

“Verde - sometimes we call it green”: Construal of Language Difference and Power in a Preschool Dual Immersion Program ¹

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Abstract

In dominant U.S. society, which values English to the exclusion of other languages, dual immersion is by its very nature subversive. The extent to which teachers and curricula in dual immersion programs draw on critical pedagogy may vary, but the model is itself a way of turning the common conception of English primacy on its head. Dual immersion enables children from both the language majority and the language minority groups to contest the power of English and its stranglehold over minority languages in U.S. schools and provides participating children with the opportunity and means to form friendships and alliances across cultural and linguistic barriers. This paper presents some initial findings from a preschool dual language (Spanish/English) immersion project completing its second year and focuses on the counter-hegemonic aspects of the program in terms of teacher-child power relations and the role of language and language play in shifting power dynamics in the classroom.

Background and Context for the Study

One of the most contested issues in contemporary education policy and practice concerns optimal strategies for educating English learners. While a growing literature has sought to document the outcomes of various language instruction approaches, relatively little research has documented the experiences and perspective of children in these programs, particularly at the preschool level. Federally funded preschool programs such as Head Start strongly emphasize the acquisition of English, based on the belief that English proficiency is far more important to children’s academic success and well being in this country than proficiency in any native minority language. While we applaud the overall goals and successes of such programs as Head Start in meeting many of the needs of children and families, we deplore the implicit message conveyed to English-learning

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children, their families and communities – namely, that their native language is essentially irrelevant to their education and academic success.

In contrast to an educational model that seeks to transition children away from their native language into English-only proficiency and literacy, strong or maintenance bilingual education programs (those that foster bilingualism and biliteracy) embody fundamentally different implicit assumptions about English and the minority language, as well as about the value of family participation in education. Bilingual education may prevent or slow native language loss at the same time it facilitates full academic and intellectual engagement among English-learning children, who would otherwise fall behind academically during the years it takes them to fully develop English.

Dual immersion (DI) constitutes a form of strong, developmental bilingual education that capitalizes on the presence of English-speaking peers to aid English learners in developing English, while at the same time provides English speakers the opportunity to learn a second language from their language minority peers. In DI, English-speaking students learn Spanish together with Spanish-speaking students, while Spanish speakers learn English; both groups of children become bilingual and biliterate in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect with the crucial benefit of peer language modeling and feedback.

Of the many forms of bilingual education, DI has been proposed as the model most likely to succeed in times of heightened opposition to bilingual education. DI, with its ability to provide real bilingualism to English-speaking children, appeals to a constituency that is historically more powerful, politically and financially, than the traditional, English-learning clients of bilingual education.

It is clear from research studies (Cazabon, Lambert & Hall, 1993; Holobow, Genesee & Lambert, 1991; Lindholm & Fairchild, 1990) that linguistic and social integration in children are strengthened significantly in DI programs. Instead of entering a classroom in which the anticipated hegemony (and privileging) of English is the norm, children and teachers in DI programs find that the minority language at least temporarily assumes the more privileged position. As the language and power tables are turned, children are immediately confronted by the altered power dynamics and quickly come to view each other as potential friends and language role models in a way that contrasts sharply with the linguistic and social devaluing that routinely occurs in English-only settings.

In Arizona State University's College of Education Preschool (CoE Preschool), the TWIST (Two-Way Immersion Spanish Time) program was implemented in Fall 2002 to provide a cross-cultural, counter-hegemonic preschool experience, while documenting some of the complex issues in young children's language learning experiences, identity development and attitudes toward peers. The project was developed in collaboration with a local Head Start program; the children attending this Head Start are predominantly native Spanish speakers.

The goals of the TWIST program are to integrate Spanish-speaking children from Head Start and English-speaking children from the COE preschool for instruction/play facilitated in Spanish, as a way of developing Spanish language skills in both groups of children while promoting social interaction and concepts of social justice (or antibias curriculum). Two-way immersion in elementary school has been found to successfully promote interaction between students who differ not only by the language they speak, but also by their socioeconomic status. A fundamental goal of the TWIST program is to

promote mutual respect and friendships among the primarily middle-class English-speaking children and the Spanish-speaking students in the Head Start program, an income-eligible program serving families.

