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Strategies Teachers And Families Can Use To Support Home Language Maintenance For Early Elementary Students

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STRATEGIES TEACHERS AND FAMILIES CAN USE TO SUPPORT HOME

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE FOR EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

by

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To my family, particularly my husband, Joe, and my parents, for your continuous support and encouragement. Without your faith in me and your encouragement, this process would have been much more challenging. And to my brother, Rob, for your dedication to your own education that compelled me to register for those final classes.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The number of United States residents who speak a language other than English continues to increase. The Census Bureau reported in 2013 that the number of residents, aged five and older, who speak a language other than English is 61.8 million (Camarota & Ziegler, 2014). Further, in the United States, more than one in five students, aged five to seventeen, speak a language other than English at home, and in Minnesota, one in eight students, speak a language other than English at home (Camarota & Ziegler, 2014). The guiding question of this capstone project is: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students?

The National Center for Educational Statistics reported that in the 2014-2015 school year, 9.4 percent of U.S. public school students were identified as English language learners (ELLs) and in Minnesota, 7.2 percent of the public school students were identified as ELLs (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017). To be identified as an ELL in Minnesota, families must indicate on the Minnesota Home Language Survey, which is given to all families as part of the school registration process, that a language other than English is spoken or understood by the student (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018). After the school district receives the completed home language survey, students whose families indicated that the students speak or understand a language other than English are screened to identify if they qualify for English language support.

Entering school, kindergarteners are screened for their oral language proficiency in English; students in first through twelfth grade are screened for their oral and literacy language proficiencies in English. This process aims to identify students who need support to access the core content material. EL services support students by working on language skills to gain proficiency and providing language supports, such as sentence stems, graphic organizers, or word banks. English language services and classes, however, do not necessarily include support to students for maintaining their home language or languages and not all students who speak a language other than English at home receive English language services.

Therefore, the guiding question, What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students?, explores strategies for mainstream teachers, English language (EL) teachers, and families. In this capstone, I researched the benefits of multilingualism, the impact of language loss, and factors for maintaining or losing home languages. As a result of this study, I created a resource for teachers explaining the importance of home language maintenance and strategies for how to support home language maintenance, as well as a handout for teachers to share with families. The goal of this capstone project is to provide teachers and families with concrete ways to support students in home language maintenance.

This chapter explains important terms to this capstone project and describes some of the relevant impacts of language loss. Additionally, this chapter introduces the background and role of the researcher.

Explanation of Terms

This capstone project will frequently refer to these terms:

Home language: the language or languages spoken at home, also referred to as L1, first language, heritage language, minority language, and native language

ELL: English language learners

ESL: English as a second language

EL: English language

Language loss: Oxford (as cited in Lai, 2009, p.10) defines language loss as "the loss or deterioration of competence in one's first language or second language." Further, language loss can also include lack of first language skill because of lack of development or delay, not just the deterioration of proficiency (Guardado, 2002). Toppelberg and Collins (2010) provide an example of the lack of development of the first language and state that, for children, vocabulary needed in the school context may be stronger in English. Thus, children may not develop the vocabulary needed in this context in their home language.

Results of Language Loss

Supporting home language maintenance is important because language loss can impact familial relationships, self-image, and cultural identity (Guardado, 2002; Hinton, 1999b; Lai, 2009).

Erosion of Familial Relationships

Language loss can negatively impact immediate familial relationships amongst members with differing abilities and differing opinions on the importance of the home language, thus, leading to a deterioration in communication and familial ties (Lai, 2009).

Further, learners who are more proficient in the dominant language of the society, in which they are currently living, may become ashamed of their parents or other relatives who struggle with the dominant language or who desire to speak the home language in public (Hinton, 1999b). Additionally, learners may also develop shame about their inability to communicate with visiting relatives or relatives who have maintained the home language leading to a desire to avoid communication with those relatives (Hinton, 1999b).

Impact on Self-Image and Cultural Identity

The erosion of familial relationships and the loss of the home language impact the learner's self-image and cultural identity because family helps create an "awareness of the children's own ethnic identities and their own origins" (Lai, 2009, p. 11). Guardado (2002) states that the loss of language can lead to feelings of shame about the home culture and language, attempts to "adopt other cultural values," and even negative feelings "toward more recent immigrants of their own culture" (p. 347).

Background and Role of the Researcher

I attended Temple University and studied Spanish language and literature and Latin American Studies. During my time at Temple University, I studied abroad at the University of Oviedo in Oviedo, Spain. Having the opportunity to live in another community and be surrounded by the language I was studying, helped my language skills develop significantly. By the end of the five months I lived in Spain, I was dreaming in Spanish and forgetting which prepositions to use when speaking in English. Within months of being back in the United States, I noticed another shift in my language skills--I

was already losing some of the language fluency I developed while living abroad. This was the first time I realized the importance and necessity of continual practice and exposure for language maintenance.

In 2013, I moved to Daegu, South Korea to work as a native English teacher for third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at a public elementary school. I was welcomed by the community. Other teachers and complete strangers went out of their way to help me as I struggled to set-up internet in my apartment, take the subway the correct direction to school, and buy groceries. Throughout the twelve months I lived in South Korea, I learned basic vocabulary and how to maneuver the subways, markets, and grocery stores and refined my communication skills without taking any language classes. Again, my language skills were shifting because of the place I lived. I made a focused effort to practice and maintain my language skills in Spanish through listening and reading during this time; however, without a community to practice writing and speaking, I experienced language loss. This led me to pursue a volunteer teaching position for six weeks in San José, Costa Rica following my contract in South Korea where I was able to immerse myself again in speaking and interacting in Spanish and combat some of the language loss I had experienced.

My experiences abroad led me to pursue my K-12 teaching license in English as a Second Language. After completing my student teaching in the spring of 2017, I began teaching in a suburban school district with ten elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. In the 2017-2018 school year, I worked with about forty-five kindergarten, first, and second grade English language learners. During parent-teacher

conferences in the fall semester, many parents had questions about the English language program, the skills I work on with their students, and what they should work on at home with their students. Several parents expressed that they wished their students wanted to speak their home language (primarily Spanish or Somali for the families at my school), but that their children were not interested and preferred to speak in English. Other parents were curious if it was best for their students to practice English skills at home or if they should practice speaking and reading skills in their home language at home. These experiences led me to want to find strategies that teachers and families can use to support and encourage home language maintenance for early elementary students.

Further, in October, a kindergarten student registered at our school that had recently arrived in the United States from Colombia. He did not speak any English and he was identified as an English language learner. He only attended our school for two weeks before his family decided to settle in New York; however, during the two weeks he attended our school, I worked on his English development in a pull-out group with three other English language learners in his class. During our group time, I gave directions in both English and Spanish; however, prior to his arrival, I gave instructions only in English. The dual-language instructions became distracting and frustrating for the other students in the group. One student comes from a home where Somali is spoken and he was frustrated at not being able to understand parts of what I said and what his classmate said. The directions were distracting for the other two students in the group who come from homes where Spanish is spoken and one commented daily, "That's how we speak at home!" Her comments demonstrated that she associates Spanish as the language spoken

at home and English as the language spoken at school; it shows that she does not associate school with a place she should utilize all of her language skills. This capstone project helped me discover strategies I can implement and share with other teachers to encourage students to utilize all of their language skills at school and to support students in seeing the value of all of the languages they and their classmates speak as well as provide resources for families to support home language maintenance at home.

Summary

In this project, I provide strategies for teachers and families to support home language maintenance for early elementary students. Chapter One explained key terms, described some of the possible impacts of language loss and thus the need for language maintenance, and introduced the background and role of the researcher. Chapter One additionally identified the guiding question of this capstone project.

