

SOCIAL LANGUAGE IN A DUAL IMMERSION SETTING

by

Anna M. Carlson

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Committee:

Heidi Bernal, Primary Advisor
Ann Mabbott, Secondary Advisor
Penny Johnson, Peer Reviewer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter One: Introduction..... | 1 |
| Significance to Students and Families..... | 3 |
| Significance to Colleagues and the ESL/Bilingual Field..... | 3 |
| Summary..... | 4 |
| | |
| Chapter Two: Literature Review..... | 5 |
| Definition of Dual Immersion Programs..... | 5 |
| History of Dual Immersion Programs..... | 7 |
| The Role of Social Language in Language Learning..... | 9 |
| Code Switching..... | 11 |
| English as a Power Language..... | 12 |
| Gaps in Research..... | 13 |
| | |
| Chapter Three: Methodology..... | 14 |
| Rationale for Case Study..... | 14 |
| Site and Subjects..... | 15 |
| Table 3.1..... | 18 |
| Table 3.2..... | 19 |
| Materials..... | 20 |
| Procedure..... | 21 |
| | |
| Chapter Four: Results..... | 24 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Pre-Study Questionnaire..... | 24 |
| Lunchtime Recordings..... | 26 |
| Lunchtime Conversation #1..... | 28 |
| Lunchtime Conversation #2..... | 28 |
| Lunchtime Conversation #3..... | 30 |
| Lunchtime Conversation #4..... | 31 |
| Class Work Time Recordings..... | 32 |
| Work Time Conversation #1..... | 34 |
| Work Time Conversation #2..... | 35 |
| Work Time Conversation #3..... | 37 |
| Work Time Conversation #4..... | 38 |
| Summary..... | 40 |
| | |
| Chapter Five: Conclusion..... | 42 |
| Major Findings..... | 42 |
| Implications..... | 46 |
| Limitations..... | 48 |
| Recommendations for the Future..... | 48 |
| Summary..... | 49 |
| | |
| References..... | 51 |

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My interest in social language development of students in immersion settings began when I worked at a one-way Spanish immersion school in St. Paul during the early years of my teaching career. The philosophy of this immersion program is that students are expected to speak in the target language of Spanish to one another all of the time, unless it is a specified time to speak in English. Students were expected to speak in Spanish during social interactions, which included conversations they had during group activities in class, as well as during lunch and recess time. I found that most students, however, did not speak Spanish during these times of the day. While I was teaching in this program, teachers tried to force students to speak Spanish during these times, but it was not successful and most teachers gave up. When I had these students in my class later as a K-6 specialist teacher, instead of a classroom teacher, and the students were in intermediate grades, I found that their academic Spanish had developed, but their social Spanish had not.

After teaching in that program, I spent some time getting my ESL licensure, taught as an ESL teacher, and then got into the classroom teaching in bilingual settings. For two years, I worked in a transitional bilingual program in which I taught second grade to all native Spanish-speaking students. In this program, the second grade year is the transitional year. Students move from all Spanish in kindergarten to three-fourths to one-half of the day in Spanish in first grade. Second grade prepares them for speaking only English in third grade. My instruction was delivered mostly in English with Spanish support as needed. I found that these students also did the same as the students I had in

the one-way immersion program, even though their goal was English instead of Spanish. During social conversations, they chose to speak in Spanish instead of in English.

The school in which I taught in the transitional bilingual program closed at the end of the school year. In the spring, many teachers were interviewing for our next placements. We had many conversations during this time about the pros and cons of the current dual language programs. One colleague asked me about the one-way immersion program I taught in several years ago. He had visited the school, taking some time to observe in one of the classrooms. He noted what I had experienced when I was there: the students were not speaking in Spanish during social times. This led me to wonder if this is true in dual, or two-way, immersion programs. I had also wanted to work in such a setting as I have researched the most successful bilingual programs and found that this setting proves most successful. (Soderman, 2010; Christian, 1994) I interviewed for a position in a dual immersion program and was offered the position. I currently teach first and second graders in a Spanish-English dual immersion setting.

The more I have read about dual immersion, the more curious I am about the social language development of the students in this type of program. One feature of dual immersion that makes the program successful is having peer role models for language (Soderman, 2010). The idea is that the native English-speakers learn more Spanish from interacting with the native Spanish-speakers and vice versa. I want to know if students choose to speak in English or Spanish, and why they make this choice, during independent group work and during lunchtime. The research I have found on dual immersion programs focuses on the benefits of these programs and bilingual proficiency. However, I have not found anything directly related to social language development.

During my study, I plan to record students' conversations during independent group work time and lunch, then play back the recordings to students, asking them why they chose the language that they did. The questions that I will answer are: Why did students choose the language that they chose during their social conversations? When do students choose to use their first language or the target language?

Significance to Students and Families

This research project could be important to students and their families for a couple of reasons. First of all, it may provide students and their families with information on why they use their first language in school. Parents of students in immersion programs make a big commitment to support their child through the duration of the program. These insights may help parents know how to help and encourage their children at home when it comes to social language. I also hope that this study will demonstrate to families how teachers can better serve the social language needs of students at school.

Significance to Colleagues and the ESL/Bilingual Field

In order for students to be able to communicate proficiently in the target language, social language is just as important as academic language. I feel that often teachers focus more on the academic language and easily give up on the social language when it becomes difficult to enforce the use of the target language during social conversations. There needs to be a balanced focus, of helping student with both academic and social language, in order to have a successful dual language program. I hope that this study will increase educators' awareness of the importance of social language, as well as reveal ways to help students in their development of social language.

Summary

My personal experience in immersion and bilingual programs, as well as the significance of social language development, has led me to study the social language of students in a dual immersion program. By doing so, we may realize the importance of helping students develop their social language and design our instruction to help become proficient speakers. Although there is much research on the benefit of dual immersion programs and a focus on the development of academic language, there is not much research done specifically on the benefits of social language development. Through my study, I hope to gain insights as to why students choose the language that they do during social interactions and find ways to help them learn to use the target language at all expected times during the school day.

In the next chapter, my literature review will reveal past research on dual immersion programs and social language in general. The third chapter will describe the methods used to collect data and why these methods were chosen. Chapter four will reveal the results of the data collection, and chapter five will be a conclusion that includes further discussion on what I learned, as well as suggestions for instruction and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The questions that I will answer in my study are: Why did students choose the language that they chose during their social conversations? When do students choose to use their first language or the target language? Many researchers of dual immersion programs have written about the characteristics that make these programs successful. One of these characteristics is that the programs have the benefit of peer role models for learning the target language, both academically and socially. Social language is a significant topic for dual immersion educators because it is the language that students will naturally use when speaking with each other. My case study will focus on the language choices that students make when they are in situations in which they use social language, including independent work time in the classroom and the discussions that they have with each other during lunch.

In this literature review, I will include a definition of immersion programs, the history of dual immersion programs, the characteristics of successful dual immersion programs, a description of code switching, and the impact of social language on language learning.

Definition of Dual Immersion

Dual immersion, often referred to as two-way immersion, programs develop bilingualism and biliteracy in English and a second language by integrating English learners with native English- speakers. In my research, the second language is Spanish, so it is called a dual Spanish immersion program. The ideal situation is to enroll 50% of each linguistic group as this helps acquisition of the target language. The goal of the program is that both linguistic groups will become bilingual. In the primary grades of the

program, however, most of the instruction is done in Spanish in order to help students become literate in one language first, then transfer those skills to English.