The Head Start program, located on the ASU campus, uses English for instruction with 18 Spanish-speaking children and one monolingual English-speaking Native American child Monday through Friday mornings. When Head Start children come to TWIST Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons (1:00 to 3:30pm), they join a second group of approximately 27 children. These children are primarily English speakers, but include a few children who are bilingual in Navajo, Korean, and Farsi. In addition, one Korean child and one Chinese child are learning English as a second language.

These two groups come together three afternoons per week to participate in TWIST's Spanish immersion in the COE preschool site. One of the three Lead Teachers is a native speaker of Spanish who leads instruction in her classroom during TWIST. In the other two rooms, native Spanish-speaking Language Enrichment Teachers assume the instructional lead, supported by the two Lead Teachers who are learning Spanish. In addition, each classroom is assigned a native Spanish-speaking Language Reflector, whose role is to reflect Spanish back to speakers. The center director also began studying Spanish prior to the start of the program, and occasionally interacts with children and adults during TWIST. All materials for parents are bilingual and parent meetings and education are facilitated in both Spanish and English, in collaboration with the Head Start staff.

TWIST was developed against a backdrop of national and state opposition to bilingual education, associated with a growing policy discourse of standards and accountability (Wiley & Wright, 2004). Proposition 203, an Arizona ballot initiative,

became law in the fall 2000 and mandates structured English immersion (SEI) for all language minority children in the state who have been designated as limited in their English proficiency. Many K-12 bilingual education programs in Arizona have survived under a waiver provision that permits bilingual education for those who request it. However, under recent related changes in language policies of the State Department of Education (ADE) following the election of a Superintendent of Public Instruction who ran in part on an English-only campaign, bilingual education programs have become far more severely threatened. As the political and social climate continues to have an increasingly chilling effect on language minority children and communities, educational programs that support bilingualism and biliteracy create opportunities for counter-hegemonic praxis.

Little is known of how young children fare in language education programs, linguistically, psychologically or socially. The TWIST project explores the linguistic and social effects on preschool children of a two-way Spanish/English immersion program, with the aim of addressing these gaps in the research literature.

Brief Review of Literature

Research on English immersion has established the dangers of English immersion to children's academic performance (Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991) and emotional well being (Soto, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991; Hernandez-Chavez, 1984). Early advocates of English-only instruction insisted that it could be as effective as foreign language immersion in Canada, but stipulated that SEI teachers must possess two critical characteristics: 1) the ability to understand the language of the children and 2) special training in immersion techniques (Baker & deKanter, 1981). When teachers do not understand the language of the children, children may feel silenced and be less likely to

participate, and therefore less likely to engage in learning opportunities (Rolstad, in preparation). Teachers who are not adequately trained in immersion methods tend to marginalize English learners. While SEI, properly conducted by a qualified teacher, may sometimes be the most viable option in a given context, a lack of infrastructure in Arizona has undermined the enactment of an authentic SEI experience for the majority of English language learning (ELL) students. Although some nominal provisions for SEI methods instruction have been discussed in Arizona, and may eventually be made available to SEI teachers, there has been no recognition of SEI's requirement that teachers understand the language of the children they teach. Thus, a very threatening, often effacing atmosphere is created for ELL children, whose language and cultural resources are ignored or marginalized.

A threatening sociolinguistic atmosphere can be effectively countered with the authentic, valued use of the minority language and culture, such as that provided by DI to Spanish-speaking children. At the same time, English-speaking children in DI learn to value a second language and its speakers through a direct relationship with language minority children (Cazabon, Lambert & Hall, 1993). The opportunity to interact with linguistically and culturally diverse peers also contributes to an anti-bias learning environment for young children (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Marsh, 1992; Soto, 2002; Swadener, 1988; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). Spanish-speaking children's fluency in their native language may be valued in important ways by their Spanish-learning peers and contributes to Spanish-speaking children's self-esteem and confidence.

This integrative rather than isolating experience can lead to the development of cross-cultural skills and improved attitudes toward the other group on the part of both language minority and majority children, and can positively affect self-esteem (Cazabon,

Lambert & Hall, 1993; Lambert, 1987; Lindholm, 1990). Such authentic interaction is encouraged by two-way programs such as the TWIST program.

