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A Plurilingual Approach for Secondary EFL Students in Panama

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by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A plurilingual teaching approach, one that values the linguistic skills of each individual student and the linguistic diversity of the classroom, is an important methodology to help students reach their full linguistic potential (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). Research in language related fields such as bilingualism, critical language awareness (CLA) and second language acquisition (SLA) have demonstrated that emerging bilingual students are more successful when they are able to leverage their full linguistic repertoire, including their first language (L1), to learn English (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Grosjean, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2013). Researchers have also identified negative attitudes and insecurities towards their L1 among heritage Spanish speakers (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005; Martinez, 2003). This research is significant for this capstone project because without the confidence and knowledge of the linguistic potential of their full linguistic repertoire, learners will not be fully invested in a plurilingual approach.

The research in bilingualism, SLA, and CLA is relevant to this capstone because it provides a framework to address two related problems I have identified at an international school in Panama, Central America, where I worked for five years. These include: 1. low CLA awareness among secondary English as a Foreign language (EFL) students and 2. A lack of training in bilingual pedagogies for EFL teachers. By reviewing the literature in more than one discipline, I will consider studies in subject areas that can effectively address the problems I have identified. This multidisciplinary approach is called for since I am interested in exploring the identity of bilingual students, what makes them unique as learners, and how teachers can most effectively instruct in this EFL

context. This capstone project will be guided by the following research question: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* A literature review on a single topic would, undoubtedly, allow us to cover one area more extensively, but it would not provide the same background information that is called for given the problems I have identified in this EFL context.

It is also the aim of this project to describe the evolution of my thinking about bilingualism and how it can be leveraged to best serve emerging bilingual students. The fact that I am exploring an EFL context is significant because much of the research in the topics I will be exploring are from an ESL context, yet most English learners throughout the world are EFL students. By considering the classroom experiences of EFL students from this Central American context, including their unique challenges and possible solutions, this study may be applicable to other EFL contexts facing similar issues. Finally, the project will include a plan for a professional development training program for teachers in the Panamanian EFL context. An EFL context is one where English is the non-dominant language.

Context of Project

The context for this project is a K – 12 school in the province of Panama Oeste, located about 1.5 hours by car from the capital city of Panama City, Panama, Central America. About 50% of the students are Panamanian and the remaining 50% is made up of South Americans, North Americans (mainly the US and Canada), Europeans, and South Africans. The school is an English immersion school where most subjects are taught in English and all students receive one class in Spanish. Most of the Panamanian and other non-English speakers are attracted to the school because many of the teachers

are native English speakers and it is known to graduate students who are proficient in English. This is important to mention since the public schools in Panama do not have a high level of English instruction and English language skills are valued in Panama because it opens more career opportunities for students with a high level of proficiency. During my five years of employment at this international school I worked as a middle and secondary school humanities teacher and in administration as an assistant principal for the primary grades.

Personal Rationale for Project

My experiences as a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish, EFL teacher in Panama, and TESOL graduate student have profoundly influenced my interest in bilingualism and its related pedagogies. I grew up in St. Paul, MN as a native English speaker and learned Spanish during a study abroad program in Costa Rica while in college followed by a three-year stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Panama. Learning a second language was a life changing event for me in that it has allowed me to communicate with a new set of speech communities while opening my worldview to belief systems that would be difficult, if not impossible, to access without fluency in Spanish. Moreover, my ability to speak Spanish has allowed a certain access to their ways of thinking that has made me attuned to their developing bilingualism.

My work as an EFL teacher has allowed me to implement bilingual pedagogies and observe their effectiveness with my students. A lesson I taught on translanguaging (the intentional use of students´L1 for instructional purposes) in an English language arts (ELA) class was significant in the way that students used their L1 (Spanish) to deconstruct a nonfiction text in English. During this translanguaging activity, my

students demonstrated complex thinking and analysis that was detailed and thorough. Though I did not have an English-only example to compare my observations, based on other lessons with the same students, I am confident in my belief that the translanguaging allowed them to create an analysis that was more nuanced and complex than would have been possible with an English-only approach. I also observed a high level of motivation among the students to complete the task.

   This short translanguaging activity that explored the use of my students' L1 to help them learn the target language, and their enthusiasm for the lesson, contributed to the realization that my students were open to exploring their bilingualism. Through a sociolinguistics class at Hamline University, I was exposed to another topic in bilingualism, critical language awareness (CLA), that led to further exploration into bilingualism and ways to promote this in my classroom. CLA is a topic that I will explore in greater detail in Chapter Two, but it is important to mention here that it encompasses topics such as linguistic diversity, language and identity, and the mixing of a student´s L1 and L2. It also includes pedagogy to both measure the CLA of students and provide them with instruction in sociolinguistics. Becoming familiar with the research in CLA has helped me to develop my personal language identity in a way that has better equipped me to teach my students topics in sociolinguistics and language consciousness.