Dual immersion is different from one-way immersion programs in that one-way programs enroll students from one language group and immerse them in a second language. For example, a one-way Spanish immersion program enrolls native-English speaking students and delivers 100% Spanish instruction in the primary grades. Students gradually receive English instruction as they move up in grade level, with a 50/50 ratio of Spanish and English for the intermediate grades.

There are several benefits of dual Spanish immersion, versus one-way immersion, due to the fact that native Spanish-speakers make up part of the class. Many researchers suggest that using the native language of students may have the most benefits on overall student learning. D.K. Palmer (2008) studied a second grade class in a Spanish dual immersion school in California. In an interview with Palmer, the teacher of the class stated that the English-speaking students benefit from seeing their Spanish-speaking classmates as strong, confident academic learners. The results were benefits for students in both language groups both academically and linguistically. The principal of the school felt that the dual immersion program provided many advantages for the Spanish-speaking children because they became the peer role models for the English-speaking students. In an article by Collier and Thomas (2002) about the effectiveness of dual language education, they reported having two language groups in one classroom leads to friendships that cross the boundaries between different social and language classes.

History of Dual Immersion Programs

Dual, or two-way, immersion programs began back in the 1960s in Dade County, Florida, when there was an influx of Cuban refugees. At this time private bilingual schools formed for the refugees, but parents of English-speaking children wanted to enroll their children in these programs as they were attracted to the benefits of becoming bilingual. When administrators noticed the benefit of native-speaking peers, two-way immersion programs were started. The definition of a two-way immersion program is “a program that develops bilingualism and biliteracy in English and a second language by integrating English learners with English speakers (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004).” The target language is used for a minimum of 50 % of the instructional time, and English is used for a minimum of 10%. In the instructional periods, one language is used at a time. The goal of these programs is to develop high levels of proficiency in English and the target language (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004; Chavez, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2002).

Characteristics of Successful Dual Immersion Programs

Dual immersion programs have proven to be successful as a bilingual approach to education. Research indicates that there are several characteristics of these programs that contribute to the success of such programs (Chavez, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2002; Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2004). First, research indicates that the target language is best acquired by English language learners when their first language is established, and the target language for native English speakers is best acquired through immersion in the second language. For the purpose of my case study, I will be specifically writing about Spanish-English dual immersion programs. Dual immersion classrooms generally consist of 50% native English speakers and 50% English

learners. In order to achieve what research has indicated to be successful in both groups learning their target language, most programs have 100% Spanish instruction in kindergarten, 90% Spanish instruction in first grade, 80% in second grade, 70% in third grade, and 50% in grades four through six.

Other factors that contribute to the success of dual immersion programs include strong leadership and academic support, qualified teachers that are proficient in both Spanish and English, a commitment to the program by parents for a five to seven year duration, a balance in the composition of students in the classrooms, and a focus on academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). This academic achievement means that teachers use curriculum based on state standards, that they help students develop high language skills in both languages, and that there are adequate bilingual instructional materials to support the curriculum. Characteristics that are specific to instruction and lesson delivery by teachers include a positive learning environment, adequate exposure to the target language, being consistent with using only one language during the lesson delivery, and a strong collaboration with parents.

Research has also followed students who have gone through dual immersion programs to find out if the programs helped them become successful learners throughout their educational experiences (Rodriguez & Alanis, 2008; Soderman, 2010). Rodriguez found that students who had four to seven years in a dual immersion program were able to maintain high grade point averages in English reading and math all the way through twelfth grade. These students also have enhanced academic and linguistic competence in both languages, have an increased development of collaboration and cooperation skills, have a higher appreciation of other cultures and languages, and have increased cognitive

abilities in comparison to students in regular non-immersion classrooms. In addition, the students that went through immersion programs have shown a lower high school dropout rate and increased college attendance compared to students who went through non-immersion programs.

The Role of Social Language in Language Learning

Social language for elementary students is often referred to as the “language of the playground” (Cummins, 1984). Cummins’ educational term for this language is Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, or BICS. BICS are what students will use in the hallways, classroom, lunchroom, buses, and during recess. Many times BICS is based on context and includes survival vocabulary, such as asking to use the bathroom, following teacher directions, and participating in hands-on activities. Other times, there is not a context to help students with this language. This would include activities such as holding a conversation that is more than simple one-word answers to questions, decoding a reading passage, copying words from the board, communicating what they know about a particular school subject, and social interactions with peers (Haynes, 2007).

Students often acquire the survival social language rather quickly as they need to be able to use language in certain ways immediately in order to get through the school day. The social language not context-embedded and therefore not automatically “picked up” is what I will be addressing in my case study. According to Haynes (2007), students will have an easier time using social language when they have a real reason to speak it with their peers. During independent work time and lunch, when students are either asked to speak conversationally by the teacher or are just in a social context, the students have a choice to make about which language they will use to communicate. In dual immersion

programs, they are expected to use the target language, which in my case study is Spanish. But in situations such as these, students do not have the same accountability as when they are engaged in academic discourse.

In the 2007 studies of Eugene E. Garcia, research was done on the most effective instructional practices for linguistically and culturally diverse students. In the most effective classrooms, the organization was a “very informal family-like social setting in which the teacher worked with small groups of students” (p. 5). Fillmore and Snow reported in 2000 what teachers need to know about language in an article by that exact name. One role investigated showed the teacher as an agent of socialization. For ESL students and native-speaking students entering dual immersion programs, socialization begins at home and continues at school. Fillmore and Snow (2000) say that students become socialized in their thoughts and behavior by building on what they acquired from family at home. This enables them to critically think about ideas and experiences, and then they add academic discourse to their language skills. However, for non-native Spanish-speaking students entering a dual immersion program, the socialization at home is mismatched with the socialization at school since there are two different languages involved. According to Fillmore and Snow, this kind of mismatch disrupts the socialization process. A huge part of that socialization process is the social language involved. Both of these studies, from Garcia, as well as Fillmore and Snow, show students learn well from a social-type setting, emphasizing even more the importance of social language development.

Code Switching

Many students alternate between languages when they are in a bilingual setting. When someone alternates languages interchangeably or simultaneously, crossing sentence boundaries, this is referred to as code switching (Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001; Gumperz, 1982). This is a very normal aspect of bilingualism (Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 2001) and requires students to think cognitively and linguistically. In a case study by R. Ann Strupeck (2006), the questions of when and why Hmong middle school students code switched during group work were investigated in order to find out what role the students' first language played in the classroom. Strupeck found that when bilingual students feel comfortable in the classroom, they will code switch more often than when they are in a classroom where they perceive their language to not be important. They also code switch when they know that the other people involved in the conversation will understand them or when peers need clarification because they did not understand the teacher. Other reasons that students code switch include: to make a stronger point, learn new vocabulary, quote someone directly, gain knowledge about the preferred language within a group, and for ethnic identity. Ultimately Strupeck's study concluded that code switching is beneficial to students as it serves them both academically and socially.

Another study done in Johannesburg, South Africa found that the context of the conversations in classrooms had a great influence on when and how code switching took place (Ncoko, Osman & Cockcroft, 2000). In the study, forty multilingual students between the ages of six and eleven, were secretly recorded during informal conversations, such as on the playground, and during formal conversations, such as during lessons in

class. Students code switched more often in the informal settings than the formal.