Data Collection Methods

Early childhood research relating to language development has long been based on psychological theories of language, and would benefit greatly from advances in language development research that are grounded in theoretical linguistics. This study seeks to reframe many of the issues of early language development accordingly, and, we think, more accurately. We have collected data on language proficiency, via audiotaped natural language samples, and have videotaped classroom and playground interactions, augmented by note-taking, for an ethnography of child-child, child-teacher, teacher-parent and teacher-staff interactions that occur in conjunction with the program and its required inter-agency collaboration. Videotaped data collection was rotated daily among the three TWIST classrooms, as well as the playground, so that each setting was filmed in entirety once per week.

The taping was done by a graduate Research Assistant, who also works as a part-time teacher in the program. The initial coding of the videotapes was done by this assistant and by two native Spanish speakers. In addition, we are in the process of interviewing staff and parents from both the COE preschool and Head Start to document their reactions to and observations about the program and its effects on children.

Findings

For purposes of this paper, we focus on an analysis of examples of the counter-hegemonic impacts and challenges of the TWIST program, vis-à-vis an emphasis on language and power dynamics, as well as the potential for antibias education in early childhood contexts. Within this broad framing, we focus on two themes: (1) teacher-

child power dynamics, including addressing questions such as whose language is privileged and who is learning language from whom, who is getting attention in particular contexts, etc.; and (2) linguistic engagement and language play, including children's reactions to the TWIST program, peer relationships and power dynamics between native Spanish-speaking and English-speaking children.

An initial concern when starting the project was that two of the three Lead Teachers in the preschool were not proficient in Spanish. Our stricture that only Spanish was to be spoken by adults during TWIST meant that any adults, whether teachers, teaching interns, students workers or visitors who were not proficient in Spanish, would effectively be silenced; no English was to be spoken by adults. It was our hope that this experience of language restriction would have two outcomes: to encourage these adults to learn Spanish and to provide them with an intense, deeply meaningful experience in difficult communication through a language they do not know well or at all. The difficulty and frustration faced by these adults is the usual daily experience of many English learners placed in English-only settings. It was our hope that placing the burden of productive communication on the adults would help them to empathize and identify with the children they served.

We wondered, of course, how some adults' lack of Spanish proficiency would affect the program and children's valuing of Spanish and Spanish speakers. We wondered what effects adults' flawed Spanish might have on children, Spanish speakers and English speakers alike. We suspected that instances of flawed Spanish production

would be more than balanced by the children's access to accurate Spanish models via the native Spanish-speaking teachers and via the children's parents and families.²

We further assumed that Spanish-learning children would be relatively unaffected by adults' Spanish errors, not only because the errors would be balanced by the authentic Spanish of native speaking adults, but also because such errors are likely to escape the notice of children at this very early stage of second language acquisition. Further, it is clear that children learn language usage to a far greater extent from their peers than they might learn from adults, so we counted on these children's access to their Spanish-speaking peers as appropriate linguistic models. We hoped that these aspects of language acquisition would have no negative effects.

On analyzing our data, however, we have been struck by what seems to have been an overwhelmingly positive effect of that lack of Spanish proficiency on the part of some of the adults; namely, that children daily witness teachers making every attempt to use Spanish and learning from the native Spanish-speaking children. While this has varied between teachers and not been present in all adults in these classrooms, data have provided striking and consistent examples of the shift in power dynamics created by the teachers' need to draw on the children's linguistic expertise.

Theme One: Teacher-Child Power Dynamics

In any developmental, child-centered preschool program, teacher-child power dynamics tend to reflect prevailing "best practices" in early childhood including an emphasis on constructivism, including a co-construction of learning between teachers and children. For primarily English-speaking teachers, this concept of learning with and from

² Although the variety of Spanish spoken in these communities is sometimes socially stigmatized, parents and other native speakers are nonetheless perfectly competent and proficient language users, providing a perfect model of language for their children. For more discussion of this point, see Rolstad (in preparation).

children is taken a step further in the TWIST program. Teacher interviews and informal discussions reflected some teachers' feelings of being silenced in their own classrooms and not able to share their wealth of knowledge and experience in providing their usual feedback and guidance to children. However, to the extent that these teachers engaged in learning and using more Spanish and listening intently to Spanish-speaking children and adults, a further power shift has occurred, as evidenced by the following examples. We have characterized such examples as instantiations of a theme of shifted teacher-child power dynamics.