Chapter Two explores three key themes connected to the guiding question: benefits of multilingualism, impact of language loss, and factors for maintaining or losing home language. The first two themes explore why supporting students in maintaining their home languages is important and the third theme explores how home languages are maintained or lost, including barriers to home language maintenance and tools to support maintenance. Chapter Three explains the capstone project, including an overview of the project, the setting, and audience, timeline, and project description. Chapter Four provides a conclusion and reflection on the project. This project provides a resource for mainstream teachers, English language teachers, and families.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The goal of this research is to explain three key themes connected to the guiding question, the benefits of multilingualism and the impact of language loss and additionally to identify factors that lead to language maintenance or loss and strategies teachers and families can implement to support home language maintenance. The guiding question of this capstone project is: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students? As a result of this study, two resources on how to support home language maintenance were created: one resource for teachers and one for families.

The literature review is guided by the following three questions: First, what are the benefits of multilingualism? Second, what are the impacts of language loss? Thirdly, what are the factors that support home language maintenance or home language loss and what are strategies that promote home language maintenance? The first section describes the cognitive, academic, and emotional and behavioral health benefits of multilingualism which gives context to the importance of supporting students in home language maintenance. The second section discusses the impacts of language loss on familial relationships and an individual's identity. This section aims to give more context to the importance of supporting students in maintaining their home languages. The third section

identifies the factors that support home language maintenance or loss as well lists

strategies that teachers and families can use to support and encourage early elementary

students in home language maintenance.

Benefits of Multilingualism

Johnson (2014) defines multilingualism as "the use of multiple languages by an

individual speaker" (p. 913). The author further explains that there is debate about the

level of proficiency a language user must have to be considered a user of the language

and recognizes that language users fall on a proficiency spectrum ranging from ability to

use few phrases to native-like proficiency (Johnson, 2014). For this literature review,

multilingualism will refer to users of two or more languages. Kroll and Dussias (2017)

summarize the communicative benefits of multilingualism as increased "opportunities for

social interaction, for economic advancement, and for increasing intercultural

understanding" (p. 254). This section, however, goes deeper and discusses the cognitive,

academic, emotional and behavioral benefits of multilingualism.

Cognitive Benefits of Multilingualism

Studies have demonstrated the cognitive benefits of multilingualism. One of the

cognitive benefits of multilingualism is selective attention. Chandler and Munday (2011)

define selective attention as "a general tendency for human beings to focus on only some

of the sensory data or information available to them at any given time" (para. 1). With

multiple languages in their linguistic repertoire, multilinguals must choose which

language to focus on and switch between languages. This is a cognitive process

monolinguals do not utilize with only one language in their linguistic repertoire (Friesen,

Latman, Calvo, & Bialystok, 2015). Another cognitive benefit of multilingualism is executive control which is also known as executive functioning. Executive functioning is "multiple- inter-related processes which are together responsible for goal-directed behavior, and reflection on it;" these processes positively impact multilinguals academic achievement and success in adulthood (St Clair-Thompson & Gathercole, 2006; Blair & Peters Razza, 2007; Moffit, Arseneault, Belsky, Dickson, Hancox, Harrington, & Caspi, 2011, [as cited by Goriot, Denessen, Bakker, & Droop, 2016, p. 701]). Thus, cognitive advantages in executive functioning give multilinguals benefits in other areas, including academic achievement.

The research by Blom, Boerma, Bosma, Cornips, and Everaert (2017) showed that the bilinguals performed higher than monolinguals in selective attention but not in working memory. This study compared three different groups of six to seven year old bilingual language users, including Frisian-Dutch bilinguals, Limburgish-Dutch bilinguals, and Polish-Dutch bilinguals, to monolingual Dutch language users. The results demonstrated the cognitive benefits of being multilingual occur across bilingual contexts as the Frisian-Dutch bilinguals and Limburgish-Dutch bilinguals both use a regional language of the Netherlands and the majority language and the Polish-Dutch bilinguals use a migrant language and the majority language. Thus, the results show that the benefits of multilingualism are similar for language users across sociolinguistic settings (Blom et al., 2017).

Additionally, although Friesen et al. (2015) acknowledge that previous studies, have conflicting evidence on whether or not multilingualism has benefits in executive control

in young adulthood, the results of this study concluded that bilingualism positively

impacts top-down selective attention in young adulthood.[1] This study compared English

monolinguals to similarly aged bilinguals who speak English and another language and

found that when compared with monolinguals,"bilinguals more quickly identified the

target in the difficult conjunction" (Friesen et al., 2015, p. 700).

The results of Goriot et al.'s (2016) study confirmed previous findings that

bilingualism positively affects executive functioning in children. This study's participants

were Dutch monolinguals, Dutch-German bilinguals, and Dutch-Turkish bilinguals from

throughout The Netherlands. Both groups of bilinguals outperformed the monolingual

group in nonverbal working memory and switching, demonstrating the cognitive

advantage of multilingualism in these areas. However, the study's results did not

demonstrate cognitive advantages in verbal working memory or inhibition (Goriot et al.,

2016).

Kroll and Dussias (2017) assert in their article that the benefits of multilingualism can

be seen in all stages of life from infants to aging adults. They report that bilingual infants

watch adults' mouths sooner and for longer periods of time than monolingual infants

(Pons, Boscho, & Lewkowicz, 2015, as cited by Kroll & Dussias, 2017) and "are better

than monolingual babies at rapidly forming internal memory representations of novel

visual stimuli" at six months old (Singh, Fu, Rahman, Hameed, Sanmugan, Agarwal,

Jiang, Chong, Meaney, & Rifkin-Graboi, 2014, [as cited by Kroll & Dussias, 2017, p.

252]). Additionally, the areas of the brain connected to executive function show

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[1] Friesen et al. (2015) cite Bialystok, Martin, and Viswanathan (2005) and Daap and Greenberg (2013) as
having conflicting evidence on whether or not multilingualism has benefits for executive control in young
adulthood.

"enhanced neural activity" by the time infants are eleven months old (Ferjan Ramírez, Ramírez, Clarke, Taulu, & Kuhl, 2017, [as cited by Kroll & Dussias, 2017, p. 252]). When comparing individuals of similar age and educational background, research has shown that multilingualism can cause a "delay of 4 to 5 years in the onset of Alzheimer's symptoms" (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman; Perani, Farsad, Ballarini, Lubian, Malpetti, Fracchetti, & Abutalebi, 2017, [as cited by Kroll & Dussias, 2017, p. 252]). This research demonstrates the cognitive benefits of multilingualism for people from infancy to old age.

Academic Benefits of Multilingualism

Research demonstrates the academic benefits of multilingualism. Cha, Goldenberg, and Graham's (2015) study examined the relationships between Spanish and English oral proficiencies of students in California and Texas. The study found that initially students from homes where Spanish was dominantly used had slower rates of growth in English proficiency in the early elementary grades, but "there was an additive relationship Spanish and English oral proficiencies" (Cha et al., 2015, p. 950). Additive bilingualism or multilingualism is the development of proficiency in another language while maintaining and developing the home language. Therefore, the results of the study indicate that there is no negative correlation between developing the home language in the home environment on students achievement of English proficiency and suggests that there may even be a positive effect on the second language development by fostering home language development (Cha et al., 2015). The results of Bylund, Abrahamsson, and Hyltenstam's study (2012) of Spanish-Swedish bilinguals also confirmed that home

language maintenance does not hinder development of nativelike proficiency in the second language.

Further, there is not interference in vocabulary development in the second language by developing the home language (Hammer, Davison, Lawrence, & Miccio, 2009; Mancilla-Martinez, & Lesaux, 2011, as cited by Cha et. al, 2015, p. 937); multilinguals are more skilled at acquiring vocabulary than monolinguals (Kaushanskaya & Marian, 2009; as cited by Kroll & Fricke, 2014, p. 923). First language maintenance can support children in learning to read in their second language (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998, as cited by Anderson, Anderson, & Sadiq, 2017, p. 645). Thus, this demonstrates academic benefit in vocabulary acquisition and reading skills to fostering multilingualism.