According to school policy, these multilingual students had to sit apart from each other in their classrooms so that it would be more difficult for them to use their first language.

The circumstances of both studies are different from my own research setting as my classroom includes two language groups of students and instruction delivered in the target language. Stupeck's study involved English instruction to native Hmong-speaking students. My students are integrated in the classroom so that there is no separation between the two language groups as was mandated by school policy in the South Africa study. I do expect to find code switching among my students in their social conversations, but my results may be quite different from these two studies given different circumstances.

English as a Power Language

In some two-way settings, students learn to value English, and sometimes devalue Spanish (Freeman, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This can happen when the dual immersion program is a small part of a school with several non-immersion classrooms and/or when the school is part of a large district in which a majority of the instruction is English-only. D.K. Palmer (2009) also states that this happens when immigrant working-class students are integrated with middle-class English-speaking students. When a teacher is trying to meet the needs of both language-minority and English-speaking students in one program, many issues of power distribution may arise in the classroom. She gives the example of a teacher in a dual immersion program modifying her Spanish so that the English-speaking students will understand what she is saying. When she does this, she may be "watering down" the language for the Spanish-speaking students

(Palmer, 2009). According to Palmer (2009) the way that society views foreign-language acquisition versus second-language acquisition is very different. It is expected that a Spanish-speaking child learn English, and any failure creates a problem. On the other hand, it is considered enrichment when an English-speaking child learns a foreign language and any success is highly valued. Children can be aware of the difference in these views, and it affects the power distribution in the classroom (Potowski, 2004).

While this research shows that when English is present as a first language in a classroom it becomes the more dominant language, social language was still not specifically addressed. My research setting differs from this as well, since 75% of my students are native Spanish-speaking, making Spanish the more common first language. Also, the English-speaking students in my classroom are not middle-class. Ninety-seven percent of students enrolled in the school where I teach qualify for free and reduced lunches, and 100% of the students in my classroom qualify for free and reduced lunches. Therefore, the results of my study could be different.

Gaps in Research

While there has been much research done on the history and benefits of dual immersion programs, as well as on the impact of social language development on language learning, there has not been specific research on social language in dual immersion programs. In my research, I will address the social language students are expected to use in dual language programs, even though they often choose to use their first language instead. I will keep track of their choice and ask why they made that choice.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The questions that I will answer in my study are: Why did students choose the language that they chose during their social conversations? When do students choose to use their first language or the target language? In the previous chapter, I described the history of dual language programs and the importance of social language in these programs. For my case study I wanted to explore which language first and second grade students chose to speak in social situations in a dual immersion setting. I wanted to know if they chose to use Spanish or English, and why they made this choice, in order to find out which language they use more in social interactions. I studied social language during class work time in the classroom and during lunch. I want to help educators in dual immersion settings understand the significance and purpose of social language, as well as find out where my students are in their social language development. This helped me guide my instruction to meet their needs in this area. In order to answer my questions, I collected and analyzed language samples of a group of six students during class work time and lunch.

Rationale for Case Study

For the purposes of this research project, a case study was chosen as a method to answer my questions because they aim to explain the use of learning a language within a specific population and environment through detailed explanation (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The case study involved six students: three native-Spanish-speaking, two native-English-speaking students, and one native-Hmong-speaking student. Two practice sessions were done ahead of time to ensure that once the formal recordings of the students' conversations began, the microphone and recording equipment did not

intimidate them. Once the formal process began, two language samples from class work time and two language samples from lunch time were recorded and analyzed. Students were also given a pre-study questionnaire and a post-study interview to develop the research.

Site and Subjects

The elementary school used in this case study is an inner city school in Minnesota. It is part of a large district with a total of 19, 428 elementary students. Of these students, 75% are students of color. The language count is as follows: 57% English, 20% Hmong, 12% Spanish, 2% Karen, 3% Somali, and 6% other language. The site for this study has a student population of 521. Of these students, 96% are students of color. The language count is as follows: 35% English, 28% Hmong, 14% Spanish, 18% Karen, 2% Somali, and 2% other language.

The dual immersion program at this site started five years ago. The members of original class are currently fourth graders in the program. The model for the dual immersion program is as follows:

- Kindergarten and first grade students receive 90% instruction in Spanish, with a 30-minute block of English oral language development.
- Second grade students receive 80% instruction in Spanish. Besides the 30-minute block of English oral language development, they also begin to receive English Reading and Writing instruction, alternating units between English and Spanish. Math is also taught the same way, alternating the two languages.
- In third through sixth grade, the percentage of Spanish instruction diminishes a little bit each year until a balance of 50% English and 50% Spanish instruction is

- reached. Certain units are taught in English and certain units are taught in Spanish in each subject area to provide this balance.
- The specialist classes students attend (Music, Physical Education, and Science) are taught in English by the specialist teachers.
 - Due to low enrollment in the program, there is a split-grade class of first and second graders and another of third and fourth graders. There is also one full kindergarten class in the program. Only three classrooms are part of the dual immersion program. The rest of the school is not part of the program
 - Since the class that I teach is made up of both first and second graders, the first graders hear more English than they would if they were in a classroom by themselves, as second graders receive some English instruction.
 - While the ideal dual immersion classroom would be made up of 50% native English-speaking students and 50% native-Spanish speaking students, my classroom is made up of 75% native Spanish-speaking students and 25% native English-speaking students.

Subjects of this study are three native-Spanish-speaking students, two native-English-speaking students, and one native-Hmong- speaking student who also speaks English at home. They are all from the split first and second grade class in the dual language program. For the purposes of confidentiality and organization, each student was given a pseudonym. Here is a description of each student:

1. Cassie, a second-grade female, eight-years-old. Cassie is a student who speaks in Hmong with her parents at home and in English with her five siblings at home. She has been in the dual immersion program since kindergarten. She is the only member of her

family who speaks any Spanish. She is a strong leader in the classroom and easily switches between the three languages she knows.

2. Roberto, a second-grade male, eight-years-old. Roberto is a native-Spanish-speaking student who has been in the dual immersion program since kindergarten. He was born in El Salvador, and moved to the United States when he was four-years-old. He is an only child and has become bilingual from being at school, playing with neighbors, and watching television. He is a quick learner with an out-going personality. He often asks very deep questions.

3. Leah, a second-grade female, seven-years-old. Leah is a native-Spanish-speaking student who has been in the dual immersion program since kindergarten. She was born in Minnesota, but her parents only speak Spanish. Leah speaks in Spanish with them, but in both English and Spanish with her nine-year-old brother, who is also in the dual immersion program. Leah likes to please others and enjoys school.

4. Carlitos, a first-grade male, seven-years-old. Carlitos is a native-Spanish-speaking student who came to Minnesota from Mexico at the beginning of his kindergarten year. He is considered a newcomer student since he came to the school not speaking any English. He is also identified as gifted. He is a deep thinker who asks many questions.

5. Amy, a first-grade female, seven-years-old. Amy is a native-English-speaking student who started in the dual immersion program in kindergarten. She comes from a blended family with some half-sisters and brothers. She is a quick learner and a perfectionist.

6. John, a first-grade male, six years old. John is a native-English-speaking student who started in the dual immersion program in kindergarten. He is an only child and his

parents like to be very involved at school. Even without instruction in English reading, he can read in both English and Spanish.