   The scholarship in bilingualism by Ofelia Garcia is another important influence in my thinking about bilingualism and the ramifications for the EFL context in Panama. Garcia's work covering the history of bilingual education to the present-day concept of plurilingualism has been important to the field of bilingualism, and for this capstone in

particular, because it provides important context within bilingual theory. Moreover, by building on concepts from CLA, this scholarship provides a pedagogical response to the issues I have identified in the Panamanian EFL context; topics I will discuss further in Chapter Two. Furthermore, Ofelia Garcia´s work is significant for the thorough description of a plurilingual approach in bilingual education (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). According to this approach, a student's linguistic individuality is valued within the context of the plurality of all learners in the classroom (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). The idea of valuing a student's linguistic individuality was something I had already considered, but this scholarship has provided me with a research-based background to help me understand and educate my students about their language choices.

Professional Rationale for Study

The use of their L1 in an English language context is important for many learners in the Panamanian EFL context because most students will be navigating in a bilingual workforce in Panama or other Latin American Countries once they graduate from high school. However, in their current EFL context, the use of their L1 is not encouraged at times when it would be appropriate and useful to learn the target language, English. Nor is their bilingualism explicitly promoted.

To be successful in their future context, students' linguistic toolbox will be varied and diverse. A high level of English proficiency will be an important part of this repertoire, but their needs are more nuanced, and this includes an appreciation and understanding of what it means to have bilingual language skills. For example, what are the language requirements to effectively communicate in a bilingual work context? Which activities are more likely to be completed in Spanish or English? These questions reflect the

linguistic realities my students will be facing, and it would be prudent to consider them within the learning context. Lastly, it is important to mention that my students naturally use their bilingual skills in the classroom for a myriad of reasons, including understanding directions, code switching for multiple purposes, solving difficult problems or tasks, and socializing.

Despite this reality of many of the bilingual students in the international school, most teachers at the school do not have the background information or tools to be able to promote the linguistic diversity of their students. Moreover, as a teacher at the school, I have observed mixed messages around language choice from the school administration that furthers the lack of clarity on this issue. On the one hand, teachers are encouraged to promote the cultural diversity of their students, but, because of an English-only ideology, discouraged from permitting the use of the L1 in the classroom. This is problematic from a plurilingual perspective since students are not receiving explicit instruction to promote their emerging bilingualism. Furthermore, since most teachers have not been trained in linguistics and language acquisition, they do not have the skills to effectively support their bilingual students. Notably, many teachers covertly promote the use of Spanish and other L1 uses of language in their classrooms using translators (both electronic and with designated students), and translanguaging. The fact that teachers are already employing bilingual teaching and learning approaches demonstrates that their lived experiences have shown these practices to be effective.

Applications in Related EFL Contexts

This project is significant because it addresses the unique problems of a specific EFL context in Panama, Central America and provides resources for teachers to adjust their instruction to include bilingual pedagogies better suited to the needs of their students. It is likely that teachers working in related EFL contexts find themselves in similar straits and would also benefit from the background information in bilingualism and related fields as well as the professional development (PD) seminars. However, since each teaching context is unique, it is likely that information gleaned from this project would need to be modified for their distinct contexts.

It is important to note that there are numerous studies in plurilingual ideologies and bilingualism in an ESL context, but not in EFL (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). This focus on ESL over EFL is also true in the literature within CLA research (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Shin & Henderson, 2017). The scope of this project will not include original research in an EFL context, but it will synthesize relevant research from the studies reviewed to inform the final product, a seminar series on bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingualism. This PD will be an important tool for secondary teachers who are teaching English as a foreign language since this knowledge is not covered in most teacher training programs and because of the critical need to respect and foment the unique linguistic tools of bilingual students.

Chapter One Conclusion

In Chapter One I have introduced the concept of plurilingualism as an ideology that can be offered as a framework to address the limitations of an English immersion

program. I have also mentioned the related topics of critical language awareness (CLA) and second language acquisition (SLA) as the other two legs that will prop up the theoretical framework that will be used to develop a teacher's guide for a plurilingual pedagogy. I have discussed how my identity as a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish, as well as my role as an EFL teacher and graduate student, have informed my interest in this topic and why I believe it is worthy of further exploration. I have also explained how the EFL scholarship on these topics is not as robust as the ESL context and how this is a significant shortcoming given that most EL students in the world are learning English in an EFL context. Lastly, I have noted that each EFL context is unique and the information in this capstone will not necessarily be appropriate for all international schools who may face similar limitations with their English immersion programs.

Through the literature review in Chapter Two, plurilingualism, and bilingual plurilingualism in particular, will be described and explored as a pedagogy that is "dynamically centered on the individual student's language practices – that is, on the singularity of the plurality in the classroom" (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011, p. 292). In other words, with a plurilingual approach the unique cultural and linguistic singularity of each student is celebrated and promoted within the diverse milieu of the bilingual classroom. In this paper I will use the term bilingual to refer to the knowledge or use of Spanish and English in the classroom and multilingual for the use or knowledge of more than two languages.

