sorts, which can be used in both L1 and L2 and may be extended to compare/contrast activities across languages. Words about school, family, friends, activities, and interests can be used to align with the autobiography project and build vocabulary.

With respect to vocabulary development, this can be particularly challenging for students like Manuel, who may have limited academic vocabulary in L1. Vocabulary journals can be used to build and expand on thematic word lists, illustrate definitions, and highlight cognate words (i.e., semantic equivalents with similar phonological/orthographic features in both languages, such as *hero*–*héroe*; *decision*–*decisión*, *important*–*importante*). Autobiographical writing in English may begin by working with sentence models and supplying relevant vocabulary words. Students can also be encouraged to tell their stories orally, in either language, to develop narrative skills while working with a more proficient writer to record and/or translate. Resulting written texts can then be used to build reading fluency by reading sentences or passages aloud repeatedly and/or reading aloud after a competent model (Fawcett & Rasinski, 2008). All of these strategies can benefit struggling-emerging ELLs by introducing them to meaningful English vocabulary and syntactic structures while simultaneously building their metalinguistic awareness, promoting their general literacy skills, and strengthening common underlying proficiencies that can be applied in either the L1 or L2.

Support for the dominant-emerging bilingual writer.

Students like Edgar, who come to the ESOL classroom with some level of academic language proficiency in their L1, require, in addition to acquisition of L2 vocabulary and sentence structure, metalinguistic strategies that will aid them in applying the skills they already possess to literacy tasks in their new language. Further, sociocultural factors will be important in encouraging dominant-emerging ELL students to take risks and build confidence in their L2. Students like Edgar strongly identify with their home language and culture and may resist the L2. For these ELLs, as others have recommended (e.g., Dworin, 2006; Flores-Dueñas, 2004; Moll et al., 1992; Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001), the incorporation of culturally relevant literature and students' funds of knowledge may provide

valuable opportunities to engage in a meaningful and supportive language learning environment.

In conjunction with culturally relevant literature, graphic organizers (e.g., Venn diagram) and concept maps can be used to identify key vocabulary and morphosyntactic structures and/or summarize text. These can also be used to organize students' own writing. Word sorts can promote the development of vocabulary depth and knowledge of spelling patterns, as students can categorize cards containing diverse words with similar meanings (e.g., *happy*, *ecstatic*, *thrilled*, *joyous*) or sort words into groups of derived words that share the same root (e.g., *just*, *unjust*, *justice*, *justify*, *injustice*). On the reverse side of each card, students might create illustrations to express word meaning or provide a written definition, example of a sentence, and/or a translation into L1 (especially in the case of cognates). These words can be incorporated into students' personal writing to enrich their stories with increased lexical sophistication.

In their autobiographical writing, dominant-emerging students can build confidence by working with sentence models and patterned poems in their L2 (Peregoy & Boyle, 1993). An example of the former might be, *If I could . . . I would . . .* A series of these sentences might then be combined into a patterned poem based on the theme of "My wishes." These students might also collaborate with more proficient peers to translate their writing from L1 to English. Translation builds cross-linguistic awareness and supports the acquisition of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Support for the balanced-emerging bilingual writer.

With regard to ELL instruction, students like Carolina are ready to be challenged with higher level academic language and literacy tasks. In the classroom, these students can be encouraged to continue developing both languages by acquiring more complex, literate vocabulary and sentence and text structures. A student like Carolina may also serve as a resource to less proficient ELLs, for example, as a translator or collaborator in developing their autobiographical stories.

One strategy that can support balanced-emerging students' writing is sentence combining. For example, students might rewrite familiar scenarios by combining simple sentences (or "notes" in the instructions to students) into texts that "sound better" (Scott & Nelson, 2009). This type of task builds metalinguistic awareness and supports more literate use of syntax as students practice creating various types of clauses (Kameen, 1979).

It would also serve balanced-emerging students well to compare and contrast casual discourse with academic discourse in both oral and written language. Carolina, for example, wrote relatively competently in both Spanish and English. However, in both languages, her texts were conversational in style and lacked the formality of academic composition. Conversational and academic texts can be compared and contrasted at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels using a graphic organizer to display similarities and

differences. This activity, which can be integrated into autobiographical oral storytelling/writing, would increase meta-linguistic awareness and introduce specialized vocabulary and structures.