An English-speaking boy responds to a query from a Language Reflector about color in a book, "verde – sometimes we call it green." One interpretation of his use of 'sometimes' is that he feels that language choice is fairly random, rather than reflecting any power differences. At age three, he may not even have been aware that he was using words from two distinct languages, why there are two words for the same color, or what could possibly drive the selection of "verde" vs. "green." However, we are especially interested in the significance of his theorizing about which language, and which group, is privileged, given his use of the pronoun 'we.' He says this to a native Spanish-speaking adult, a male Language Reflector, presumably including him in his use of 'we.' It suggests that he identifies with the Language Reflector and feels included in whatever group the Language Reflector belongs to. In considering how this child construes the language and power difference between English and Spanish, we submit that he has not yet been sensitized to differential valuing of the two languages in this regional context.

From our analysis of videotaped data collected in the first weeks of the program, several interesting and potentially contradictory findings relating to language difference and power emerged. A few of the English-speaking children (who were there all day)

had initial reactions to the teachers' switching to Spanish in the afternoon, reactions which included covering their ears, hiding their faces in their shirts, or verbally complaining. However, most children seemed to quickly adapt to the fact that their Lead Teachers suddenly were speaking Spanish to the extent that they could, with the overall effect of two of the Lead Teachers talking much less than they had earlier in the day. While some children seemed to be initially confused or disoriented that their teachers were no longer speaking English to them, most children accepted without question their teacher's behavior and language. For example, English-speaking children happily sat through whole stories read in halting Spanish during choice time and witnessed Spanish-speaking children serving as resources to their teacher. Many child-centered activities (e.g., art, dramatic play, construction, etc.) appeared to be well facilitated using a few basic phrases in Spanish. Some English-speaking children were also observed quietly repeating Spanish words within the first 2-3 weeks of the program.

A Spanish-learning Lead Teacher describes her experiences with the program,

It was not as easy as I thought. I cope with my lack of Spanish by keeping a Spanish dictionary around and also I ask the children; they are my teachers. I just ask them, 'como se dice...?' and they teach me. I am learning from them... I am not as frustrated anymore. I have seen the successes and I think it's a great program. We are not wasting our time whatsoever. Our Spanish speakers feel very comfortable here. The English speakers feel comfortable. The program flows (Teacher G).

When asked what had been most surprising to her about teaching in TWIST, the same teacher responded,

Having fun with the language -- the fun that the kids and us can have playing with the language. When you watch two kids and one is Hispanic and one is English-speaking, it is wonderful because you know that these two kids who may never have gotten together are doing so, and it is a good thing, a good start in their lives. I have not seen that before. In other experiences that I had before, it was not that *we* learned *their* language; they always had to learn English (Teacher G).

This view is echoed by the Spanish-speaking Lead Teacher, who commented that she was surprised by the interactions between Spanish-speaking and Spanish-learning children.

Socially, they play together, with good interaction, lots of play; they don't care who speaks which language. You hear a lot of Spanish. A non-Spanish speaker and a Spanish speaker play together, I don't know how they communicate with each other, but they still play together (Teacher R).

A Language Reflector, an undergraduate student, reflecting on how the children communicate with each other across language boundaries, described their communication this way,

It is through body language and pointing at things. They talk to each other. It's funny – one kid will be talking in Spanish and the other in English. They still know what they are saying to each other. But their response will always come from their language. Sometimes [the English-speaking children] will answer back in Spanish if they know the word (Language Reflector V).

A native Spanish-speaking Language Enrichment Teacher, discussing English-speaking children's experiences in the program, shares her perception,

Something that is interesting is that the English speakers get a chance to learn what it feels like to not understand a language, or being different. They are now more aware of what it feels like for those kids that are learning the language (Teacher T).

It is this reversal of the power dynamic and the way English-speaking children are confronted with the valuing of Spanish and Spanish speakers that best captures the goals of TWIST. As a Spanish-learning Lead Teacher reports,

There is equal respect for both languages. The English speakers are not going to learn [much] Spanish, not now. But they are going to have an [open] attitude toward it. And hopefully maybe even an [open] attitude for all languages (Teacher G).

Acquisition of Spanish by the English-speaking children is a source of delight to parents and teachers, but the primary goal of the program is to counter – whether proactively or reactively – the dominance of English.