The literature review will also define and explore critical language awareness, its development, and how it has been used in other contexts to improve the CLA levels of

secondary students. An understanding of CLA is foundational for this project because the first step toward a plurilingual approach is metalinguistic knowledge that allows students to fully comprehend and embrace their linguistic potential. Following the section on CLA, this literature review will introduce the research into the use of a student´s L1 in the L2 classroom. This research in second language acquisition (SLA) is important in our exploration into bilingualism because it reviews the literature about how students have used their existing L1 resources to advance their L2 learning. Lastly, I will review research on plurilingualism and plurilingual pedagogies.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Since the English learners in the Panamanian International School are English as a Foreign language (EFL) students, it is important to reflect upon their place in a society where Spanish is the most commonly spoken language. As adults, they will be more likely to live and work in a context where Spanish is their predominant language and/or as bilinguals speaking English and Spanish. If this is the students' reality, I have wondered why they are being taught as monolingual English students and what other options would be more appropriate given their linguistic context. I have developed my research question to explore this disconnect between the current pedagogy at the school and the students' linguistic identities as bilingual students. My research question is: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* This research question will be used to guide this literature review and the capstone project.

Bilingualism

I will begin by defining what it means to be a bilingual student and explore how bilingualism is understood as a linguistic resource in the literature. Grosjean (2010) defines bilinguals as "those who use two or more languages in their everyday lives." (p. 22). For this capstone we will also consider a definition of a specific type of bilingual student that is fitting for the EFL context, the emerging bilingual. As Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) have observed, emerging bilingual students have the ability to function in their

home language and English. They make the distinction between "emergent bilingual" (p. 2) and English language learner (ELL) because with the term emergent bilingual, "students are seen instead for their potential to become bilingual, and bilingualism begins to be recognized as a cognitive, social, and educational resource" (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, p. 3). The idea that bilingualism is viewed as an asset to the language learner has been observed by other researchers as well (Cummins, 1979; Fox et al., 2019; Grosjean, 2010; Garcia & Sylvan, 2011; Lambert, 1974). This concept is central to this capstone project because of its insight into the mind of bilingual students and the concomitant pedagogies that are essential in bilingual contexts.

Prior to the early 1960´s, however, researchers had not found positive effects for bilingual students (Lambert, 1974). It was with a sense of surprise that Lambert (1974) began to observe results that showed a higher level of scores on both verbal and nonverbal measures of thinking and performance amongst bilingual learners. In particular, Lambert identified what he called "more diversified structure of intelligence" and "more flexibility in thought" (p. 22) amongst the French/English bilingual students he studied in Montreal, Canada.

Lambert's work with bilingual students in Montreal was also important because of his conceptions of additive and subtractive bilingualism. He explained how additive bilingualism added a language to a student's existing linguistic repertoire while subtractive bilingualism suppressed the first language of a student in favor of the target language. Subtractive bilingualism was common at this time since many national language programs promoted the L2 at the expense of the student's L1 (Lambert, 1974).

Lambert's notion of additive bilingualism is significant since it began to approach bilingualism from an acquisitive position rather than as a deficit.

Another early theory in bilingualism, linguistic interdependence, was proposed by the researcher, Cummins (1979). According to this theory, students' linguistic abilities in both their L1 and L2 are mutually supportive in language learning. This theory is more pronounced in instances when languages are more linguistically similar like Spanish and English. While it is less pronounced when the languages are more dissimilar, it has been shown that skills such as reading and writing do have more interrelations than speaking and listening (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). The related theory of common underlying proficiency posits that the skills learned in one language become available when the student is learning a second language. It has been shown that a student's ability in their home language is a good predictor of academic achievement in their L2 (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). Cummins (1979) developed these theories based on his work in the North American context as well as studies conducted with students in Europe and Australia.

In what Garcia and Sylvan (2011) call the "second turn" (p. 387), bilingual education began to change in a way that reflected the increased global exchange that characterized the close of the 20th century. As people and resources began to move throughout the world with greater speed, so too have their linguistic resources. Garcia and Sylvan (2009) liken this change in their conception of bilingualism as one from a linear additive or subtractive bilingualism - like a unicycle or a bicycle - to something more akin to an all-terrain vehicle that is able to adapt to the changing linguistic landscape as conditions may require. They call this dynamic bilingualism. According to this conceptualization,

bilinguals' L1 and L2 are conjoined and function with a high level of complexity (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011).