Bringing It all Together

The autobiography project offers layers of opportunities for social and academic language instruction and practice and contextualized language and literacy applications for adolescent ELLs. Additionally, the outcomes of such a project allow teachers and SLPs to not only assess students' language proficiency in a collaborative way, but also to learn about students' background experiences, motivations, and identities. Additionally, it is important to offer choices throughout the project regarding writing topics and options for the final product. This provides a safe classroom environment that respects students' privacy and allows them to opt out of topics that may be sensitive in nature. Similarly, depending on students' language proficiency, the completed autobiography project might take the form of a PowerPoint presentation, digital story, poster, or comic, rather than a written composition. The creation of these products involves various Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) standards (TESOL, 1997) and affords students the use of multiple language modalities. Additionally, these activities support the development of students' academic language skills as they engage with technology (see Danzak, in press, for an example).

Practices such as these can contribute to the creation of individual profiles of ELL students that extend beyond scores on standardized tests or language performance measures to shed light on the sociocultural and experiential factors that shape students' identities as bilingual or monolingual readers and writers. In the current study, the profile analysis delved deeper than the lexical, syntactic, and discourse features evident on the surface of the students' texts to offer explanations for their diverse writing abilities.

From this perspective, a case that stands out is that of Manuel, the young man who was introduced at the beginning of this article. Because Manuel struggled to write in both Spanish and English, he surfaced as a student with a possible, undiagnosed LLD. Therefore, Manuel represented an outlier, or an extreme/unique case (Yin, 2003), which highlighted him both quantitatively and qualitatively as a student to further investigate. Additionally, Manuel came to epitomize the portrait of a struggling-emerging biliterate writer, representing an underserved population of ELLs who, like him, require intensive support to fill gaps in L1 academic language and literacy skills while also building these skills in English.

Indeed, academic English is a gatekeeper for success in school and beyond (Bailey, 2010). Perhaps then, in addition to an examination of *how* students write, an exploration of *what* they write can provide educators and SLPs with

valuable entryways through which to better engage ELL students and meet their unique needs for development of academic language proficiency. Additionally, for ELL research, individual profiles may serve as a tool for differentiating sociocultural variables that facilitate or hinder L2 language and literacy learning.

The three portraits of biliteracy presented here offer an additional window through which to view the diverse identities and abilities of ELL students in middle school. Much work is still needed to better understand and meet the needs of adolescent ELL students, particularly those who may have an undiagnosed LLD. A common challenge to the educator or SLP working with ELL students is the variation in the experiences and abilities of these students. Perhaps a deeper exploration into this diversity, integrated with big picture patterns of ELL language and literacy development, will offer some solutions to overcome these challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Findings reported here resulted from a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, University of South Florida. Segments of this research were presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Philadelphia, PA, March 2010; and the World Congress of the International Reading Association, San José, Costa Rica, July 2008.

The author wishes to express gratitude to Elaine Silliman and Louise Wilkinson for their editorial comments.

REFERENCES

- Accountability Works.** (2005). *Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment*. Ewing, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Armon, J., & Ortega, T.** (2008). Autobiographical snapshots: Constructing self in *Letras y Arte*. *Language Arts*, 86, 108–119.
- August, D., Carlo, M., Dressler, C., & Snow, C.** (2005). The critical role of vocabulary development for English language learners. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 20, 50–57.
- August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.).** (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bailey, A. L.** (2010). Implications for assessment and instruction. In M. Shatz & L. Wilkinson (Eds.), *The education of English language learners: Research to practice* (pp. 222–247). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Batalova, J., Fix, M., & Murray, J.** (2007). *Measures of change: The demography and literacy of adolescent English learners—A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