The research by Palacios and Kibler (2016) indicated that reading mastery was negatively affected by the use of minority language in the home and delayed mastery of oral skills in the dominant societal language; however, by the time the participants were in fifth and eighth grade there was not a discrepancy in the levels of reading mastery when other school factors, primarily English language services were present. Although the results of this study demonstrate a possible negative effect of maintaining the home language on academics, the effects did not continue, if other factors, such as English language services, were present.

Additionally, Hsin and Snow (2017) assert that multilingualism positively impacts the skills of social perspective taking and metalinguistic awareness or the ability to think about language as a concept. According to the linguistic interdependence hypothesis, multilinguals are able to transfer metalinguistic knowledge of their home languages and

apply it to their developing language (Cummins, 1979, 2000, as cited by Cha et al., 2015, p, 937). Related to social perspective taking, through constantly balancing knowledge of more than one language and needing to select the appropriate language depending on the situation, multilinguals have a heightened awareness of others' perspectives which can be advantageous for certain genres of writing. Hsin and Snow (2017) compared the argumentative essay writing of fourth through sixth grade language minority, or emerging bilingual, students with English monolingual students and found that the emerging bilingual students incorporated more personal perspectives in their writing which ultimately strengthened their arguments. These results demonstrate that language minority students have a stronger tendency to apply social perspective taking in their academic writing (Hsin & Snow, 2017).

Agirdag's (2014) study compared the annual earnings of limited bilinguals, balanced bilinguals, and English dominant young people in their mid-twenties. This study found that limited bilinguals and English dominant language users had comparable earnings, but balanced bilinguals earned more than English dominant language users. Agirdag (2014) recognizes that the greater annual earnings of balanced bilinguals may be only in the beginning stages of their careers, as he only compared data of people in their mid-twenties. Agirdag (2014) suggests that "bilingualism might have a positive impact on educational attainment" which may be the cause of greater earning potential (p. 459). Therefore, this research shows that multilingualism may affect educational achievement which may then lead to greater future earnings.

Emotional and Behavioral Health Benefits of Multilingualism

Multilingualism may have benefits for the emotional and behavioral health of students. Han and Huang (2010) followed a group of Asian students starting in kindergarten. The study found that in fifth grade, balanced bilingual students and non-English dominant bilingual students had the lowest rates of problem behaviors in school; English dominant bilinguals and English monolinguals had similar rates of problem behaviors; and non-English monolinguals had the highest rates of problem behaviors. Being multilingual connects students with more than one culture and thus connects them to more than one perspective. The results suggest that being multilingual may help students "appreciate diversity and get along with peers and teachers" (Han & Huang, 2010, p. 837). Multilingual students are able to communicate and foster relationships with more people. The results may also indicate that students who are unable to communicate and thus connect with peers and teachers exhibit the highest level of behavior problems in elementary school (Han & Huang, 2010). Therefore, the results of this study suggest that there are emotional and behavioral benefits to multilingualism.

Section Summary

It is evident from the research presented in this section of Chapter Two that multilinguals can benefit cognitively, academically, and emotionally from their ability to use more than one language. This section examined some of the specific cognitive benefits in selective attention and executive functioning, academic benefits in vocabulary acquisition, reading skills, metalinguistic knowledge, and social perspective taking in writing, and emotional and behavior benefits of multilingualism and thus offered reasons why supporting home language maintenance is important. The next section will address

another reason why supporting home language maintenance is important: the possible

impacts of language loss.

Impact of Language Loss

This section discusses the impacts of language loss on families and individuals.

Oxford (as cited in Lai, 2009, p.10) defines language loss as "the loss or deterioration of

competence in one's first language or second language." Further, language loss includes a

lack of first language skill because of lack of development or delay, not just the

deterioration of proficiency (Guardado, 2002). Toppelberg and Collins (2010) provide an

example of the lack of development of the first language and state that, for children,

vocabulary needed in the school context may be stronger in English. Thus, children may

not develop the vocabulary needed in this context in their home language. Language loss

may also be called language attrition.

It should be noted that not all people believe home language maintenance is important

and assert that focusing on home language maintenance may hinder people's language

development of the dominant language and thus limit their opportunities (Nguyen &

Hamid, 2016). Odango (2015) also notes that language shift from the home language to

the dominant language can be seen to have a positive impact and give people educational,

professional, and social benefits.

Guardado (2002) notes two groups of people that are particularly affected by language

loss—immigrants and children with only one parent who speaks the minority language in

the household. This especially affects children who enter the school system and are

taught primarily in the new language. Language loss begins as soon as children enter the

school system (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010). Discussion of the results of language loss

provides context for the importance of home language maintenance.

Impact of Language Loss on Families

Language loss may negatively impact familial relationships as language loss can affect

family members' ability to communicate with one another. In Flores (2015)'s study, the

participant, an elementary student aged nine at the beginning of the study, noted that she

"avoided using German, even with her German-speaking cousins" (p. 274). It may be

difficult to maintain relationships when people, in this case cousins, do not feel

comfortable speaking the same language. Hinton's interviews (1999b) with about 250

Asian-American college-aged students from the University of California, Berkeley

revealed a similar perspective as students shared that language helped families maintain

strong connections to one another. Further, Wong Fillmore (2000) illustrates the

deterioration of communication, an increase of tension within the household, and a lack

of knowledge about what is happening in other members' lives when children lose their

home languages through the family history of a Chinese immigrant family to the United

States. Two of the children in this family were young, aged four and five, when the

family immigrated to the United States and the other two children were born in the

United States; within the span of a few years, all children were English dominant

speakers. Not only did the loss of the home language result in a breakdown of

communication between family members and place the burden of interpretation on the

child with the highest home language proficiency, but Wong Fillmore (2000) lists that the

family teaches:

A sense of belonging; knowledge of who one is and where one comes from; an

understanding of how one is connected to the important others and events in one's

life; the ability to deal with adversity; and knowing one's responsibility to self,

family, community. (p. 206)

Thus, if parents or other adult family members cannot communicate with their children,

their ability to teach these important lessons learned at home diminishes or becomes

impossible.

Further, learners who are more proficient in the dominant language of the society may

become ashamed of their parents or other relatives who struggle with the dominant

language or who desire to speak the home language in public (Hinton, 1999b). In

Hinton's interviews (1999b), one Korean-American student explains:

The fact that my parents do struggle with English has been at times difficult for me to

grow up with. Many times I have even been ashamed of them....This is an illustration

of the effects of immigrating to a different country, and some of the social "problems"

that have to be dealt with. (p. 28)

This student's perspective illustrates the negative effects language loss can have on

familial relationships. In addition to feelings of shame in public spaces, the reliance on

children as translators may serve as a role reversal in the parent-child relationship and

have detrimental effects on the relationship, such as loss of respect or loss of authority

(Ramsey, 2009, as cited by Puig, 2010).

Impact of Language Loss on Identity

Language impacts the language learner's identity and worldview which means that multilingual people are affected by multiple influences. Language influences how people interact and communicate with one another. Speaking and using home languages can both empower and encourage students who are learning the dominant language of the society because it is a way to give value to that part of their identity (Tadayon & Khodi, 2016). It is also important to note that people's linguistic identities continuously evolve as people interact and communicate with others (Odango, 2015).

Home language loss can negatively impact people's perception of themselves by causing feelings of failure (Guardado, 2002). Additionally, home language loss may also cause feelings of shame if people are not able to communicate with family members, including family members who live in other countries (Hinton, 1999b). Loss of language can lead to feelings of shame about the home culture and language, attempts to "adopt other cultural values," and even negative feelings "toward more recent immigrants of their own culture" (Guardado, 2002, p. 347). Beyond the negative impacts of language loss as more than the loss of communication between family members, home language loss can cause young people to question their identities and impact "youth mental and social health and the development of one's self-esteem" (Guerrero, Hishinuma, Andrade, Nishimura, & Cunanan, 2006; Guerrero, Nishimura, Chang, Ona, Cunanan, & Hishinuma, 2010; Rumbaut, 1994; as cited by Odango, 2015, p. 39). These negative feelings may occur because people do not feel like their identity is fully with their home culture or the dominant culture.