The native language of the six students was determined by the language indicated by parents on their Home Language Questionnaires that are part of their cumulative school records, the knowledge that I have about the students' language backgrounds, and their MN-SOLOM test scores. The MN-SOLOM is used to determine their level of proficiency in oral language. It stands for the Minnesota Modified Student Oral Language Observation Matrix and involves rating students on a scale from one to five on listening and speaking. There are two subcategories for listening, which include academic comprehension and social comprehension. There are four categories for speaking, which include fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The levels of proficiency and scores for the six students are listed in the two tables below:

Table 3.1: MN-SOLOM Levels of Oral Proficiency

| Total Points MN-SOLOM Score | Speaking/Listening Oral Proficiency Level |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 6 - 8 | Level 1, Beginner |
| 9 - 14 | Level 2, Early Intermediate |
| 15-21 | Level 3, Intermediate |
| 22 - 26 | Level 4, Early Advanced |
| 27 - 30 | Level 5, Advanced |

Table 3.2
MN-SOLOM Scores

| Student | English Score | Spanish Score |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Cassie, 2 nd grade, native English-speaker | 23 | 21 |
| Roberto, 2 nd grade, native Spanish-speaker | 19 | 30 |
| Leah, 2 nd grade, native Spanish-speaker | 18 | 29 |
| Carlitos, 1 st grade, native Spanish-speaker | 15 | 30 |
| Amy, 1 st grade, native English-speaker | 30 | 13 |
| John, 1 st grade, native English-speaker | 29 | 15 |

The students were selected based a few months of field notes that I gathered before the case study. In my field notes, I made note of students who were reflective in their thinking and academics, students who worked well together in group situations, students who highly participated in conversations with peers, and students who had consistent attendance. These characteristics were important in choosing students to participate in the case study, as I wanted to make certain the students chosen would readily have a conversation with one another and I wanted to obtain reflective thoughts in the interviews that I did with students after the recordings. I also wanted to rely on the attendance of these students so that data collection could continue as needed. They were also determined by parental permission. In addition to these things, I tried to achieve a balance of Spanish and English speakers, first and second graders, and boys and girls.

Materials

The materials used in the study include a pre-study questionnaire, two microphones taped to the middle of the table where students sat, a laptop computer with sound wave software, a mixer, and a post-study interview. The pre-study questionnaire included the following three simple questions:

1. Do you speak in English or Spanish when you work in a group with your friends?
2. Do you usually speak in English or Spanish when you talk with your friends during lunch?
3. Which language, English or Spanish, do you think I want you to speak at school?

These questions in the pre-study questionnaire were asked in each student's native language with the hope that they would answer more completely in their native language. I chose these particular questions because I wanted to know how students perceived their language use in these two situations and to confirm that they knew that I want them to speak in the target language.

The microphones allowed me to obtain the speech samples needed for data collection. I listened to the recordings and analyzed when students spoke in English and when they spoke in Spanish.

The interview questions were administered upon students hearing their recording. The interview questions were:

1. Why did you choose to use (Spanish/English) during this time?
2. (If the target language was not used, then ask) Is there something that would help you use Spanish during these times?

The interview questions were also asked in each student's native language in hopes that they would answer more completely in their native language.

Other materials used in conjunction with those already mentioned are field notes taken prior to recording the speech samples, during the recording, and during the analyzing of the recordings.

Procedure

The first step in the data collection process was to send a letter home explaining the research and talking to students about the project. I talked to the whole class about the procedure and gave them all a chance to practice with the microphones on the table in order to make all students comfortable with having them in the classroom and while eating lunch prior to the formal research. I explained to the class I would be doing the actual research with a group of six students, and I needed to get permission from their parents in order for them to participate.

The next step in the process was to observe students and choose the group of six. This choice was made based on group dynamics, parental permission, and consistent attendance in class. Once this group was established, there was some practice at group work time and lunchtime before the formal research began. Due to needing clear recordings without a lot of background noise, I decided it was best to have this group of students eat their lunch in the classroom rather than in the cafeteria with several other classes. The students practiced eating in the classroom for two days before the research so it would not be a brand new idea to them and to create a comfortable lunch environment.

When it was time for the formal research, the group of six students answered the questions in the pre-study questionnaire. On the first day of the recordings, I asked the group of students to bring their lunches to the classroom as we had practiced for two days

prior. I had them sit around the table where the two microphones were taped down and then told them I would be at my desk while they ate their lunch and talked to one another. I directed them not talk to me during this time, as I normally am not with them at lunchtime. (This is also how it was practiced on the previous two days.) I gave them all instructions in Spanish, as the time of the day students go to lunch is Spanish time for our classroom. Students do go to recess before lunch with five other classes not part of the dual immersion program. Therefore, there is a lot of English spoken on the playground. However, when I pick up students from lunch, they know the expectation is they speak in Spanish with me. Students were recorded for the duration of lunchtime, then for lunchtime the following day as well using the same procedure.

The next two recordings were done during a class work time. I chose to use our Reader's Workshop time to gather these two speech samples as it is a time of the day that students work in groups and it is also when I have the support of a teacher that could be with the rest of the class while this group of six students was being recorded. On the first day of the recording, students participated in a shared Spanish reading, and then discussed in the small group the events of the story. On the second day of the recording, students were asked to sequence the story and to give details about what each character did. Again, all instructions were given in Spanish.

Once I analyzed the speech samples, I conducted a one-on-one interview, using the questions included above, with each of the six students to find out why they chose the language they did during these social interactions. To make this work, I chose pieces of the recordings to play back to students so they could hear themselves speaking and remember what the conversations were about at the time of the recordings.

To analyze my data, I began by transcribing each of the four recording sessions. I then assigned a different color to each student and went back through the transcriptions, highlighting according to the color assigned to each student so that I could have a visual way of keeping track of who said which parts of the conversations. After that I went through the transcriptions a third time and circled the times that students spoke in Spanish, leaving the times they spoke in English not circled.

The next step of my data analysis was to go over the pre-study questionnaire and answers to the interview questions. When I did this, I created three bar graphs to show the students' responses to the pre-study questionnaire and took notes on their interview answers.

In this chapter I described the rationale for my case study, the site and subjects, the materials, the procedure, and the analysis methods. In the next chapter I will describe the results of my study, the themes and patterns discovered in the data, and connect these results with the literature review from the second chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The questions that I will answer in my study are: Why did students choose the language that they chose during their social conversations? When do students choose to use their first language or the target language? Chapter three explained information about the students who participated in this case study as well as the setting and the methods used. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether students spoke in Spanish or English during their social interactions during lunchtime and during class work time. In this chapter I will present the results of my research. First, I will present the table showing the students' pre-study questionnaire answers. Second, I will examine specific parts of the conversations to highlight times the students did speak in Spanish and when they did not. Third, I will list the notes I took from the interviews conducted with students after the study to analyze their reasons for speaking or not speaking in Spanish during the recorded social interactions.

Pre-Study Questionnaire

Description

The pre-study questionnaire was made up of the following three questions:

1. Do you speak in English or Spanish when you work in a group with your friends?
2. Do you usually speak in English or Spanish when you talk with your friends during lunch?
3. Which language, English or Spanish, do you think that I want you to speak at school?

Table 4.1 shows students' responses to these questions. For the native-English speaking students, these questions were asked in English and for the native-Spanish speaking students they were asked in Spanish.