- Benard, B.** (2004). *Resiliency: What we have learned*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.
- Bernard, H. R.** (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Bloome, D., Power Carter, S., Morton Christian, B., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris, N.** (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom language and literacy events: A microethnographic perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Brisk, M. E.** (2010). Learning English as a second language. In M. Shatz & L. C. Wilkinson (Eds.), *The education of English language learners: Research to practice* (pp. 152–173). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Carlo, M., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C. E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D. N., ... White, C. E.** (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*, 188–215.
- Constas, M. A.** (1992). Qualitative analysis as a public event: The documentation of category development procedures. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*, 253–266.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L.** (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cummins, J.** (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J., Bismilla, V., Chow, P., Cohen, S., Giampapa, F., Leoni, L., ... Sastri, P.** (2005). Affirming identity in multilingual classrooms. *Educational Leadership, 63*, 38–43.
- Cummins, J., & Schecter, S. R.** (2003). Introduction: School-based language policy in culturally diverse contexts. In S. R. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual education in practice: Using diversity as a resource* (pp. 1–16). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Danzak, R. L.** (2011). The integration of lexical, syntactic, and discourse features in bilingual adolescents' writing: An exploratory approach. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 42*, 491–505.
- Danzak, R. L.** (in press). Defining identities through multiliteracies: ELL teens narrate their immigration experiences as graphic stories. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*.
- Danzak, R. L., & Silliman, E. R.** (2005). Does my identity speak English? A pragmatic approach to the social world of an English language learner with language impairment. *Seminars in Speech and Language, 26*, 189–200.
- Dworin, J. E.** (2006). The family stories project: Using funds of knowledge for writing. *The Reading Teacher, 59*, 510–520.
- Fawcett, G., & Rasinski, T.** (2008). Fluency strategies that make a difference for struggling readers. In S. Lenski & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Reading success for struggling adolescent learners* (pp. 155–169). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Flores-Dueñas, L.** (2004). Reader response, culturally familiar literature, and reading comprehension: The case of four Latina(o) students. In F. Boyd & C. H. Brock (Eds.), *Multicultural and multilingual literacy and language: Contexts and practices* (pp. 180–206). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Garza, E., Reyes, P., & Trueba, E. T.** (2004). *Resiliency and success: Migrant children in the United States*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Gee, J. P.** (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W. M., & Christian, D. (Eds.)**. (2006). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Geva, E.** (2006). Second-language oral proficiency and second-language literacy. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (pp. 123–140). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Geva, E., & Genesee, F.** (2006). First-language oral proficiency and second-language literacy. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (pp. 185–196). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D.** (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools*. (Report by Alliance for Excellent Education). New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation.
- Grosjean, F.** (1998). Studying bilinguals: Methodological and conceptual issues. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 1*, 131–149.
- Gutiérrez, K. D., & Orellana, M. F.** (2006). The “problem” of English language learners: Constructing genres of difference. *Research in the Teaching of English, 40*, 502–507.
- Gutiérrez-Clellen, V. F., Simon-Cerejido, G., & Wagner, C.** (2008). Bilingual children with language impairment: A comparison with monolinguals and second language learners. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 29*, 3–19.
- Hunt, K. W.** (1965). *Grammatical structures written at three grade levels* (NCTE Research Report No. 3). Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Inspiration Software, Inc.** (2008). Inspiration (Version 8) [Computer software]. Beaverton, OR: Author.
- Kameen, P. T.** (1979). Syntactic skill and ESL writing quality. *On TESOL '79: The learner in focus: Selected papers from the thirteenth annual convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 343–364.
- Kieffer, M. J., & Lesaux, N. K.** (2007). Breaking down words to build meaning: Morphology, vocabulary, and reading comprehension in the urban classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 61*, 134–144.
- Kohler, A. D., & Lazarín, M.** (2007). *Hispanic education in the United States*. (Statistical Brief No. 8). Available at http://www.ncir.org/images/uploads/publications/file_SB8_HispEd_fnl.pdf.
- Kohnert, K.** (2008). *Language disorders in bilingual children and adults*. San Diego, CA: Plural.
- Kohnert, K., Windsor, J., & Yim, D.** (2006). Do language-based processing tasks separate children with language impairment from typical bilinguals? *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 21*(1), 19–29.