Nguyen and Hamid (2016) surveyed emerging trilingual college-aged students in the Central Highlands of Vietnam; students spoke a variety of ethnic languages as their home language in addition to Vietnamese and English. All students expressed that their home languages connected them to their ethnicity and to passing on tradition. Many students expressed that the ability to speak the ethnic language showed their identity as part of that group. Hinton's interviews (1999b) revealed similar perspectives that language connects people to their culture.

However, in Nguyen and Hamid's study (2016), when the researchers asked the hypothetical question of what two languages would they teach their children, if they could only choose two, the students' responses varied. Some students asserted that teaching their children their home language was essential as part of their identity and connection to their families and home cultures; however, other participants responded that they would choose Vietnamese and English because of the benefits, such as communication with other people of different backgrounds and career, educational, and travel opportunities. Though not all of the participants agreed when asked the hypothetical questions, all expressed that their home language was part of their identity and connected them to their home culture (Nguyen & Hamid, 2016).

Section Summary

This section discussed the impact of language loss on familial relationships and identity. Though some people view the advantages of and opportunities associated with acquiring the dominant language as more important than maintaining the home language, research, presented in this section of Chapter Two, has also shown the detrimental

effects, such as a breakdown of familial communication, the burden of interpretation on the child, and feelings of shame, associated with home language loss. The first two sections demonstrated why home language maintenance can be beneficial, both cognitively and for relationships. The next section examines factors that support home language maintenance or cause language loss as well strategies that teachers and families can implement to encourage elementary students in language maintenance.

<div style="text-align: center">**Factors of Home Language Maintenance or Loss**</div>

Factors that Support Home Language Maintenance

Research demonstrates several factors that support home language maintenance. These factors include: positive attitudes of important adults towards the home language, domains to use the home language, gender, amount and quality of the language input as well as instructional support in developing the home language, opportunities to use productive language skills, and literacy programs in the home languages.

Parents, teachers, and other important people's positive attitudes towards multilingualism is beneficial for the acquisition of languages (De Houwer, 2015) and similarly, important adults in the child's life can disempower students with negative attitudes towards home language maintenance (Cummins, 1996, as cited by Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard, & Freire, 2001). Goriot et al. (2016)'s research suggested that students' perception of their teacher's appreciation of their home language impacted the cognitive benefits of multilingualism. The German-Dutch bilingual students reported that they believed their teachers appreciate their home language at higher levels than the Turkish-Dutch students reported. The German-Dutch students outperformed the

Turkish-Dutch students in the nonverbal working memory tasks. Goriot et al. (2016) suggest that the German-Dutch bilingual students' higher performance may have resulted from several factors associated with their perception of their teacher's appreciation of their home language, including feeling acknowledged as a bilingual and more opportunities to switch between German and Dutch (Goriot et al., 2016). If young people see value in and a purpose for maintaining a language, there is a greater likelihood that a language will be maintained; this means there is a need for domains in which the language is used and valued in the community (Letsholo, 2009).

Young people may see greater value in maintaining the home language if they have a greater attachment to their home culture and traditions. The child's gender may impact home language maintenance as parents were generally stricter with their female children which may lead the female children to have a greater cultural attachment and desire to pass on cultural traditions (Duursma, Romero-Contreras, Szuber, Proctor, Snow, August, & Calderón, 2007, as cited by Kang, 2015).

Next, the quality and the frequency of the home language input in the home impacts home language development and does not negatively impact second (or third) language development (Cha et al., 2015; De Houwer, 2015). Flores (2015) asserts that the results of her study confirm that language learners "need uninterrupted exposure to both languages in order to retain bilingual competence" (p. 587). The results of Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux's study (2011) demonstrated that the use of Spanish, the minority language background of the participants of the study, in the home does not necessarily lead to the acquisition of Spanish. Children need both the use of the home

language in the home and instructional support in the home language which is not the case for developing and maintaining proficiency in the dominant societal language (Duursma et al., 2007, as cited by Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011, p. 537). Children need continuous opportunities for language input and development to acquire and maintain language proficiency in their home languages.

Kang (2015) surveyed Korean-American families around the United States and concluded that parental linguistic input was the most important factor for children maintaining their home language. The research conducted by Verdon, Mcleod, and Winsler (2014) had similar conclusions, finding that strongest predictor of home language maintenance was language use in the home. The use of the home language by both parents is beneficial for home language maintenance. Another factor that can support language maintenance in early childhood is the daycare setting; if children are cared for by a family member or someone who speaks the home language it is beneficial for home language maintenance (Verdon et al., 2014). Similar to the other studies, Guardado (2002) interviewed four native Spanish speaking families in Vancouver. Based on the children's experiences of language maintenance or loss, the study found that cultural pride, regular exposure to the home language, and adults' positive attitude and entertaining approach to language learning supported home language maintenance (Guardado, 2002).

Additionally, using the productive language skills of speaking and writing, as opposed to only the receptive language skills of listening and reading, is influential for maintaining the home language (Fisherman, 1991 as cited by Burn, Creeze, Hastwell,

Brugh, & Harrison, 2014, p. 385). In the research by Burn et al. (2014), the interviews

with adult refugee immigrants to New Zealand found that access to reading materials in

the home language, including digital reading materials like online news sites, social

media, and email, as well as motivation to maintain the home language were important

factors for home language maintenance. Thus, giving elementary students a variety of

reading opportunities in their home languages such as news articles and opportunities to

communicate with others in the home language, both in speaking and writing, may

support home language maintenance.

Anderson et al. (2017) reviewed bilingual literacy programs and found that these

programs have positives impacts of students' literacy development. They note that these

results are limited as there are not many bilingual literacy programs; this is possibly due

to funding and opportunity as the already existing programs are established in areas with

a large number of people from one linguistic background (Anderson et al., 2017).

Similarly, the research by Bylund and Diaz (2012) showed that participation in a home

language class lead to higher levels of language proficiency in the home language. This

study looked at twelfth grade Spanish-Swedish bilinguals living in Sweden and compared

students who attended home language classes to those who stopped attending home

language classes after eleventh grade. Besides higher levels of language proficiency in

Spanish, the home language classes may provide additional benefits to students such as

literacy skills development, academic language development, and creation of a linguistic

community (Bylund & Diaz, 2012).

Thus, the research demonstrates that a variety of factors support home language maintenance. These emphasize giving value to the home language and providing opportunities for students to use and develop their language skills in all the language domains, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Barriers to Home Language Maintenance

Causes for language loss differ by individual and language loss occurs over a period of time (Guardado, 2002). It is important to note that "children may choose to be monolingual" (Verdon et al., 2014, p. 170). The major causes of language loss include: societal pressure, peer pressure, and power of the dominant language. These factors are interrelated and work together to cause language loss. Another term for language loss is subtractive multilingualism which is the loss of a language or languages as another language or languages develops (Roberts, 1995, as cited by Verdon et al., 2014).

Societal Pressure. Children encounter societal pressure to speak the dominant language of the society. One Chinese-American student describes:

At the age of ten, my family on my mother's side immigrated to America and this is when I learned my second language. Going to school made me feel deaf, mute, and blind. I could understand nothing that was going on around me (Hinton, 1999b, p. 22).

As exemplified by this student's experience, students face the societal pressure to speak the dominant language of the society so that they can understand and participate in school and in the larger society. Societal pressure may lead to language rejection by the learner because of the rejection or devaluation of the heritage language by members of the society who speak the dominant language (Guardado, 2002).

The language used at home. The language spoken in the home impacts learners'

maintenance or loss of the first language. Hinton explains, "There is a direct connection

between fluency in a language and the degree to which that language is used" (1999a, p.