Table 4.1

| Student | Question 1: Do you speak in English or Spanish when you work in a group with your friends? | Question 2: Do you usually speak in English or Spanish when you talk with your friends during lunch? | Question 3: Which language, English or Spanish, do you think that I want you to speak at school? |
|---|--|--|--|
| Cassie, 2 nd grade, native Hmong speaker | English | English | Spanish |
| Roberto, 2 nd grade, native Spanish speaker | Spanish | Both | Both |
| Leah, 2 nd grade, native Spanish speaker | English | Spanish | Both |
| Carlitos, 1 st grade, native Spanish speaker | Spanish | Both | Spanish |
| Amy, 1 st grade, native English speaker | English | English | Spanish |
| John, 1 st grade, native English speaker | Both | Both | Both |

A variety of answers were given in response to the first question about class work time interaction. Three students said they choose to speak in English, and one of those students is a native-Spanish speaker. A native-English speaker said he uses both English and Spanish. Two native-Spanish speakers said they usually speak in Spanish at this time. It surprised me that students were honest and said that they speak in English instead of Spanish at this time. While I expected students to know the expectation of

speaking in Spanish during Spanish class work time, I also expected them to want to please me with their answers.

For question two on lunchtime conversation, only one student said she exclusively speaks in Spanish during lunch time. This is the same native-Spanish speaker who said she speaks in English during Spanish class work time. I was expecting more students to say they speak in English at lunchtime as they are coming to the cafeteria from recess with a large group of English-speaking students from other classes. Throughout the school year, I noticed students speak to me in Spanish when I go to pick them up from lunch. This shows me they know the expectation of speaking in Spanish to me, but from the results of the pre-study questionnaire they do speak in English with their peers at this time of the day.

For the third question on teacher expectation, all students said that they feel I expect them to speak in Spanish during the school day. The two students who answered I expect them to speak in both Spanish and English clarified that I expect them to speak in English during our English time each day, but not at other times. This is what I expected them to say, but this does not fit with some of the data from the other two questions nor from the results of recording their conversations, which I will describe next.

Lunchtime Recordings

The students in this study were recorded during two different lunchtimes on two consecutive days. Two practice sessions helped lessen conversation about the recording equipment and eating in the classroom instead of the cafeteria. The loud background noise of the cafeteria would affect the recording quality

. Students come to lunch from outdoor recess, where they are the only dual immersion class among five other classes. While students know Spanish is the expected language to use at all times of the day except for our English oral language time, I anticipated that students would use more English at this time of the day since most other students speak in English during recess and lunch.

Both lunchtime recordings are twelve minutes in duration. I listened to each recording using headphones and one computer while transcribing the conversations on a second computer. I listened to each one three times to make sure I wrote down the conversations completely and accurately. I then listened to them a fourth time, and color-coded the lines according to the assigned color for each student. After this I read through the transcriptions and circled each line in which Spanish was spoken for at least one word in that line. For the purpose of this study, a line is defined as each time the speaker changed in the conversation. There were a total of 216 lines in the first lunchtime recording and 220 lines in the second lunchtime recording. I counted the number of times that Spanish was spoken, and then figured out a percentage using that number divided by the total number of lines in the conversation. For the first lunchtime recording, students spoke Spanish 7.44% of the time. For the second lunchtime recording, students spoke Spanish 7.56% of the time. While it did not surprise me that students spoke more English than Spanish, it did surprise me that the percentage of Spanish spoken was so low. I expected that by having three native Spanish speakers in the group, there would be at least 20% Spanish spoken during the recorded lunchtimes.

The next step in my data analysis was to choose specific pieces of the recorded conversations to play back for students and ask them why they chose to speak in the

language that they did. I chose some pieces of conversations in which students code-switched, some in which I felt that students should have used the opposite language that they did, pieces that showed involvement of all students in the case study, and pieces that would help students answer reflectively during the interviews. I interviewed students one at a time and played back the chosen pieces of the conversation during the interview. I did this the day after the recordings were finished so that students would remember their conversations. Here are the pieces that I chose and the interviews I had with the students:

Lunchtime Conversation #1:

Amy: “You should see the Old Buffet. It’s really good.”

Roberto: “I know. There’s chicken, fish, rice...”

Carlitos: “And marrones, I eat some marrones.”

(English translation for Carlitos’ line: And seafood, I eat some seafood.)

For this piece of the conversation I interviewed Carlitos, one of the native Spanish-speakers. I asked him why he chose to use the Spanish word for seafood, and used English words for the rest of what he said. He told me that he doesn’t know what the English word is for “marrones” and that he didn’t want to say the whole sentence in Spanish because the other students were speaking in English. Next I asked him what he thought would happen if he would have spoken the whole sentence in Spanish. He told me that he thought that some of the students would not have understood him.

Lunchtime Conversation #2:

Roberto: “Knock, knock.”

Amy and John: “Who’s there?”

Roberto: “Zapala.”

Amy and John: “Zapala who?”

Roberto: “Zapala I’m gonna put a tattoo on your face.”

Later in the conversation, Roberto said another knock-knock joke, so I decided to include this as part of this conversation piece:

Roberto: “Knock, knock.”

Amy, John, and Cassie: “Who’s there?”

Roberto: “Zapala supalapa.”

Amy, John, and Cassie: “Zapala supalapa who?”

Roberto: “Supalapa can you play with me?”

(English translation for zapala and supalapa: both are Spanish nonsense words)

For this piece of the conversation, I interviewed Roberto, another native Spanish-speaker. First, I wanted to know about the words “zapala” and “supalapa” he chose to use. They are not familiar words to me, so I looked them up in a Spanish dictionary and also asked my teaching assistant who is a native Spanish-speaker. The words were not in the dictionary, nor did my teaching assistant know what they meant. However he did say they sounded like the kind of words kids would use when being silly and making up words in play. In the interview, I asked Roberto if these words were English or Spanish words to make sure he didn’t mean them to be in English like the rest of the conversation. He told me they are words used in some Spanish songs that his mom makes up when she

sings to him. I asked him why he chose to put those words into the knock-knock jokes when all of the other words were in English. He told me that he doesn't know too many English words that work in knock-knock jokes, but he wanted to make Amy and John laugh. I asked him if he knew any knock-knock jokes that were all in Spanish. He said he does, but "it's much more fun" to say them in English.

Lunchtime Conversation #3:

John: "You're in big, big trouble misters."

Carlitos: "Those are not misters, they are señoritas."

(English translation for señoritas: Misses, young ladies)

John: "Muy, muy muno."

(English translation: Very, very muno [nonsense word.])

Carlitos: "Why you say muno?"

John: "I didn't say muno. I said mono."

(English translation for mono: monkey)

Carlitos: "No tiene sentido."

(English translation: That doesn't make sense.)

John: "What?"

Carlitos: "That make no sense."

For this piece of the conversations, I interviewed John. After I played back the recording to him, I asked him what made him switch from English to Spanish when he was talking to Carlitos. He said when he heard Carlitos say the Spanish word

“senoritas,” he thought he should try speaking Spanish back to him. He said he also knew Carlitos was being silly and he wanted to say something silly back. Next I asked him what would help him speak more Spanish with his friends at lunch. He said if they spoke more Spanish to him, then he would speak in Spanish more to them.