How Bilingualism Affects Academic Performance

Research in bilingualism and positive academic performance has consistently pointed to the impact of supporting a student's home language combined with academic preparation in the target language (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). In a five-year study, Thomas and Collier (2002) researched English Language Learners (ELLs) throughout the US to measure long term achievement in English reading and other subjects. They analyzed programs that included 90-10 bilingual immersion (90 % Spanish and 10 % English instruction), 50-50 bilingual immersion (50% Spanish and 50% English instruction), other bilingual immersion programs, and ELLs in content-based programs. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that the most effective bilingual teaching approach was the 90-10 bilingual immersion where students started working 90% of the time in their home language while moving to a 50:50 home language/Spanish approach. Similar to Garcia and Kleifgen´s (2010) notion supporting the use of the students' home language to promote academic achievement, Thomas and Collier (2002) found that the greatest variable affecting L2 achievement was the level of formal education in the student´s L1.

Rolstad et al. (2005) also looked at the effectiveness of bilingual approaches on academic performance by comparing bilingual programs to English-only immersion programs. They conducted a meta-analysis of 17 studies of minority students in ELL programs in the US. Using data from standardized tests conducted in schools, they found that when compared to English-only immersion programs, students in bilingual programs demonstrated higher academic achievement. This was also true for advancement in the

students' L1. The results of the meta-analysis also showed a benefit to students who continued to study in both their L1 and English in comparison to programs that used the L1 to transition to greater use of the students' L2. A review of the research by Slavin and Cheung (2005) comparing English immersion and transitional bilingual programs found the same advantage for the transitional bilingual programs that was identified by Rolstad et al. (2005).

How Bilingualism Affects Cognition

Fox et al. (2019) also completed an analysis of studies from 2012 to 2019, which mainly focused on cognitive abilities and benefits of bi and multilingual speakers. Similar to Rolstad et al. (2005) and Slavin and Cheung (2005), Fox´s (2019) results pointed to the benefits of bilingual programs and, in particular, the cognition advantages of the bilingual students. According to Fox (2019), studies looking at executive functioning/cognitive control showed that bilingual students had an increased ability to complete complex tasks when compared to their monolingual classmates. Studies considered by Fox (2019) also pointed out that promoting bilingualism at an early age was positively correlated with greater effects on students' executive functioning. It is important to mention that some studies had mixed results in this area as well.

Cognitive flexibility, or the "ability to shift between mental sets in cognitive tasks and social interactions" (Fox et al. 2019, p. 708), was another area where bilingual students had the advantage over their monolingual classmates. The studies reviewed by Fox et al. (2019) demonstrated an increase in cognitive flexibility due to the fact that students were more accustomed to working between two languages. This ability to move seamlessly between two languages was described as the cause of this increased cognitive flexibility

(Fox et al., 2019). Grosjean (2010), a well-known researcher in bilingualism, has also written about the cognitive flexibility of bilinguals. Other benefits of bilingualism include the facilitation of learning new languages, a positive effect on open mindedness, promoting differing perspectives on life and cultural awareness (Grosjean, 2010).

Disadvantages of Bilingualism

Some of the disadvantages of bilingualism, as recorded by interviews with bilinguals, include feeling the need to code switch when speaking the L2, borrowing, and interferences from the L1 (Grosjean, 2010). Borrowing, as it sounds, is using words from the bilingual´s L1. Interferences are when words from the bilingual's L1 are inadvertently inserted into discourse. Other disadvantages include a disinterest in translating/interpreting, feeling distant from the cultures that are connected to the language(s), and frustration with the weaker language in a speaker's repertoire (Grosjean, 2010).

Translanguaging and Cognition

Translanguaging is a pedagogical approach used by bilinguals and their teachers to leverage their linguistic skills in the classroom (as cited in Lewis et al., 2012). Williams, a Welsh educationalist, developed the concept in response to his observations that students used their more dominant language, English, in the Welsh classroom and that these skills could be a positive contribution to their L2 learning. As a part of an in-service session, he developed in Northern Wales, the practice was originally called trawsieithu in Welsh. It was changed to translinguifying, followed by its current form, translanguaging. The term translanguaging was originally defined by Williams in 1994 as

"a planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning within the same lesson" (p. 643). Translanguaging is an important concept that builds upon the work of earlier researchers such as Lampert (1974) and Cummins (1979) who had also posited the interrelated nature of language learning.

As a cognitive process, Williams (as cited in Lewis et al., 2012) posited that translanguaging is more complicated than translating because it involves the capacity to assimilate input in one language and requires a "deeper understanding as it moves from finding parallel words to processing and relaying meaning and understanding" (p. 644). He also suggested that a student's L1, the more developed of the two languages, would help to bolster the L2, thus creating a balance between the two languages.