221). Families may shift to using the dominant language of the society in hopes of aiding

their children's school performance, responding to their children's teachers' or school's

request, or acquiescing to their children's language preference (Guardado, 2002;

Eisenchlas & Schalley, 2017). Further, Eisenchlas and Schalley's reflection (2017), based

on the survey response received from parents and caregivers after they completed the

home language maintenance workshop, stated that families may choose to use the

dominant language of the society, in this case English, in their homes as an opportunity

for them to practice the dominant language. Thus, the families may shift to use of the

dominant language at home because of their opinion that is beneficial for the children and

for themselves.

Additionally, older siblings may speak the heritage language more proficiently, but

shift to using primarily the dominant language of the society in their homes as they

progress through school; thus, younger siblings hear the dominant language of the society

at home more often and as a result, gain or maintain less proficiency in the heritage

language (Guardado, 2002). Further, if a lower level of language proficiency in the home

language is acquired, it is more likely that the language user will shift to using to the

dominant societal language (Smieja & Batibo, 2000, as cited by Letsholo, 2009). Since

families desire the success of their children, they may support the use of the dominant

language of the society in their homes, leading to a loss of the heritage language.

Lack of linguistic community. Immigrants who are linguistically isolated from other speakers of their heritage language face another obstacle to maintaining their heritage language—lack of linguistic community. Linguistic communities provide a meaningful opportunity for speakers to use their home language outside of the home; lack of a linguistic community can lead to a deterioration of language skills (Hinton, 1999a; Letsholo, 2009). A lack of a linguistic community increases the influence of the pressure from society to speak the dominant language because there is a limited time and space where the heritage language is used and understood.

Flores' (2015) longitudinal study on language loss of one elementary student who migrated from Germany to Portugal and experienced language loss in her second language (German) demonstrates the impact of the loss of a linguistic community on language maintenance. Prior to relocating back to Portugal, the participant demonstrated proficiency in her family's home language, Portuguese, and the dominant language of the country she resided in, German. Within eighteen months, her language skills in German showed signs of loss in all areas that were examined, including subject expression, case and gender marking, verbal morphology, and verb placement as well as language loss in lexical retrieval. The participant noted that in Portugal she had limited opportunities to use German and additionally initially she used German with her brother, but within months they had transitioned to using Portuguese when communicating. The results of this study demonstrate that the lack of language input and opportunity to use the language can lead to language loss (Flores, 2015). Further, a lack of a linguistic community for

purposeful, authentic use of the language can be a challenge for language maintenance (Guardado, 2002).

    Peer pressure. The desire to assimilate and to be accepted by peers or by society impacts language loss. Learners face peer pressure to be the same as everyone else. They develop feelings of shame instead of pride about their heritage language and culture (Hinton, 1999a). This peer pressure can lead to language rejection.

    Negative feedback. An obstacle to first language maintenance is negative feedback given by other, more proficient speakers of the first language. While negative feedback does not directly pressure learners to speak the dominant language of the society, it discourages them from speaking the heritage language. Krashen (as cited by Lai, 2009) explains imperfect speakers of the heritage language are often dissuaded from using the heritage language because of error correction and censure by more proficient heritage language speakers. This leads to less input and less proficiency in the heritage language.

    Lack of meaningful opportunities for first language use. For many learners, a lack of meaningful opportunities for first language use demonstrates the power of the dominant language of the society and causes loss of the heritage language. Chumak-Horbatsch's (1999) study of Ukrainian families examines the language shift of the children through interviews conducted when the children were in early preschool and in early adolescence. The interviews took place with ten mother-child pairs. There was ten years between the interviews. The children in Chumak-Horbatsch's (1999) study of language loss express a disinterest in reading or speaking Ukrainian for reasons such as "Ukrainian books are boring," or "Why should I?" (para. 28). The results of the study

showed that the heritage language became less meaningful over time because learners lost the time and place where the heritage language was necessary (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999). The primary language used in their school or social settings was the dominant language of the country and they experience language shift in their homes, resulting in the ability to use the second language predominantly.

Societal and peer pressure, the language used at home, a lack of a linguistic community, negative feedback, and a lack of meaningful opportunities to use the language all act as barriers to home language maintenance.

Strategies for Teachers to Support Home Language Maintenance

Teachers can influence students' desire to maintain their home languages. It is important to note that to support students in maintaining their home languages, teachers and families should collaborate (Wong Fillmore, 2000).

Teachers can work to value the diversity of languages and cultures in their classrooms and encourage students to utilize and share their home languages and cultures. Lai (2009) suggests the incorporation of important holidays and traditions into the school day as well as allowing students to lead these projects which supports home language maintenance. One adaptable project teachers could implement is an interview project where students are required to interview a parent, other family member, or neighbor about a specific topic and students are allowed and encouraged to conduct the interview in their home language (Rogovin, 1998, as cited by Puig, 2010). Incorporating opportunities for students to use their home languages in school may show students that their school values their home language in addition to giving them an opportunity to practice their home

language (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2001). In incorporating students' home languages and cultures, teachers may help reduce the impact of societal and peer pressure on students to value becoming proficient English users, at the expense of their home languages (Wong Fillmore, 2000).

Additionally, Santos, McClelland, and Handley (2011) researched adult English as a second language (ESL) classes and practices for connecting a specific content topic to culture. Although the practices examined were created for adult learners, some of the practices may be adapted to elementary students as practices to help students share and value their familial cultures and traditions. Teachers can provide texts connected to students cultural backgrounds and lead discussions around how students would react if they were the character in the text (Santos et al., 2011). These classroom practices would hopefully create a classroom culture where students feel that their home cultures are valued and thus lead to students' greater desire to maintain their home cultures and languages.

Further, teachers can support students' home language maintenance by developing relationships with families that foster a deeper understanding of each family's cultural practices and opinions of multilingualism. Teachers can educate families about the benefits of multilingualism for their children and support the families' decisions about their family language policy (Eisenchlas & Schalley, 2017).

Teachers can support home language maintenance through collaborating with families on how to best encourage and work with their student, providing opportunities for students to use their home languages in school and to learn about different cultural

backgrounds of the students in the class, educating families on the benefits of multilingualism, and supporting parents home language policies.

Strategies for Families to Support Home Language Maintenance

One strategy families can use to support home language maintenance is by creating and implementing a family language policy. The family language policy consists of how and which languages are practiced in the home, how adults manage language use in the home, and adults' beliefs about the languages (Kang, 2015). The family language policy should be implemented consistently and provide meaningful opportunities for language use (Clyne, 2005, as cited in Eisenchlas & Schalley, 2017, p. 3). Parents and other adult family members can develop language practices that encourage students' language growth and continued development throughout childhood and follow the cultural tradition of their families. Depending on the cultural tradition of the family, parents and other adult family members can help their children develop language skills in oral traditions or literacy (Wong Fillmore, 2000). To support the continuing development of their children's language skills, the parents in Guardado's (2002) study whose children were successfully maintaining their home language were being corrected when they made linguistic mistakes. Further, De Houwer (2015) advocates for a family language policy that promotes active multilingualism; this means that parents and other adult family members require their children to respond in the language they are addressed in. De Houwer (2015) also asserts that if both parents speak the home language at home, it is more likely the children will speak both the home language and the dominant society language.

It is important to note that parents' own language learning experience and what they view as practical and reasonable to implement with their children impacts family language policy (King & Fogle, 2006). Based the family language policy, there are various strategies parents may use to support home language maintenance in their families.

Families can expose the children to the pop culture from their home countries or in their home language, including literature and songs (Guardado, 2002). Exposing children to literature and music in the home language encourages children to use the home language because they are engaging and entertaining methods of learning. One way of exposing children to the language spoken at home is by listening to radio stations that use the home language (Letsholo, 2009). A specific resource available to support Spanish-English bilingual families, as well as teachers, is the Read Conmigo program which offers free books, online games, and an app that supports building reading skills in both Spanish and English ("'Read Conmigo' program shows the benefits of being bilingual," 2015; "Read Conmigo: A resource for families and educators," 2013).