The three conversation pieces that I listed above are the only three different types of conversation including Spanish between the two lunchtime recordings. (There was one more instance of some Spanish spoken, but it was another knock-knock joke, and therefore, not a different type of conversation.) The rest of both lunchtimes were all in English. Therefore, when I interviewed the other three students in the group, I played back the same conversation piece to all three of them and asked them why they spoke in English at this time and if there is anything that would help them speak in Spanish more. Here is the conversation piece that I played back for Amy, Leah, and Cassie:

Lunchtime Conversation #4:

Amy: “Don’t eat that whole thing. You’re gonna choke like Jennifer did, remember?”

Cassie: “Leah can bite it and then swallow.”

Leah: “I need water. That was awful.”

Amy: “I’m gonna finish all my chicken, but not so fast.”

Leah: “I don’t want any more.”

Cassie: “Me either.”

I played this recording back to Amy, Leah, and Cassie one at a time. When I asked Amy why she only spoke in English during this piece of the conversation, as well as for most of the lunchtime, she said she always speaks in English with her friends while she

eats. She commented she cannot “think so hard in Spanish and eat at the same time!” When I asked her what would help her be able to speak in Spanish more during lunchtime, she said she would if other students spoke in Spanish and if she knew more words.

When I asked Leah why she only spoke in English during this piece of the conversation, she said she didn’t think that Amy and Cassie would have understood her if she had spoken in Spanish. Leah is one of the students who said she speaks in Spanish during lunchtime when she sits next to a Spanish-speaking friend.

When I asked Cassie why she only spoke in English during this piece of the conversation, and during most of the two recorded lunchtimes, she said she doesn’t know enough Spanish words to be able to say everything she wanted to say. When I asked her what would help speak Spanish more during lunchtime, she said if there were more Spanish words and posters around the cafeteria so she knew more lunch and food words, she would speak more Spanish at that time of the day.

Class Work Time Recordings

The students in this case study were also recorded during two class work times. Again, we practiced having the recording equipment on the table in the classroom for two days prior to actually recording. The non-participating students worked with another teacher in a different room both during the practice sessions and the two recordings to diminish the background noise. The first recording was done following a shared reading about a family having a picnic. Students worked on the skill of sequencing events and recalling facts. Their assignment was to work together to put five events in story order by writing the numbers one through five under the corresponding picture on a sheet of

paper. They then had to recall which food item each family member brought to the picnic and write or draw it next to the character's name. The shared reading and the assignment were both in Spanish. Despite the practice sessions, this recording came out unusable because students spent most of the time talking about the microphones on the table and about the fact that I would hear what they were talking about when I listened to the recording. Since this is not natural work time language, I decided not to include this recording in my data analysis.

The second recording was done after a different shared reading from a non-fiction book about having a rabbit as a pet. Students were working on the skill of identifying facts versus opinions. The assignment for group work time was to write down three facts about what rabbits eat, what color they can be, and what they do. Students were then asked to write if they thought a rabbit would make a good pet and why. The shared reading and the assignment were both in Spanish. This recording did not include any conversations about the recording equipment, and the students were much more focused on their work. This recording was about thirteen minutes in duration. It had 231 lines in all. Of those 231 lines, 38 of them included at least one Spanish word. Therefore, the percentage of Spanish spoken in this conversation was 16.5%. This was more than a 50% increase from the amount of Spanish spoken during the lunchtime conversations. However, it was still not as high of a percentage as I thought and hoped it would be. I anticipated the students would speak in Spanish more since the story and assignment instructions were both in Spanish and because students would more than likely use some academic language as part of their conversations.

For the interview step of my data analysis, I again played back specific pieces of the conversation recorded during the class work time. This was done the day after the recording so students could remember their conversation easier. I asked students why they chose to speak in the language they did and what would help them to speak in Spanish more. Here are the conversation pieces and results from the interviews:

Work Time Conversation #1:

Carlitos: “¿De qué color puede ser un conejo?”

(English translation: What color can a rabbit be?)

Roberto: “Blanco, café, negro...”

(English translation: White, brown, black...)

Carlitos: “Y ahora del conejo y su comida.”

(English translation: And now about rabbits and their food.)

Roberto: “Yo sé, yo sé, yo sé!”

(English translation: I know, I know, I know!)

Carlitos: “Zanahorias.”

(English translations: Carrots)

Roberto: “Manzanas.”

(English translation: Apples)

Carlitos: “Chicken, pollo, ¿este es de pollo? Chicken...”

(English translation for pollo, este es de pollo: chicken, this is of chicken?)

Roberto: “Y el color puede ser...”

(English translation: And the color can be...”

Carlitos: “Menos son blancos.”

(English translation: Fewer are white.)

John: “Bunnies do not eat eggs.”

Roberto: “Yo sé. Carlitos, ¿a qué hora vamos a jugar?”

(English translation: I know. Carlitos, what time are we going to play?)

For this piece of the conversation, I interviewed Carlitos, Roberto, and John one at a time. When I played the recording back to Carlitos, I asked him why he chose to completely speak in Spanish. He said it was because the story was in Spanish, the work was in Spanish, and because Roberto was speaking in Spanish, too. Roberto had the same response about the story being in Spanish and that Carlitos was speaking in Spanish. I also asked Roberto why he answered in Spanish when John spoke to him in English about rabbits not eating eggs. He shrugged his shoulders and said “Spanish just came out!”

When I played the recording back to John, I asked him why he spoke in English about rabbits not eating eggs when both Carlitos and Roberto were speaking in Spanish. He said he couldn’t remember all of the words in Spanish. I asked him if he could understand what Carlitos and Roberto were saying. He said he could, but it was more difficult to speak in Spanish himself. I asked him what would help him be able to speak in Spanish more when doing class work, and he said he just needed to practice some more.

Work Time Conversation #2:

Carlitos: “¿A qué hora vamos a jugar Cops and Robbers?”

(English translation: What time are we going to play Cops and Robbers?)

Roberto: “Who wanna play?”

John: “Me.”

Amy: “Cops and Robbers?”

John: “Me, I am. The name of it’s called Cops and Robbers.”

Amy: “It’s not robbers any more. It’s just called cops cuz it didn’t sound good together, so now it’s just cops.”

Roberto: “Wanna play Cops?”

John: “What if they name the show Cops and Robbers. It’s about cops and then the cops find the robbers.”

Amy: “That would just be weird.”

Roberto: “Ya acabé.”

(English translation: I finished.)

For this piece of the conversation, I interviewed Roberto, John, and Amy one at a time. I asked Roberto why he switched to speaking in English at this point in the conversation when before he had been speaking in Spanish. He said he knew Amy and John spoke more in English and he wanted to play Cops and Robbers with them. When I asked him if he would have spoken in Spanish if Amy and John had been speaking in Spanish, and he said that he would have. When I asked him why he spoke in Spanish to say he had finished, he said it was because he was talking about his work and not the recess game.

Next I interviewed John. I asked him why he spoke in English during this piece of the conversation. He stated they were talking about a recess game and they always speak in

English at recess. When I asked him if there is anything that would have helped him speak in Spanish, he said he would if he were not talking about recess.

I interviewed Amy next. I also asked her why she spoke in English during this piece of the conversation. She said Roberto and John were speaking in English, so she did, too. She added she didn't know the words for cops and robbers in Spanish. When I asked her if there was anything that would have helped her speak in Spanish at that time, she simply replied "no."

Work Time Conversation #3:

Amy: "Look, my bunny's cute."

Leah: "Mine looks like a girl."

Carlitos: "Mine looks like a boy."

John: "Mine looks like a mad boy."