The multilingual researcher, Wei Li (2021) described the *trans* of translanguaging as the user's ability to transcend boundaries while the *ing* suffix captures the idea of language use occurring in a single moment in time. Wei Li also believes that translanguaging allows a speaker to transcend the socio-political nature of named languages like Afrikaans or Swahili to create a unique way of expressing oneself (Wei Li, 2021). This ability to borrow and mix languages has been a part of the human experience since the development of speech and the idea of named languages is relatively recent, coinciding with the creation of the nation state. Furthermore, there is good evidence from research in neuroscience that different languages are not compartmentalized in different parts of the human brain (Grosjean, 2010).

Summary

In the first section of this literature review I defined the term emerging bilingual as the most apt description for learners in an EFL context in Panama. I have also presented bilingualism as an asset for language learners and discussed early thinking that began to explain the interrelated nature of a learner's L1 and L2. I have also discussed bilingualism and how it affects academic achievement. When compared to English-only approaches, studies have consistently shown that students' academic performance is superior when exposed to bilingual teaching approaches. Moreover, academic success in a student's L2 is directly related to the level of formal education in a student's L1. This finding follows what Cummins (1979) would predict with his theory of linguistic interdependence. It is significant for this capstone because of the notion that language cannot be disentangled; a student's acquisition of their first language promotes their second language.

Research reviewed on bilingualism and cognition also demonstrated certain benefits, including executive function and cognitive flexibility, among others. Finally, the concept of translanguaging was introduced, the role it plays in the cognition of a bilingual and how meaning is created. In the following section I will explore the literature in second language acquisition (SLA) in an effort to better understand how students acquire language and how bilingualism comes into play. I will build on the existing knowledge from bilingualism and translanguaging research to consider ways that students can learn how and why their unique language skills can be used in the classroom and beyond. I will continue to use my research question - *How can we develop a pedagogy for*

emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential? - to guide this discussion.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): Languaging

Now I will pivot from bilingualism to a discussion that is framed through the lens of SLA to explore the idea of languaging and how this is related to the acquisition of language. Languaging is a cognitive process that is used by humans to create a sense of meaning in their world (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). Vygotskian sociocultural theory, a guiding theory of Swain's work, describes the ability to use language in its different forms (including the L1) as a mediating tool to adjust to a person's unique human condition and solve problems (Loewen, 2020; Turnbull et al., 2011).

To further explain this concept, we can consider how a young child understands how to regulate their own behavior through language. Initially, infants' behavior is controlled by objects. For example, a favorite toy is close to the child and can be retrieved when prompted by an adult. Later, when language skills have become more developed, a child will be able to find their favorite toy when an adult asks them, even if the toy is not near the child. Here the language has been regulated through the speech of someone else. In the next stage, the child can use language themselves to accomplish a function. The child may think to themselves: I want to play with my favorite toy. I am going to find it! The language function of the child has now been internalized from a social interaction to a psychological function. The child is now able to use language to mediate cognitive processes. This is the essence of languaging (Swain & Lapkin, 2013).

Languaging is important for this discussion because it helps to explain how language is used as a tool by humans, whether they are bilingual or not. In an EFL language classroom, languaging also helps to explain the role of the L1 in the learning of the L2. To better understand how students use their L1 for developing their L2, I will consider the following example from a French immersion classroom where two French language students were tasked with writing a story in French about why a girl fell asleep after her alarm clock went off (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). The girls' explanation focused on how the girl fell asleep. After considering their work, the French teacher provided the students with feedback that highlighted a different explanation: the state of the room. The girls used their L1, English, to discuss their teacher's feedback and how they did not agree with her suggestion. However, when they rewrote the French assignment they used a lexical suggestion from the teacher, but in a way that forwarded their initial argument (Swain & Lapkin, 2013).

Their use of English was instrumental in discussing the subtle forms of a lexical item and to advance their assignment, completing their task in French. Vygotsky (as reported in Swain & Lapkin, 2013), describes the use of the L1 in the following way: "in learning a new language, one does not return to the immediate world of objects and does not repeat past linguistic developments, but uses instead the native language as a mediator between the world of objects and the new language" (p. 106).

L1 in the L2 classroom

Learning New Vocabulary

Using the idea that language is a mediating tool for cognition as a backdrop, I will now explore studies in the field of SLA that consider the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom for learning vocabulary. Several studies with a focus on lexical acquisition have compared code switching treatments (CS) with an English-only (EO) treatment to find if the CS is more effective in the teaching of vocabulary in the L2 (Lee & Macaro, 2013; Levin & Lee, 2020; Tian & Macaro, 2012). Tian and Macaro (2012) completed a study that considered the effects of a focus-on-form activity (listening comprehension) on a learner´s ability to acquire target vocabulary, including both abstract and concrete words. Participants included Chinese University students divided into three groups and assigned to the following conditions: non-codeswitching condition (NCS), code-switching condition (CS), and control condition (CONT). Students heard listening texts once, then in sections focused on the target vocabulary and one of the three language conditions (NCS, CS, or CONT). Results showed that students who received the instruction with the NCS and CS condition performed better on posttests, and students with the CS condition outperformed the students with the NCS condition. Researchers concluded that over the long term, this advantage was not sustained and recommended that further studies may want to recycle words over multiple sessions of instruction.