Lai (2009) suggests that travel to the home country, insistence of the use of the home language, and finding a community of other speakers of the same home language can support home language maintenance. The parents interviewed by Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. (2001) echo these suggestions to support home language maintenance and additionally included home language classes and using the home language to write letters to family members outside of the home and thus maintaining contact and relationships with family.

Additionally, the research conducted by Eisenchlas, Schalley, and Moyes (2016) concluded that online games can be beneficial to the development of emergent literacy skills in the home language. The study looked at early elementary German-English bilinguals in Australia and found that self-directed play of three online games increased the participants emergent literacy skills in German (Eisenchlas et al., 2016). The use of online games is a strategy both teachers and families can implement to support students in developing literacy skills in their home languages.

Further, research shows that oral language skills are tied to literacy skills. Ijalba (2015) conducted a study that educated mothers of students who struggle with language acquisition on early literacy interventions; the study used interactive picture books and the mothers committed to reading at least fifteen minutes a day with their children. When compared to the control group, the study found that the children of mothers who implemented the intervention learned more words than their peers with an increase in the amount of time reading with their mothers and an increase in the number of books in the home. The results of this study suggest that shared reading in the home language support language acquisition overall (Ijalba, 2015) and vocabulary and grammar learning (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004 as cited by Ijalba, 2015).

Creating a family language policy will help adults establish the language goals they have for their children. After creating a family language policy, parents and other adult family members can implement a variety of strategies such as reading together and writing to family members to support their children in developing and maintaining their home language.

Section Summary

This section discussed factors that encourage home language maintenance, including

valuing of the language and opportunities for use, and factors that serve as barriers to

home language maintenance, including societal and peer pressure and lack of domains or

a community where the language is used. Additionally, this section provided strategies

for teachers and families on how to support home language maintenance, including

specific opportunities for language practice. The previous two sections provided reasons

of why supporting home language maintenance is valuable and this section identified

how home languages can be maintained.

The Importance of this Research

With the continued presence of a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds in

schools in the United States, it is essential for teachers to develop an understanding of

language learning and its impacts on students. Though teachers in my school building

encourage families to develop their children's language skills and vocally support home

language maintenance during conferences with families, there is a lack of explanation to

the parents about why home language is important and how teachers and parents can both

work together to support this goal. Further, families in my school context have expressed

a desire to pass on their linguistic traditions to their children, but that their children are

not interested, strategies included in this research may help families motivate or

encourage their children to engage in home language learning.

Gap Statement

Despite the desire from both the teachers and the families to encourage students in maintaining their home languages, there is a gap in this type of resource for both teachers and families that explicitly outlines strategies that can be implemented. With the research from this literature review, I created two resources: one for teachers and one for families. The resource for teachers provides information about the benefits of multilingualism and the impact of language loss as well as provide strategies teachers can use at school; this will enable teachers to have research-backed conversations with parents and support students in the school setting. The resource for families also includes context for why home language maintenance is beneficial as well as provides concrete strategies families can implement. Overall, the purpose is to provide both teachers and families concrete strategies for supporting students in home language maintenance.

Summary

This chapter explored the benefits of multilingualism, the impacts of language loss on the family and the individual, factors that support home language maintenance or loss, and strategies for teachers and families to support home language maintenance. The guiding question of this research is: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students? The project following this research provides teachers and families for reasons why supporting home language maintenance is important and how to support students in doing so. These questions guided my research and the creation of the project: 1. What are the benefits of multilingualism? 2. What are the impacts of language loss? 3. What are the factors that support home language maintenance or home language loss and what are strategies that

promote home language maintenance? Answering these questions provides context for why teachers and families should implement strategies to support home language maintenance.

The first section of the chapter discussed the cognitive, academic, and emotional and behavior benefits of multilingualism. The second section explored the negative impacts of language loss on familial relationships including the breakdown of communication, the burden of interpretation, and the struggle to pass on cultural values and traditions. The final section of the research discussed factors that support home language maintenance such as positive attitudes of important adults and engaging opportunities to practice language as well as factors that serve as barriers to home language maintenance such as societal and peer pressure and lack of opportunities to use the language or lack of a linguistic community. In Chapter Three, I provide a detailed explanation of the project including the context, intended audience, and rationale for the format of the project.

Chapter Three

Project Description

Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the project based on the research question: What are

strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early

elementary students? This project identified why supporting home language maintenance

is beneficial and provided concrete ways for teachers and families to support home

language maintenance. In this chapter, I describe the context of the project including an

overview of the project, setting and audience, timeline, and project description. Including

all of these components is important because it provides a clear explanation of why this

project is important and how, when, and by whom this project will be utilized. Next, I

included a rationale of the format of the project which described the benefits of the

chosen format. Understanding the rationale for the format of the project is important

because it explains the accessibility of the project to the intended recipients- teachers and

families. Finally, I summarize the chapter.

Context

This project utilized the knowledge gained from completing the literature review and

provided information about why supporting home language maintenance is beneficial and

how teachers and families can support home language maintenance for early elementary

students. In the United States, more than one in five students, aged five to seventeen,

speak a language other than English at home and in Minnesota, one in eight students,

speak a language other than English at home (Camarota & Ziegler, 2014). With a significant portion of school-aged students speaking a language other than English at home, it is important for teachers and families to understand why supporting home language maintenance is beneficial and how they can do so.

This project is comprised of two different, related resources which are intended for different audiences; however, both resources will be used within the same setting. Both will be distributed and used within my school building and potentially to other elementary schools and early childhood programs in my district. In my district, 12.7 percent of the students are EL students which equals about 1350 students (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018); in my school, 17.3 percent of the students are EL students which equals about eighty students (Vollmuth, 2018). The top four language groups, not including English, in my district are Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, and Chinese, but there are seventy-six different language spoken by students in the district (Stenglein & Young, 2017). Parents or guardians share the languages understood or spoken by the students during the enrollment process on the Minnesota Home Language Survey. Based on the information provided in the Minnesota Home Language Survey, students are screened to see if they qualify for EL service. My district uses several EL program service models, ranging from pull-out to co-teaching, depending on the school and student age.

Both resources are online tools that can be shared either electronically or printed and shared. The first resource, a Google Slides presentation, is intended for other elementary teachers, both mainstream teachers and English language teachers. This resource will be

shared with the kindergarten, first, and second grade mainstream teachers I collaborate

with and the other English language teacher in my school building. In the fall, I will offer

to meet with each grade level team to present and answer questions about the Google

Slides presentation that includes strategies for teachers to support home language

maintenance and links to the family handout. Meeting with each grade level team will

allow us to discuss their specific grade level and students and will eliminate the barrier of

finding a time that works for three different schedules. The presentations can occur in any

classroom, depending on the preference of the teachers on the team. This presentation can

be presented in one session that would last between thirty and forty-five minutes,

depending on the depth of the discussion and amount of questions. Additionally, I will

share this resource with the English Learner Program Specialist in my district who will be

able to distribute the resource throughout the district, as wanted or needed. The benefit of

this resource for teachers is a concise, research-based explanation of the benefits of

multilingualism and the impact of language loss and a list of specific strategies they can

try in their classroom.

The second resource, a Google Doc handout, is intended for families of early

elementary students who speak a language other than the dominant language of society,

English in this context, at home. I will also share and explain this resource to the

kindergarten, first, and second grade mainstream teachers and the other English language

teacher in my building as well as the EL Program Specialist. I will share this resource

with the families of students who speak a language other than English at home during fall

parent-teacher conferences. The benefit of this resource for families is a concise

explanation of why they should support home language maintenance and specific strategies of how they can do so that they are able to access and use immediately.

These audiences were selected because in previous parent-teacher conferences questions such as "Should I speak English with my child?" and "What do I do if my child doesn't want to speak my language?" were asked. While teachers encouraged maintaining home languages, these resources are beneficial as they provide a research based explanation of the benefits of multilingualism and impact of language loss and concrete strategies on how to support home language maintenance, particularly focusing on early elementary aged students. This resource will provide an opportunity for teachers and families to collaborate which is beneficial for students' home language maintenance (Wong Fillmore, 2000).