A Language Enrichment Teacher expressed her feeling that the Spanish-speaking children felt empowered in TWIST, compared to how they felt in their English immersion Head Start program, saying,

I think the Spanish speakers like it most. The parents express that the kids like coming here, sometimes even more than going to Head Start. So they really, really like coming here and you can tell (Teacher T).

A Language Reflector feels strongly about TWIST's benefits, linguistic and otherwise for the Spanish-speaking children. He explains,

There are a lot of things that we do that go far beyond the language. They learn social skills, such as approaching somebody that is different than they are.... They learn to sing, speak, plan and listen. It is way beyond the language. Language is a principal thing, but not all (Language Reflector V).

As we analyze TWIST data, we keep in mind questions of whose language is privileged, who is learning which language from whom, who is getting attention in particular contexts, especially attention from adults, and so forth. From interviews with TWIST adults, as well as from the videotape data, we find an increasing use of English by Spanish-speaking children over the course of the year. This phenomenon, pointing to the hegemony of English even in settings devoted to the use of a minority language, is quite common in studies of K-12 bilingual education programs, including DI programs. In contrast to many other settings, however, we also find many examples of Spanish being privileged, and of predominantly English-speaking children and adults learning Spanish from Spanish-speaking children, and of Spanish-speaking children receiving prolonged, positive attention from adults. These examples of the valuing of Spanish and Spanish speakers persist despite the intrusion of English.

In the following video clip, pay close attention to three interesting aspects: how absorbed three English-speaking boys are in a Spanish-language story; how the Spanish-learning teacher turns to a Spanish-speaking boy for his Spanish expertise; and how the

Spanish-learning teacher shifts her attention away from the three English-speaking boys to the Spanish-speaking boy.

(Insert video clip #1.)

Further, notice this Lead Enrichment Teacher's physical inclusion of a Spanish learner, but heavy linguistic engagement with a Spanish-speaking child.

(Insert video clip #2.)

This teacher, when asked if she thought that kids who speak English or Spanish feel more or less comfortable with a teacher that speaks their language, responded,

I don't think so. I was so surprised about this. When I first started, I thought that if I only spoke Spanish to the [English-speaking] kids, they would not develop a relationship with me. I thought that language would be a barrier. But I think the kids were able to see me as the teacher. And that was interesting (Teacher T).

Finally, we were interested in comments from the preschool director and several of the Lead Teachers, who have noticed that there are far fewer conflicts between children during TWIST than typically occur in standard preschool settings. This was surprising, since these experienced educators had anticipated an increase in conflicts due to the mixing of linguistically and socially different groups. Still more interesting, perhaps, is that despite most adults' natural desire for low incidence of conflicts among children, it has been argued that conflict negotiation actually provides a rich and valuable opportunity for children in DI kindergarten programs to develop their second language proficiency (Hayes, 2002). We wonder whether and to what extent TWIST reduces conflicts among children, and whether that might in some way affect children's opportunities to stretch themselves, socially and linguistically, through conflict negotiation. It is also possible that the value of conflict and its negotiation is simply greater for children of kindergarten age, and in kindergarten settings.

Theme Two: Linguistic Engagement and Language Play

While we are pleased to think that both groups of children could potentially become bilingual, we regret the tendency for English learners in this society to lose proficiency in their first language, a phenomenon that may be most common in children who undergo English immersion at younger ages (Wong Fillmore, 1991). TWIST teachers have observed the intrusion of English, despite their emphasis on Spanish.

The Spanish speakers are learning more English than the English speakers are learning Spanish, but that is not the result of the program. That is probably the context, but also the kids from Head Start probably realize that English is powerful.... For example, when I ask them what they want to sing, the Spanish speakers will always bring an English song to sing, like the ABC song. They don't want to sing the Spanish songs and they know those songs. I'm beginning to feel that they think it is cooler to sing in English than in Spanish (Teacher T).

[Insert Clip #3]

The data reveal many instances of Spanish learners using and playing with Spanish. Willingness to engage in language play in the new language reveals children's level of comfort with the 'strange' social and linguistic experience of TWIST. Several examples of this were reflected in a teacher journal kept by Teacher T, one of the Language Enrichment Teachers. During a recent interview, she made the following observations.

The English speakers are becoming more and more comfortable with the new language. They feel more comfortable with not knowing everything, with the fact that they don't know everything that is being said. At the beginning of the year they were less comfortable.