Lee and Macaro (2013) confirmed the results of Tian and Macaro (2012) by showing that the acquisition of lexical items benefited more from a code switching treatment than an English-only treatment in the instruction of vocabulary. This study is of particular interest because the CS treatment was beneficial to both younger and adult learners. This

same result was also found to be true by Hennebry et al. (2017). In a study of Korean University students, Lee and Levin (2020) also found evidence that a CS treatment was more effective than English-only (EO) treatment for learning target vocabulary (phrasal verbs in this case). They also looked at how these treatments affected the EFL learner's listening comprehension. Results showed no statistical advantage between the CS and the EO treatment for this communicative activity, but the lower-level learners in the study (intermediate) did show a more positive effect than the more advanced learners. The authors concluded that this result showed a possible advantage for the use of CS over EO treatment and that the effective use of CS in the classroom may vary depending on the level of the EFL learner.

Complex Tasks

Other researchers have considered the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom for the purpose of completing complex tasks (Alegría & Mayo, 2009; Tae, 2019; Turnbull et al., 2011; Turnbull et al., 2017). Turnbull et al. (2011) completed a study with French immersion middle school students seeking to understand the science topics of seismic and volcanic activity throughout the world and explain why volcanism exists. The students were expected to produce an oral presentation and written account of their research. Researchers found that French was used for linguistic tasks that were less complex while English was used in activities that required a higher level of complexity. This result in a middle school French immersion context is consistent with the earlier discussion of the French language students who leveraged their L1 skills to complete an assignment in French.

Alegria and Mayo (2009) were also interested in exploring the use of the L1 in an EFL classroom of university students in Spain. Participants were divided into three groups and completed one of three activities: a jigsaw, dictogloss, or text reconstruction. All activities were designed around content that was familiar to the students. Researchers found that students' L1 use was most pronounced in the jigsaw activity, which, according to the researchers, was not surprising since this activity involved more problem solving than the other task and required more interaction. During the jigsaw task, students were observed using their L1 to work through more complex problems, a result that is consistent with the finding of other studies I have reviewed (Turnbull et al. 2011; Swain & Lapkin, 2013). The strategy most often employed across the three activities was the use of the L1 to verify meaning of a lexical item or expression. This observation of using the L1 for vocabulary is consistent with the results of the studies showing a benefit of L1 use for L2 vocabulary acquisition (Lee & Macaro, 2013; Levin & Lee, 2020; Tian & Macaro, 2012).

In the Turnbull et al. (2017) study, they moved from describing which language was used to complete a complex task to measuring the effect of discussing the topic in different registers before producing a written response in the L2. Fifteen Japanese university EFL students read a text about the weather and were divided into three groups to produce written recalls. Group one, the control, was not allowed to discuss the reading before formulating their response. Group two was allowed to discuss the reading in the L2, English, and the third group was all allowed to discuss the reading in their L1, Japanese. Results showed that the students in group three discussed the text for longer than the groups who were not allowed to use their L1, and languaged in a way that

permitted them to create their own meaning and a greater understanding in general. In terms of comprehension, group three, the group allowed to use their L1, showed the highest level of understanding followed by group two, who used their L2, and the control, group one.

Reading and Writing

There is also evidence that reading ability in a student's L1 promotes reading skills in an L2 (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Van Gelderen et al. (2007) studied secondary Dutch EFL students over a three-year period to test Lambert's transfer theory to determine if linguistic knowledge from the L1 is transferred to the L2. Over a period of three years, researchers collected data from students from various academic levels and found that the correlation between reading comprehension skills were initially high and only became stronger by the end of the study. This included strategic reading skills and the ability to successfully use vocabulary and grammar in the L2. They also found a correlation between metacognitive knowledge in reading between the L1 and the L2 but were not able to determine that this result was due to L1 reading levels since other intellectual pursuits, both inside and outside of school, could also affect this ability. They also found that vocabulary knowledge in both languages had a positive effect on metacognitive knowledge.

In a more recent study conducted in the Korean EFL context, Pae (2019) studied Korean secondary students and considered how L1 and L2 skills are related in English reading and writing. Like the results of Van Gelderen et al. (2007), they found a strong correlation between L1 and L2 reading and writing ability. However, the findings did not show a strong relationship between L1 writing ability and L2 reading skills. The findings

related to writing are significant since there have been fewer studies in this area. In fact, they found that L1 writing ability was as significant as L2 writing proficiency as a predictor of L2 writing skills. Due to this result, the researchers consider that it is prudent to consider explicit instruction in writing skills in the L1 in the areas of brainstorming and general organizing skills for transfer to the L2.