Both resources for this project were created during the summer 2018 semester which concluded in August 2018. I will share the project with other teachers at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year and parents during fall parent-teacher conferences.

The Google Slides presentation includes speaker notes and is organized, as follows:

1. Introduction: topic title

2. Introduction: statistics about the number of students who speak more than one language nationally and in Minnesota

3. Introduction: our school's statistics on the number of EL students

4. Learning targets: description of what teachers will learn in this presentation

5. List of terms: explanation of terms used in the presentation

6. Importance of home language: two Ted Talks by young people explaining the importance of their home languages to them and the impact of home language maintenance

7. Turn and Talk: reflection on the videos

8. Benefits of Multilingualism: overview

9. Benefits of Multilingualism: explanation of cognitive benefits of multilingualism

10. Benefits of Multilingualism: explanation of academic benefits of multilingualism

11. Benefits of Multilingualism: explanation of emotional and behavioral benefits of multilingualism

12. Turn and Talk: reflection on the benefits of multilingualism

13. Impact of Language Loss: explanation of the impact of language loss on families and individuals

14. Overview of Factors that Support Home Language Maintenance

15. Overview of Barriers to Home Language Maintenance

16. Turn and Talk: reflection and connection to teaching practice

17. Specific Strategies Teachers can use to Support Home Language Maintenance in School

18. Ideas for Collaboration between Teachers and Families

19. Overview of Strategies Families can use to Support Home Language Maintenance: inclusion of a link to the Google Doc handouts for families

20. Review of Learning Targets: restatement of learning targets and opportunity for questions

21. Questions: opportunity for questions

22. Google form: audience assessment of effectiveness of the presentation

23. References

24. References

25. References

26. References

27. References

28. References

The Google Slides presentation introduced the learning targets of the presentation in slide four and revisited them at the end of the presentation on slide twenty. The intended outcome of the presentation is that teachers will be able to describe why students should maintain their home languages and that teachers will be able to list ways to support students in maintaining their home languages. These outcomes will be assessed with the Google Form at the end of the presentation.

Additionally, the Google Slides presentation was framed by Knowles' (1992) principles of adult learning. Knowles' (1992) principles of adult learning include "that the learners be active participants in the process of inquiry" and "that the process should start with and build on the backgrounds, needs, interests, problems, and concerns of the participants" (p. 11). Based on these principles, the presentation was created to incorporate times for active reflection and connection to the audiences' teaching practices and opportunities for questions. In the presentation, there are four slides that ask the audience to turn and talk with a partner with guiding questions that encourage active

reflection on the information presented. Additionally, there is an opportunity for questions and one of the questions in the Google Form offers the audience an opportunity to share their concerns and ask additional questions.

The Google Doc handout is concise and focuses primarily on specific strategies families can implement with their children to support home language maintenance. There is two versions of the document: the first will have sections one through four and the second will have sections one through five. One of the major language backgrounds of the families at my school is Spanish. The Google Doc handout will include:

1. Summary of Benefits of Multilingualism

2. Summary of the Impact of Language Loss

3. Overview of Factors that Support Home Language Maintenance

4. Strategies for Families of all Language Backgrounds, including resources such as how to find books in different languages at the library and questions to ask children while reading together

5. Specific Resources for Spanish-Speaking Families

In summary, the project includes two resources with reasons why it is beneficial to support home language maintenance and strategies to support home language maintenance for early elementary students. The first resource, a Google Slides presentation, is intended for teachers and the second resource, a Google Doc handout, is intended for families. The resources were created during the summer semester of 2018 and will be shared with the intended audiences in the fall of 2018. The next section will discuss the rationale for the chosen format for this project.

Rationale

I used Google Slides and Google Docs because my school district uses Googled-based email addresses and teachers have received training in how to use Google applications, such as Google Slides, Google Docs, Google Drive, and Google Classroom. Teachers and other staff in the district know how to utilize Google resources which will allow them to save, copy, navigate, and share the resources easily.

Google Slides and Google Docs are shared through entering the intended recipient's email address which sends them an invitation. The owner of the Google Slides presentation or Google Doc can choose whether the recipient has the ability to only view the resource or if they can comment or edit. However, the recipient may make their own copy to add their own additional notes or delete a portion that is not relevant for their current group of students.

Creating the resources through Google Slides and Google Docs allows teachers to have continual, online access to the resources. By saving it in their Google Drives, teachers can access the resources at any time to print copies to share or share electronically. This will increase the effectiveness of the resource and the likelihood of teachers continuing to use and reference the resources.

The resources I created include specific strategies for how teachers and families can support home language maintenance, such as how to access library books and programs, questions to ask children while reading, and relevant online games for Spanish speakers. Creating the resources as a Google Slides presentation and a Google Doc allows for them

to be easily edited as different resources that support home language maintenance become available.

Further, my school district trains teachers on how to use the Seesaw app, especially in kindergarten, first, and second grade. Seesaw is a resource that allows teachers and students to share work completed in the classroom and send messages to parents. The resource for families could be shared with them by their classroom teacher through Seesaw. This way families would have digital access to the resource and it can be shared with families who cannot attend conferences.

In summary, the two resources created for this project were made in Google Slides and Google Docs because this format is easy to access, save, share, and utilize. The next section of this chapter will discuss the plan to assess the project's effectiveness.

Project Effectiveness

The Google Slides presentation includes a Google form at the end of the presentation. This allows the teachers to provide feedback and the presenter to assess the effectiveness of the presentation and whether the presentation met the intended learning targets of describing why students should maintain their home language and listing ways teachers can support students in home language maintenance. The Google form responses are sent to my email and the form includes six questions:

1. Linear scale of one to five, with one being 'not at all' and five being 'like an expert': I can describe why students should maintain their home languages.

2. A fill in the blank question: One reason students should maintain their home languages is….

3. Linear scale of one to five, with one being 'not at all' and five being 'like an expert': I can list ways to support students in maintaining their home languages.

4. A fill in the blank question: One way I can support students in maintaining their home language is by….

5. Linear scale of one to five, with one being 'not at all' and five being 'absolutely': This information is beneficial for my teaching and I will implement something I learned into my teaching practice.

6. Is there any other feedback you want to give the presenter?

The Google doc handout adds to the effectiveness of family-teacher collaboration as it provides another resource to share with families and specific ways families can support their children at home. To assess the effectiveness of the handout, teachers will ask families about their use of the information in the spring conferences. The next section of this chapter will summarize the chapter and introduce the following the chapter.

Summary

This project seeks to educate both teachers and families on strategies to support students in maintaining their home languages. Parents, teachers, and other important people's positive attitudes towards multilingualism is beneficial for the acquisition of languages (De Houwer, 2015) and similarly, important adults in the child's life can disempower students with negative attitudes towards home language maintenance (Cummins, 1996, as cited by Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard, & Freire, 2001). Teachers and parents can influence students' desire to maintain their home languages and can support students in home language maintenance through collaborating (Wong Fillmore, 2000).

This project provides two resources: one intended for teachers and one intended for families listing the reasons why home language maintenance is important and strategies to support home language maintenance based on the research question: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students? These resources can be used to as starting point for discussion and collaboration on how to best support students. Since the resources were created as a Google Slides presentation and a Google Doc handout, they can be modified in the future to best fit the needs of the intended students and families.

In Chapter Four, I reflect on my capstone project including reflecting on what I learned, revisiting the literature review, exploring possible implications and limitations, and reflecting on the benefits of the project on my profession.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

The project created based on this research serves as a tool for EL teachers, mainstream teachers, and families to understand the importance of home language maintenance and to support home language maintenance for early elementary students. This project was created based on the research question: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students?