Now they try to listen, try to pay attention, try to extract some meaning. They use non-verbal clues. The kids that are more adaptable or willing to try, they just will try different things. They will try something in English to see if that will work.

They are also starting to use Spanish words in their language. Like the other day this English-speaking child came to me and said, "I always like *rojo*." Or like, they would count to themselves in Spanish. They would be counting how many cookies they have, but in Spanish rather than

English. I think that shows that Spanish is becoming part of their communication (Teacher T).

A Lead Teacher comments,

It was interesting watching the [Spanish-learning] kids' transition from putting their hands over their ears and not wanting to listen to an acceptance. And then this year, the kids that are in their second year are actually using Spanish. They will use Spanish like in counting or the colors. They use little greetings. They learn the songs that Teacher T uses. They are finding joy in it and that makes it all worthwhile (Teacher G).

A Language Reflector adds,

There were kids that at first they would say, "I hate Spanish," and all you do is speak Spanish to them. At the beginning it is always a challenge to establish a relationship and learning the kids' personalities. This kid that said he hated Spanish now sings everything with us. It is just that they don't understand it at first, but once they do, they are fine (Language Reflector V).

The mother of a second-year Spanish learner comments about her daughter, that "Spanish has become an important part of her identity." This child has an older sister who does not know Spanish, and who is learning Spanish words from her little sister. For this TWIST student, Spanish gives her a sort of "cultural capital" that her older sister lacks. Similarly, another second-year Spanish learner is reported to teach Spanish to her younger sister at home.

Parents of Spanish learners have reported many other anecdotes of their children's uses, and sometimes misunderstandings, of Spanish outside of TWIST. One little boy complained, "the teachers always say *hola* to me, but my name is not Hola!" Another mother describes a day when she was helping her older children to spell words in English, when her preschooler joined in.

"Mom, what does 'e' mean?" I said, "Well, nothing really, all by itself." He corrected me, "Doesn't 'y' mean 'and'?"

One child is reported to be thriving in the program despite her lack of proficiency in either English or Spanish. A Language Reflector describes his surprise and delight this way,

[She] is a Chinese girl that does not speak English or Spanish. But when you sing the songs, a week after she came in she was already singing the songs. Through ways of communication we were able to kind of get some sort of conversation going on without having to speak the same language. I thought that was pretty neat (Language Reflector V).

One day, both of the Spanish-speaking adults typically present in one of the classrooms were out sick. It was left to the Spanish-learning Lead Teacher to maintain a Spanish language environment, a challenge which she gamely met. She describes her somewhat desperate, but quite comical attempt to dredge up all the Spanish words she had at her disposal during circle time, and her sheer delight at the impact her efforts had on the children. The Spanish-speaking children did all they could to help her fill in the linguistic blanks, but so did the Spanish-learning children. The teacher was dumbfounded at the intense interest and level of whole-hearted participation that were inspired by her obvious need, and felt it was the most exciting and enlightening day she had experienced in recent memory.

More often, Spanish-learning children are observed trying out Spanish in quieter moments, reminiscent of reports from other settings where English learners quietly try out English words and phrases (Tabors, 1997). The following video clip shows a Spanish learner using the Spanish word for ‘bird.’

[Insert video clips #4 and #5]

Based on many hours of videotape and anecdotal data, it would appear that most children participating in TWIST were quite comfortable with the larger “experiment” represented by this project. In other words, children appeared to feel safe and supported in their experimentation with both languages. Children frequently observed Spanish-

learning adults grappling with how to express themselves in Spanish and joyfully playing with the new language. One Lead Teacher has succeeded in identifying with Spanish and the Spanish-speaking children, to the point of unconsciously developing a “Spanish persona,” that includes intonations and mannerisms. Similar to notions of creating a “third space,” (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1989) this teacher appears to be able to transform herself in ways that allow her to have a significant role in the improbable, yet possible world created by the TWIST program. Another third space aspect of the program is reflected by the many opportunities that native Spanish-speaking children had to be at home in TWIST; that is, to freely use their linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge in what would otherwise be a hegemonic English immersion context. While taking place only three afternoons each week, the program did appear to offer a counter-hegemonic space and experience to Spanish speakers and Spanish learners alike.