According to the author, one possible explanation for this result is that the general writing skills learned in the L1 are more transferrable than the L1 to L2 reading skills since writers choose their words as opposed to reading, which involves more decoding. For this Korean EFL context, researchers suggested a greater focus on L1 to L2 literacy training, especially since it has not been an area of focus in the past. Lastly, a significant relationship was observed between a student's knowledge of L2 vocabulary and grammar and their overall L2 abilities. Since researchers did not consider this as an area of strength in the Korean school, they recommended a movement away from memorization and noncontextualized grammar lessons to teaching vocabulary and grammar in meaningful contexts (Pae, 2019).

In this section of the literature review related to second language acquisition (SLA), I have reviewed studies in languaging, vocabulary acquisition, complex task completion, and the transfer of L1 skills in reading and writing. I have defined languaging as an important tool in SLA because it allows students to use their full linguistic repertoire to mediate their language learning, which includes their L1. Moreover, the evidence from bilingual research and SLA provides ample evidence that the L1 has a place in the L2 classroom (García & Kleifgen, 2010). The next section of the literature review will consider research in critical language awareness (CLA), and its connection to

bilingualism and SLA. I will explore CLA with my research question as the guide for this capstone project - *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?*

Critical Language Awareness

Definition and Development

Critical Language Awareness (CLA) has been included in this literature review to better understand the connection between bilingualism, second language acquisition, and the sense of identity of the bilingual student. Initially conceptualized as language awareness, it "involves explicit learning about different varieties of the language and the social process through which one dialect becomes standard. Awareness programs also include a contrastive component in which students learn about the rule-governed nature of all dialects" (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021, p. 341). This early conception of language awareness focused on basic linguistic and sociolinguistic features. The concept of language awareness developed into CLA in the mid-1990's when British researchers championed the idea of "a critical awareness of how these practices are shaped by, and shape, social relationships of power" (Clark et al., 1990, p.249). This pivot allowed CLA to provide students with the frames to critically assess their own language use and how language is used by others in society, recognizing the power dynamics that may prioritize the use of one language over another and how this may affect a learner´s perception of their linguistic repertoire (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Clark et al., 1990).

Despite the promising lines of research into the benefits of bilingualism and the use of a student´s L1 in the classroom, the question of student belief of the use of their L1 in an

academic setting is not always in line with the research. In fact, researchers have identified negative attitudes and insecurities towards their L1 among heritage Spanish speakers (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005; Martinez, 2003). To counter these attitudes and beliefs, research in critical language awareness (CLA) have demonstrated how explicit instruction in sociolinguistic topics like language ideology, language variation, and the dynamics of power in society can raise the CLA of learners, thus increasing their understanding and appreciation of their L1 (Beaudrie et al., 2021; Gasca Jimenez & Sergio Adrada, 2021).

Heritage Learners and Curricular Interventions

Beaudrie et al. (2019) conducted an important study that focused on the development of a questionnaire to measure the level of CLA of university-level students in the heritage learner context in the USA. Following their research into dialect awareness and CLA, the researchers developed the following themes for their questionnaire: 1. language variation and linguistic diversity 2. English hegemony, language ideologies and language prejudices 3. Spanish in the US, bilingualism, and code switching 4. language policies and language maintenance/shift. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers and aimed to measure the attitudes and the behaviors of the learners using a Likert-type scale of 6= strongly agree or very likely to agree or 1= strongly disagree or very unlikely to agree. The questionnaire (24 questions) was piloted with a group of post-graduate university students and later administered to 305 university-level Spanish heritage learners in the southwestern USA. This was a significant development in CLA because the study was statistically sound and one of the few efforts to provide researchers with a tool to measure the CLA of Spanish heritage learners.

Building on the Beaudrie et al. (2019) study, Beaudrie et al. (2021) developed curriculum to explicitly teach CLA with a focus in four areas of instruction and created modules similar to the themes of the questionnaire in this study. These included: 1. language variation and diversity 2. language ideologies/language prejudices 3. Spanish in the USA 4. language maintenance (p.579). Participants in the study were university-aged Spanish speakers who were enrolled in a heritage Spanish course. The author's aim was to address the interrelated issues of a scarcity of CLA teaching materials and trained teachers in sociolinguistics who were able to teach a course with a CLA foundation. Each module included themes, goals, learning activities, and main questions or prompts and the intervention lasted for 14 weeks. The following instructional goals were proposed by Beaudrie et al. (2021):

Students will be able to see language variation as natural and recognize the intrinsic value of their own variety and all others.

Students will be able to develop a consciousness of the political, social, and economic power structures that underlie language use and the distribution of the so-called prestige and non-prestige varieties.

Students will be able to uncover dominant language ideologies that hide in daily monolingual/bilingual practices.

Students will be empowered to exercise agency in making their own decisions about language use and bilingualism (p.5).