Chapter Four begins with a reflection on what I have learned through the capstone process as a researcher, writer, and learner. Next, I reflect on the most influential learnings from the literature review which led to the development of the two parts of the project: the resource for teachers and the resource for families. This chapter also discusses the implications and limitations of the project. The project is intended as a resource for both teachers and families; however, some families may not find the layout or content of the parent handout beneficial for them because of their views on multilingualism or their family language policy. This would require further collaboration between teachers and families to work to best support the student. Additionally, this chapter offers recommendations for future research projects to build on the research completed in this capstone. Next, I describe how I plan to communicate the results of my project and how this project is a benefit to the profession. Finally, I include a short summary.

Reflection

The Learning Process

 At the beginning of this process, I was narrowly focused on wanting to research strategies for teachers and families to support home language maintenance and create resources to support both audiences in achieving that aim. However, through the research process I realized the necessity of including reasons why home language maintenance is beneficial and the importance of discussions with families about their opinions on multilingualism and home language maintenance. Conversations with families can help educators understand the family's language policy because not all people believe home language maintenance is important and assert that focusing on home language maintenance may hinder language development of the dominant language, in this case English, and thus limit their child's opportunities (Nguyen & Hamid, 2016). Odango (2015) also notes that language shift from the home language to the dominant language can be seen to have a positive impact and give people educational, professional, and social benefits. Thus, through the research process, I grew as a researcher and learner in better understanding why all people may not believe that home language maintenance is important and that the strategies I present in my project may be better received if the resources include benefits of home language maintenance and the impact of language loss.

 Although I had previously completed research projects, I had never researched a topic to this extent. This in-depth research challenged me to become more organized and critical in selecting sources and improved my ability to synthesize materials. Based on

my professional experience and a previous research paper I completed on the causes of language loss, I am passionate about this topic and about wanting to provide other teachers and the families I work with research-based strategies to support students in maintaining and developing their home language. Through the process of reading research studies and personal testimonies, I grew as a learner and I developed a more critical eye for selecting resources to share, a greater understanding of the importance of teacher and family collaboration to support students, and empathy for the challenges families face in balancing home language maintenance and dominant language acquisition.

The Literature Review

There were several articles that proved beneficial for understanding the perspective of multilingual families. Hinton (1999a) and Hinton (1999b) detailed interviews with college-aged students whose families spoke a language other than English at home. These articles gave the student's perspective on developing multilingualism and the impact of language loss on the individual and the family. Guardado (2002) interviewed Spanish-speaking families; this research also allowed the reader to see how developing or not developing the home language impacted these families, as well provided concrete strategies to support home language maintenance strategies that had been beneficial for these families. This research was important for the capstone as it provided perspectives of multilingual families and offered strategies that were beneficial for their children's home language maintenance.

DeHouwer's (2015) article clearly outlined factors that support home language maintenance including the benefits of positive adult attitudes towards multilingualism in language acquisition. This assertion about the benefits of positive attitudes was confirmed with the results of Goriot et al.'s (2016) study that found that teacher appreciation of the home language led to greater cognitive benefits of multilingualism. Further, DeHouwer (2015) stated that the quality and frequency of language input impacts language acquisition which is supported by the results of Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux's study (2011) which demonstrated that the use of Spanish, the minority language background of the participants of the study, in the home does not necessarily lead to the acquisition of Spanish. Letsholo (2009) described the importance of domains for language use for language maintenance and development as it provides not only an opportunity and community to practice with, but a purpose for using the language. This research was important for completing the capstone project as it stressed the importance of emphasizing continual opportunities and places for language practice and development.

Many researchers, including Kang (2015) and DeHouwer (2015), listed that the first step in families working towards home language maintenance is establishing a family language policy. Wong Fillmore (2000) stated that these policies should reflect the linguistic traditions of their family's cultural background. One way teachers can support home language maintenance is through understanding and supporting families' language policies. The article by Wong Fillmore (2000) emphasizes the importance of teacher and family collaboration and Eisenchlas and Schalley (2017) state that teachers can educate families on the benefits of multilingualism. This research was important for deciding on

the format of the project as it demonstrates the connectedness of both pieces of the project by emphasizing the importance of teacher and parent collaboration to support students.

The reflection on the literature review reconfirmed the importance of offering students' opportunities and domains for using the home language and collaborating with families because to acquire and to maintain language children need continuous opportunities for input and development.

Project Implications

One possible implication of this project is that it will not be well-received by other teachers in the building. I have had several conversations with one grade level team about the research I was reading and what I had learned thus far. However, I did not conduct a survey with all the teachers in my building or the EL teachers in the district to determine their level of interest in the topic. The resource I created for teachers may be viewed as another obligation to fulfill in the long list of tasks that need to be completed each day. Additionally, other teachers may not be open to sharing their conference time with families to discuss families' opinions on multilingualism and home language maintenance and share the resource for families with them. Further, families may feel overwhelmed with the information presented to them at conferences and/or not know what questions to ask about the handout given to them.

Project Limitations

One project limitation is time. Conference times with families are limited and it is difficult to provide families with all the information teachers may want to share. Further,

since I work across grade levels, often several of my students have conferences scheduled at the same time. This limits my ability to be at all conferences and/or to be there for a significant portion of the conference.

Another project limitation is language. For the next school year, my students' home languages will include: Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, Uzbek, and Russian. The resource for families includes strategies to support home language maintenance that could be used with any home language, but it requires that families find books or music in their home language and the handout is written in English. Additionally, I created a resource with the same information but tailored for Spanish-speaking families. Because I speak Spanish and I have native-Spanish speaking friends, I was able to translate portions of the resource into Spanish and look through and evaluate Spanish-language resources. Both time and language ability were limitations in completing this same task for other languages. Further, some families may not be literate in their home languages so written materials in English or their home language may not be accessible to all families.

Future Projects and Recommendations

Based on the resource for families that could be given to a family with any language background, I created a resource for Spanish-speaking families. I included websites with educational games, the questions to ask a child while reading written in Spanish, a list of Spanish radio stations in the area, and directions for finding books and events in Spanish at the library written in Spanish. In the future, the resource for families could be translated into other languages and language specific resources could be found and

included for other home languages. Within this future work, families could be asked for strategies that they have found beneficial in their homes and their expertise could be added to the resource.

Based on the findings from the literature review, I would recommend that families first discuss and decide on their family language policy. I would recommend that teachers and families start by implementing one strategy presented in the resources and evaluating the successes and limitations of the strategy and then eventually incorporate other strategies into their classrooms or homes.

Communication and Use of the Results

The twenty-second slide of the Google Slides presentation includes a link to a Google Form. The Google Form allows teachers an opportunity to offer feedback on what they learned from the presentation, ways they can use what they learned from the presentation, and any other feedback they want to share about the presentation. This will allow me to modify the presentation for clarification or inclusion of more information and to clarify any misconceptions or questions about the content.

During spring conferences, I will have a follow-up discussion with families about the usefulness of the resource for families and any of the strategies they implemented. This will allow for continued dialogue and the opportunity to edit the resource to best support families.

Benefit to the Profession

This project is an example of one professional sharing research and knowledge of a topic to benefit other professionals and the school community. This project seeks to

support other educators in collaboration and communication with families by allowing them to be more prepared and have research-backed answers to questions about what languages should be used at home and the benefits of developing and maintaining students' home languages. It also provides both other teachers and families with concrete strategies to implement to support students' home language maintenance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reflected on what I learned through the capstone process as a researcher, writer, and learner and revisited and reflected on the most important research from the literature review. Additionally, I described the implications and limitations of the project and stated directions for further research and recommendations based on the project. I discussed how I will communicate and use the results of the project and how the project is a benefit to the profession.

My literature review, based on the research question: What are strategies teachers and families can use to support home language maintenance for early elementary students?, guided the direction and creation of the capstone project: a resource for teachers and a resource for families to support home language maintenance for early elementary students. It is my hope that the project is beneficial for both audiences and that the strategies offered help both teachers and families better support students in the development and maintenance of their home languages.

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