Cassie: "Yours is big."

Roberto: "I done mines. I done mines bunny."

Amy: "Bunny? That don't even look like a bunny."

John: "Let me see. It looks like a box."

Roberto: "Es un conejo. No look like box."

(English translation: It is a rabbit.)

Leah: "He right, Amy. It is a bunny."

Cassie: "Yeah, a big bunny."

For this conversation piece, I interviewed Leah, Cassie, and Roberto. I chose this piece because it has some Spanish mixed in, but it also has some English with

grammatical errors stated by Roberto, one of the native Spanish-speakers. I wanted to find out about the English spoken by everyone in this piece.

When I interviewed Leah, I asked why she chose to speak in English. She said it was because Amy was speaking in English. Then I asked her about the last line in the conversation when she speaks after Roberto. He used the Spanish word for rabbit, but she chose to use the English word. When I asked her why this was so, she stated again it was because she was talking to Amy, and that Amy doesn't know much Spanish. I asked her if she would have spoken in Spanish or English to Roberto, and she said Spanish because "he knows like a lot of Spanish."

When I interviewed Cassie, I asked her why she chose to speak in English at this time. She said she heard Leah and Amy speaking in English, so she did too. She then added on her own, that if Roberto was talking to her, she would "for sure use Spanish."

When I interviewed Roberto, I asked him about why he mostly used English with a little bit of Spanish. He said most of the other students were speaking in English and he wanted to be like them. In my transcription process, I noticed that his English sentences contain grammatical mistakes, showing that English is more difficult for him to speak. Therefore, I asked Roberto if he feels that it is easier to speak in Spanish than in English. He, of course, said yes to this question. When I dug a little deeper and asked why he still chose to speak in English at this point in the conversation, he said "Everyone need to be speaking English. My mami say it important."

Work Time Conversation #4:

Cassie: "Now what do we do?"

Amy: “We s’posed to write.”

Carlitos: “¿Y aquí?”

(English translation: And here?)

Leah: “You draw your bunny.”

Roberto: “Negro con blanco va a ser.”

(English translation: It will be black and white.)

Carlitos: “Mío es blanco.”

(English translation: Mine is white.)

Cassie: “I don’t know the name of this.”

Roberto: “Cabbage? Col.”

(English translation for col: cabbage.)

John: “I’m drawing a paw on my bunny. You like that? You like my patito?”

(English translation of patito: duckling)

Carlitos: “Sí, mucho.”

(English translation: Yes, a lot.)

Leah: “Sra. Carlson, yo no quiero hacer esta parte por abajo.”

(English translation: Mrs. Carlson, I don’t want to do this part at the bottom.)

For this conversation piece, I interviewed Carlitos, Roberto, Cassie, and Leah. I noticed that Carlitos only spoke in Spanish for this part of the conversation, even though some others were speaking in English. When I asked him why, he said he was trying hard to get his work done and he speaks in Spanish when he does his work.

I noticed Roberto went back to Spanish at this point in the conversation and that he also helped another student with a Spanish word. When I asked him why he went back to Spanish when he had stated he wanted to try speaking in English before, he stated sometimes he gets tired of trying so hard to speak in English. He added that Carlitos was speaking in Spanish, so he was not the only one. He also said he likes to help the other students when they don't know a Spanish word.

I asked Cassie if she thought that someone would help her with the Spanish word for cabbage when she stated that she didn't know it. She said that usually Roberto and Carlitos are good at helping her when she doesn't know a word, so she thought they would help her. I then asked her what would help her be able to speak more Spanish with them and the other students in our class. She said when she knows Spanish better, she will speak it more often.

When I interviewed Leah, I wanted to know what made her switch from speaking in English with the other students to speaking in Spanish with me at the end of the conversation. She said she knows I want her to speak in Spanish and that I can understand her. Since she is a native Spanish-speaker, I asked her why she often speaks in English more often with the other students. She said she needs to so they will like her and so they will know that she can speak in English.

Summary

The research methods I used in this case study proved to be valuable to my guiding questions. The pre-study questionnaire helped me discover which language students perceived themselves speaking during lunchtime and class work time, as well as which language they felt I expect them to speak. The recordings and interviews with students

gave me concrete examples of their speech and insights on why they choose the language they do when they speak with their peers. When I calculated the percentage of time Spanish was spoken in each conversation, I learned the amount of Spanish spoken socially is even less than I thought it would be.

In Chapter Five, I will discuss my discoveries in relation to my research questions. I will also discuss the limitations of this case study and make suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The questions in my case study were: Why did students choose the language that they chose during their social conversations? When do students choose to use their first language or the target language? In this chapter I will analyze the study, discuss major findings, and consider possible implications for dual language teachers, students in dual language programs, and administrators of such programs. I will also suggest ideas for future research.

Major Findings

My major findings are a result of the interviews I had with students after the recordings. During the lunchtime recordings I discovered the amount of Spanish spoken during the conversations was a very low percentage. When I played back the recording for students and interviewed them about the conversations, I learned about why students code switched. The native Spanish-speaking students often spoke in English so that the native-English speaking students would understand them. This happened in Lunch time Conversation #1 when Carlitos only used Spanish for a word (seafood), which he did not know in English, in one sentence, but used all English words in the rest of the sentence. It also happened when Roberto told knock-knock jokes in Lunch time Conversation #2 to make Amy and John laugh, and when Leah wanted Amy and Cassie to understand her. Roberto also indicated that he spoke in English to be liked by his peers in the interview following Academic Conversation #3.

From the lunchtime interviews, I also learned from the native-English speaking students that they would speak in Spanish more if their peers were speaking in Spanish more. This happened with John when he wanted to be “silly” like Carlitos in Lunchtime

Conversation #3. I also learned the native English-speakers feel it is hard work to think about speaking in Spanish, such as with Amy and her comment about trying to speak in Spanish and focusing on eating at the same time in Lunch time Conversation #4. From that same conversation I learned Cassie relies on Spanish resources as well, as she said it would be easier to speak in Spanish if the cafeteria had Spanish words and posters displayed.

From the class work time interviews, I discovered some unexpected findings. First, the percentage of Spanish spoken was still not as high as I thought it would be, given an academic context for the social conversations to happen. There were also many of the same findings that I found from the interviews following the lunchtime recordings, such as the students choosing the predominant language being spoken by others. The native English-speaking students felt they needed more practice to be able to speak in Spanish more often. Students also have a definite knowledge of who is a native Spanish speaker and who is a native English speaker and adjust the language they speak accordingly. They seem to be aware of one another's proficiency levels and either go to fluent Spanish-speaking students for help, or adjust their language to English when speaking with a fluent English-speaking student. Code switching occurred in their conversations in these instances.

From the class work time recordings, I discovered that students spoke in Spanish more during their academic conversations. When I set out to do this research, I chose class work time as a social situation because I felt that students would have casual conversations with one another while they were completing their work. While it is a positive finding that students discussed their assignment with each other, it created a

sample of academic language, versus social language, in the recordings. Some casual conversations happened as well, but not as many as I expected.\

These are all beneficial findings and will definitely impact my teaching, but the most revealing discoveries I made came from one of the interviews I had with Roberto. When he was speaking in English with grammatical errors in Academic Conversation #3, he stated he wanted to be like “them,” meaning the native-English speakers. He stated the importance of knowing how to speak English and that his mother said it was important. This made me realize the native Spanish-speakers were much more willing to take risks in speaking English and make mistakes than the native English-speaking students were willing to take risks in speaking Spanish. In an interview with Cassie following the same work time recording, she made the comment that she would speak more Spanish when she knows it better. This shows an example of an English-speaking student not wanting to take a risk with speaking Spanish or perhaps not having a very compelling reason to do so.