Lessons Learned

We learned a great deal from the first year’s implementation of TWIST and made many improvements, from insisting that TWIST personnel have stronger theoretical background and/or experience in early childhood, to better predicting and preparing for Spanish-learning children’s negative responses to an all-Spanish language environment. One important change from the first year of TWIST to the second involved having the English-speaking children visit the Spanish-speaking children in the Head Start site before the TWIST program began. Due to site constraints, TWIST occurs in the COE Preschool, placing it in the typical position of “integration” always happening on the dominant group’s turf. It is difficult to counter the message that the language minority children appear to be the supplicants who are transported from an inferior place and position to a superior one. TWIST’s approach was to transport the language majority

children to the fun, highly-appealing Head Start setting to strengthen the Head Start children's status. This introduction of the children to each other on the Spanish-speaking children's "territory" had a noticeably positive impact on how the two groups of children viewed each other, according to the COE preschool director and to TWIST teachers.

Just a few days into the first year of the program, we noticed a fundamental lack in the Spanish language environment. Whereas children and one teacher suffice for DI in typical K-12 classrooms, the tender age and inexperience of preschoolers in school settings resulted in a heavy burden of language production falling on the lone Spanish-speaking teacher. Children were unresponsive, Spanish speakers and English speakers alike. Additional Spanish speaking adults were clearly necessary to sustain full and engaging linguistic interactions. Hence, the addition of Language Reflectors, typically undergraduate native Spanish-speaking students, who play the critical role of reflecting Spanish back to teachers and children, ensuring a back-and-forth model of interaction for children to follow.

After nearly two years experience with this preschool DI program, we are pleased to be able to say, "The pájaro flew! – Try it!" We would definitely encourage other intrepid preschool teachers to consider adopting a similar program. Despite initial reservations about teachers who were not Spanish speakers, and some difficulty with adults who lacked sufficient preschool teaching experience, we are extremely pleased with all that the children, teachers, and other adults are learning as a result of this program and with the counter-hegemonic experiment which TWIST represents.

Future Questions and Directions

TWIST's initial two years raised many new questions and led us in important directions for the future. Some key questions we will continue to explore are: Are there

fewer conflicts in TWIST than in typical preschool classes, and could this be related to the language learning environment? Do typical gender divisions in children's play still hold across language differences? That is, does gender trump all else for peer interaction preferences of preschool children? Does free-play time provide a linguistic "respite" for English-speaking children, who are more consistently immersed during large group activities, rug times, etc.? What factors influence some native Spanish-speaking children to shift away from using Spanish? What does English "slippage" mean in this context?

It is clear from research in language attrition that immersion in the socially-dominant language tends to have a profoundly negative effect on language maintenance (Lambert, 1984), and it has been argued that early English immersion exacerbates this effect (Tabors, 1997; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Even bilingual schooling may have little impact on slowing children's adoption of English as their preferred language (Veltman, 1983), although such findings rely primarily on subtractive, transitional models rather than an additive, developmental bilingual schooling models for their data. Is it possible for an early childhood DI program, in and of itself, to slow native language loss? Perhaps not, but do TWIST children receive some sort of long-term benefit relating to language maintenance (in language minority children), foreign language acquisition (in language majority children), or improved self-esteem and anti-bias perspectives (in both groups)? Is TWIST's counter-hegemonic message internalized and/or visibly operationalized in observable ways by its participants?

In terms of future research, we plan to move in three directions in the next year. First, we will focus on how a DI program facilitates English language learning in comparison to an SEI program over the course of a kindergarten year. Second, we will be following TWIST children into elementary school to see how their initial experiences in

the TWIST DI program influenced later language learning and attitudes toward learning both English and Spanish. Third, we will be looking beyond the classroom to better contextualize children's language and literacy learning at home and with their families.

One of the key questions about DI is how it facilitates English language learning for ELL students in comparison to SEI classes. Our follow-up work will compare children in a DI kindergarten program with children in an SEI kindergarten class. This comparison will allow us to see how both English language learners and English only children learn in these different environments. For instance, does a DI classroom better support an ELL child in school?

We also hope to have a number of children from TWIST who will attend a nearby school with a DI program. We are interested in exploring how TWIST children make the transition to kindergarten and further their English and Spanish language and literacy development.