- Lafrance, A., & Gottardo, A.** (2005). A longitudinal study of phonological processing skills and reading in bilingual children. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 26*, 559–578.
- Meltzer, J., & Hamann, E. T.** (2004). *Meeting the literacy development needs of adolescent English language learners through content area learning part one: Focus on motivation and engagement*. Providence, RI: Brown University, The Education Alliance.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. L.** (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moje, E. B.** (2009, October). *Enhancing the content-area literacy and learning of English language learners*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners, Austin, TX.
- Moje, E. B., Overby, M., Tysvaer, N., & Morris, K.** (2008, Spring). The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, and mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review, 107–154*.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N.** (1992). Funds of knowledge for teachers: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*, 132–141.
- Moll, L. C., Sáez, R., & Dworin, J.** (2001). Exploring biliteracy: Two student case examples of writing as a social practice. *The Elementary School Journal, 101*, 435–449.
- Norton Peirce, B.** (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*, 9–31.
- Ordóñez, C. L., Carlo, M. S., Snow, C. E., & McLaughlin, B.** (2002). Depth and breadth of vocabulary in two languages: Which vocabulary skills transfer? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94*, 719–728.
- Paradis, J.** (2008). Tense as a clinical marker in English L2 acquisition with language delay/impairment. In E. Gavrusseva & B. Haznedar (Eds.), *Current trends in child second language acquisition: A generative perspective* (pp. 337–356). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O. F.** (1993). *Reading, writing, & learning in ESL: A resource book for K–8 teachers*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Perera, K.** (1984). *Children's writing and reading: Analysing classroom language*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell.
- QSR International Pty Ltd.** (2006). XSite (Version 2) [Computer software]. Doncaster, Victoria, Australia: Author.
- Quellmalz, E. S., & Burry, J.** (1983). *Analytic Scales for Assessing Students' Expository and Narrative Writing Skills* (CSE Resource Paper No.). Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation, UCLA Graduate School of Education.
- Scott, C., & Nelson, N. W.** (2009). Sentence combining: Assessment and intervention perspectives. *Perspectives on Language Learning and Education, 16*, 14–20.
- Short, D. J., & Fitzsimmons, S.** (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners—A report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Silliman, E. R., & Berninger, V. W.** (2011). Cross-disciplinary dialogue about the nature of oral and written language problems in the context of developmental, academic, and phenotypic profiles. *Topics in Language Disorders, 31*, 6–23.
- Simon-Cerejido, G., & Gutiérrez-Clellen, V. F.** (2009). A cross-linguistic and bilingual evaluation of the interdependence between lexical and grammatical domains. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 30*, 315–337.
- Sparks, R. L., Patton, J., Ganschow, L., & Humbach, N.** (2009). Long-term relationships among early first language skills, second language aptitude, second language affect, and later second language proficiency. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 30*, 725–755.
- Spradley, J. P.** (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.** (1997). *ESL standards for pre-K–12 students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Wagner, R. K., Francis, D. J., & Morris, R. D.** (2005). Identifying English language learners with learning disabilities: Key challenges and possible approaches. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 20*, 6–15.
- Yin, R. K.** (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCAL STUDENTS

I. Background information:

1. Participant name:
2. Age:
3. Grade:
4. Place of birth:

II. Language history/use:

1. At what age and where did you begin to study/learn Spanish, English?
2. Do you or your family speak any other language(s) besides Spanish and English?
3. What age/grade were you in when you came to the US?
4. What language(s) do you speak to parents? Siblings? Grandparents, extended family?
5. What language(s) do you speak with friends in/outside of school? Phone? Email? Chat?
6. What language do you prefer for TV/radio/movies at home/with friends? (examples)
7. What language do you prefer for reading for fun? (examples)

III. Attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about language and literacy:

1. What do you most remember about school in your home country? Tell me about it. What did you like/not like?
 2. Tell me about your experiences learning to read and write in your home country. What did you like/not like about it? What did you find difficult/easy?
 3. Did you study English in your home country? Tell me about that experience. What did you like/not like about it? How was it different/similar to learning English now?
 4. How did you feel when you came to the US? How is it different from your home country? What was most difficult/easy to get used to?
 5. Tell me about your experience learning English here. How does it feel to speak another language?
 6. How did you learn to read and write in English? What was most difficult/easy?
 7. What do you think of when I say “bilingual”? Do you consider yourself to be bilingual? Why or why not? How does this make you feel? How does it make other people feel?
-

APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Today's date: _____

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Date of birth (month, day, year): _____

Place of birth (city/state, country): _____

Parents' place of birth (country): Mom: _____ Dad: _____

Do you have sisters and/or brothers? List each sibling, their age, and country of birth below (for example: Francisco, 15, Mexico):

Circle the grades when you were in school in **the United States**:

Kindergarten 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th

Circle the grades when you were in school in **a different country**:

Kindergarten 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th

Where did you go to school outside the US? (country) _____

When and where did you start speaking Spanish?

When and where did you start speaking English?