Later, in the interview with Roberto following Conversation Piece #4 from the work time recording, he was comfortable with speaking Spanish when Carlitos was speaking Spanish because he was not the only one. This comment made me wonder about how many of the native Spanish-speaking students may feel that English is more prestigious and that Spanish is inferior. Roberto’s pride increased when he explained he likes to help students who don’t know a Spanish word, which shows some pride in his native language.

In the interview I had with Leah following the same work time recording, she stated she often speaks in English more often with her peers, even though she is a native

Spanish-speaker, because she wants them to like her and so that they will know she can speak in English. This is yet another example of a student feeling that English is the more important language.

The target language in the primary grades of the dual immersion program in which I teach is Spanish. However, from the students in my case study, the native Spanish-speaking students are much more willing to speak in English socially than the native English-speaking students are willing to speak in Spanish socially. Dual immersion is set up to benefit both the native English-speaking and native Spanish-speaking students, but from my study I see that the native Spanish-speaking students are becoming bilingual faster than the native English-speaking students due to the importance of the languages in their minds. This perception also seems to come from their homes, their social environments outside of school.

These discoveries demonstrate the issue of English perceived as the language of power. In Palmer's study (2004) the principal of the dual immersion school stated that English-speaking students learn to be power agents in their early school years, but that Spanish-speaking students are not brought up in the same way. They are taught to be more submissive and quiet, so he feels that the dual immersion setting gives the native Spanish-speakers more confidence to have some of that power. I was hoping and expecting in my classroom setting, with a higher percentage of native Spanish-speakers than native-English speakers, I would discover what this principal stated. I am disappointed that English appears to have more social power than Spanish in my classroom. Critics warn that issues of power need to be examined more extensively in dual immersion settings (Palmer, 2008). My case study proved that point.

In the article by Fillmore and Snow in 2000, the non-native Spanish-speaking students in a dual immersion program have a mismatch between the socialization they get at home and the socialization they get at school. When Fillmore and Snow came to that conclusion, they felt this mismatch can disrupt the socialization process.

I wonder if Fillmore and Snow would think part of this disruption is not engaging in enough social language with Spanish-speaking peers at school. If that is the case, as a teacher, I need to find ways for the native English-speakers in my classroom to be more willing to take risks in their use of Spanish socially. Collier and Thomas (2002) state that teachers are often not aware of oral language use during group work because they are not directly involved in promoting its production. I hope to find ways to become more aware and to be more directly involved.

I also need to find ways to help my native Spanish-speakers understand that their first language is as important to maintain as it is for them to learn their second language. They also need to realize it is helpful for the native English-speaking students when they do speak in Spanish rather than switch to English for the benefit of the other students. For both groups of students, they need to be motivated by real situations for speaking with their peers in the target language that Haynes (2007) talks about.

Implications

The findings of my study have several implications for teachers of students in dual language programs, students and families in this program, and administrators of these programs. First, for teachers, opportunities for social language development need to be explored. Teachers need to get a good sense of how their students perceive the two languages involved in the classroom and find ways to make the target language the one

students will feel is most important to speak in social situations. Expectations of using the target language should continue to be made clear at all times of the day, whether in writing, reading, or oral. Students should also have opportunities to hear their teachers using social language with colleagues. While this is not always possible at the school where I teach, since there are only three dual immersion teachers and the other staff speaks English, it is important to speak in Spanish with Spanish-speaking colleagues whenever dual immersion students are present.

For students and their families, this study reveals the importance of sharing the beauty of bilingualism at home. Both languages should be viewed equally essential. Parents of native English-speaking students may not speak Spanish themselves and may find it difficult to provide opportunities to speak Spanish at home or away from school.

Teachers can be a good resource for parents in this circumstance. It is also important to build relationships with other families in the dual immersion setting so students can be together outside of school and be encouraged to speak in Spanish with each other.

Parents of native Spanish-speaking students can help by maintaining that social language at home. The benefits of dual immersion programs for native Spanish-speaking students, such as the opportunity to be role models in the target language and the ability to receive instruction in their native language, needs to be emphasized. Teachers and administrators can work together to provide opportunities for families to come to presentations about the benefits of knowing both languages.

For administrators of dual language programs, it is important to provide several language-practicing opportunities in the school to encourage social language development. Posters may be placed in shared areas of the school, such as the cafeteria

and library. Classes and families could network with each other through school-wide activities and events. In circumstances like the program in which I teach, where a majority of the school is not part of the dual immersion program, it is important for the students in the program to share with the rest of the students and to demonstrate what the program provides.

Limitations

This case study involved six students out of the 22 in my classroom. Therefore, my findings are based on this small group and could be different if every student were included in the study. It is also limited by the fact that our program is a small part of our school. Findings could be different in a school-wide dual immersion program.

If I were to do this study again, there are a few things that I would do differently. First, I would expand the study to include some students from both lower and higher grade levels to see if results vary between students in the very beginning of the program and those near the end of the program. I would also spread the study out over the course of an entire school year to build comfort for students with recording procedures and to reflect language growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Finally, I would like to have added a comparison case study with a group of students who are part of a school-wide dual language program.

Recommendations for the Future

In my future teaching, I plan to find more ways to help my students develop their social language. Part of the English reading curriculum in our district includes an oral language development piece designed to naturally guide student conversations about photographs. I intend to seek out similar materials and resources developed for Spanish

oral language development to further social language skills. These resources could involve field trips to places where students would need to speak in Spanish. I also plan to incorporate language objectives into all facets of our daily curriculum and routines, as this will help students know the vocabulary they need to speak both academically and socially.

I plan to discuss social language ideas with colleagues, both in my school and in my district, to collaborate with each other in this area. We can discuss further ways to incorporate language structures into the curriculum, ways to encourage native Spanish-speakers to involve native English-speakers in their Spanish conversations, and how to encourage English speakers to take more language risks in Spanish. I would also like the opportunity to discuss the importance of social language and the findings from my case study during some of our district's professional development opportunities.

For future research, I recommend the study of social language in additional dual immersion sites to determine overall conclusions and insights. I also recommend implementing ideas I discussed in the limitations, including studying the social language at many different grade levels within a dual immersion program, studying a whole classroom of dual language students over the course of an entire school year, and comparing results between partial and school-wide programs.

Summary

In the course of my case study, I sought to find out why students in dual language programs choose to speak in Spanish or English during their social interactions, when they choose one language over another, and how I can help students develop their social language. I discovered that students speak very little Spanish during lunchtime and even

during Spanish class group work. I learned that students often speak the language that others around them are speaking. I found that native Spanish-speaking students are much more willing to take risks in speaking English than native English-speaking students are in speaking Spanish. A huge discovery for me was how English is perceived to be more important to native Spanish-speaking students.

All of these discoveries have led me to conclude that it is important to do further research on the development of social language in dual language programs. Personally, it is important to find ways to encourage my students to speak in Spanish with each other at all times and to find ways to help them feel comfortable taking risks when speaking in their non-native language. I see the results of this case study as a starting point to keep investigating and to make this topic a priority with colleagues.

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