The follow-up in DI and SEI classrooms will also facilitate a comparison in parent attitudes and involvement in the two programs. In particular, we are interested in studying how parent-child interactions, especially related to literacy skills, are affected by the two different programs. Research on literacy development in children learning English indicates the importance of parents continuing to communicate with their children in their first language. Tabors and Snow (2001) observe that, "It would clearly be useful if educators would encourage parents to maintain their first language at home and use it" (p. 175). For example, research on parent and child book reading shows that it is through conversations and extensions about what is being read that shared book reading is most effective (Bus, 2001; Handel, 1999). Spanish-speaking parents can most

effectively do this in their dominant language. Similarly, children should be given the opportunity to make connections to their own experiences when reading books—and for English language learners this is best done in the child’s first language. Parents whose children are in English immersion classrooms, however, are likely to receive little encouragement for using their first language. Without such encouragement, parents often feel they must promote the use of English at the expense of their first language (Romaine, 1989), and children tend to quit speaking Spanish. Such a pattern is harmful to children’s academic and literacy abilities—when interactions are limited to English, children learning English might fail to develop the literacy skills and comprehension abilities needed to become strong readers (Tabors & Snow, 2001).

For example, although researchers have suggested that Spanish-speaking children learning English should be given the opportunity to choose whether a book is read in Spanish or English (Ruiz, 1995), this opportunity is not available in English immersion classrooms. Such a limitation might transfer to the home environment, where children will not elect to read Spanish-language books with their parents, leading parents who are not proficient in English to engage in less reading with their children. Another potential limitation is in the area of homework. Homework assignments from English immersion classrooms may be difficult or impossible for Spanish-speaking parents to understand, causing parents to be less involved in their children’s homework (Hayes & Salazar, 2001).

Therefore, we are interested in examining how Spanish-speaking parents in SEI classrooms describe their involvement, attitudes toward their children’s education, and beliefs about learning English. These responses will be compared to responses from Spanish-speaking parents whose children are in two-way immersion classes. The primary

issues to be examined are: a) the kinds of activities they engage in at home related to reading and writing, b) the ways in which they help their children with schoolwork, c) their role in their children's education, d) their satisfaction with their children's school and teacher, and e) their beliefs about learning English and about the importance of maintaining Spanish language abilities for their children.

In addition, we will document and compare the ways in which teachers in SEI and DI classrooms promote family-school interactions. How do teachers in a DI program support parent involvement (and in which language) in comparison to teachers in an SEI class? For instance, do teachers in an SEI class adequately encourage parent involvement and parent-child interaction in either language?

Finally, we will look at how English-speaking parents are responding to having their children in a DI program. Why did these parents choose the program and to what extent do the children use Spanish outside of school? Some initial discussions with parents in an existing DI kindergarten program revealed their feeling that the DI program is more "challenging" than a regular kindergarten class. Other parents were second-generation Mexican American parents who had undergone loss of their heritage language. These parents were excited that their children would attain bilingualism and biliteracy in their heritage language and English, abilities that had been forbidden to these parents when they were in school.

A generation ago, even during the heyday of bilingual education, relatively few children (a maximum of 30% of English learners who might have benefited from bilingual education, according to ...) were provided with opportunities to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in school. Today, DI is the only form of bilingual education likely to survive the increased anti-bilingual campaigns. It is perhaps ironic that DI

happens to be the most subversive of bilingual education approaches, presenting English-only advocates with the greatest threat of all – that of language minority students who attain the highest levels of achievement while retaining their native language abilities and politically powerful language majority students who have come to value minority languages and communities through personal experience.

Dual immersion is only possible through grass-roots organization, and must by necessity involve parents and communities. Historically, DI has struggled to involve parents from both constituent groups equally, with middle-class English-speaking parents typically enjoying the advantages of more time and resources to contribute to the success of these programs; DI is gradually making strides in this direction. In Arizona, for example, the statewide Dual Immersion Association (DIA) was recently established in an attempt to organize parents across districts in support of DI programs. One of the major charges of this organization is to develop strong linkages among both language majority and language minority parents. The alliance of these two populations, cemented through their years of DI integration in schools and bolstered by concerted efforts toward unity, could serve to twist English-only school policies inside-out. Dual immersion presents a truly counter-hegemonic approach to education, one which can provide children with a solid foundation for future understandings of language difference and shifting power dynamics.

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