Students were administered the same questionnaire used in the Beaudrie et al. (2019) study and given a pretest and a posttest to find their level of CLA. Results showed that about 75 % of the students did show an improvement of their CLA from the pretest to the posttest. Researchers noted that some of the students who did not see a notable change following the instruction had a baseline CLA that was already high.

 Gasca Jimenez and Sergio Adrada (2021) also explored CLA in the context of university level students. Their study was conducted with students in a Spanish program with a mixture of heritage learners (HL) and L2 learners of Spanish. There are not many CLA studies of L2 and HL, which is significant since it has been shown that in L2 language programs' curricular development favors L2 students over heritage learners. This study also used the questionnaire from the Beaudrie et al. (2021) study and included a pretest, posttest, and participants were divided into three groups based on the number of Spanish courses they had taken at the university. Like the other studies reviewed, the student's CLA improved after the course even though it was not explicitly taught during the course. It is notable that in this study the sample consisted of students with Spanish majors, many who already considered themselves fluent in both English and Spanish and confident with their multilingualism. Two differences from the Beaudrie et al. (2021) study were that students showed a preference for the standard variety of Spanish and did not perceive code switching to be an important linguistic resource. The authors also suggested that language ideologies should be explicitly taught at lower levels in a mixed L2/heritage Spanish program.

Shin and Henderson (2017) also researched CLA with Spanish speaking university-level students in the USA. Their study included 40 students in an advanced grammar

course who were exposed to a semester-long curriculum that included grammar, sociolinguistic concepts, and language attitudes. The instruction included certain stigmatized Spanish dialects, such as Caribbean Spanish, which were analyzed, and ensuing discussions allowed students to explore linguistic prejudice. Like the Beaudrie et al. (2019) study, researchers used a Likert-type scale and results on the sociolinguistic concepts show a gain of 16 percentage points from the pretest to the posttest. On the language attitudes part of the test, students showed gains of 18 percentage points. Both results showed the efficacy of explicit teaching of CLA, and students' views of language moved in the direction valuing diversity and variation.

CLA in the Classroom

In an interesting study from an EFL context in Peru, Zavala (2015) examined how one Quechua teacher uses a CLA approach with emergent bilingual students in an urban school. Since 2005, there has been an effort to promote the revitalization of the Quechua language, a language spoken in the Peruvian Andes that has been considered lower status than Spanish and associated with lower academic achievement. In the school described in this study, students received one to two hours of explicit instruction in Quechua per week. The study described the methodology of three different teachers and compared the Quechua-only approach of two teachers with the more fluid codeswitching that occurred in the third teacher's classroom. The third teacher, Sylvia, developed a way to use translanguaging in a way that explicitly taught the importance of linguistic diversity, a hallmark of CLA.

To achieve this, Sylvia used Quechua as the unmarked language in the classroom, but frequently switched to Spanish to add a word or phrase to complement something a

student had uttered, provide corrective feedback, or words of encouragement to include the participation of all of her students. She also encouraged the more proficient Quechua speakers to share their skills with the other classmates, thus advocating for this group as well. According to the author, students in Sylvia's class talked about how the teacher "asks us questions with fondness, explaining to us with patience and understanding us. When we can't speak well, she explains it to us and helps us" (p. 24). It is likely that the children feel this way because the teacher believes that all of her students, regardless of level, are on a continuum as emerging Quechua speakers.

In another study with a CLA focus, O´Halloran et al. (2015) considered how a Professional development (PD) for elementary teachers allowed them to teach CLA as it related to informational texts. The training was designed to teach students how science writers used language to present science texts as more than a collection of facts. For example, they looked at science texts with interpersonal adjuncts like fortunately and interestingly to determine the intended meaning of the author and what this meant for their students. During the PD, teachers were encouraged to think beyond the science content of their classes to a more participatory stance where students are questioners of a given perspective. Following the PD, researchers observed that teachers were effective at helping students identify discourse when authors injected an opinion or perspective of the text. With the realization that even science texts have elements of opinion, students' CLA in this study was increased as they began to see themselves as participants in meaning making – even in linguistic contexts that otherwise may have seemed to be free from bias or opinion.

This work in informational texts is in line with Hasan's (1996) use of the term critical literacy which describes students as participants in knowledge creation rather than as uncritical receivers of information. Critical literacy is closely tied to another important voice in CLA, the Brazilian educator Pablo Freire who, in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993), wrote:

> In problem solving education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to find the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (p. 64).

CLA is a process of transformation where students step outside of their language learning context to consider their linguistic reality.

Summary

In this section of Chapter Two, I have discussed the literature in critical language awareness, or CLA, and its relevance to the research question that is guiding this project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* I defined CLA as an instructional program to raise the linguistic awareness of bilingual students as well as looking at their language use from a sociolinguistic perspective, including how language is used in society to maintain dominant ideologies. I presented qualitative CLA research that showed how explicit instruction in CLA raised the learners' CLA levels. I also considered two examples from classroom contexts where teachers explicitly taught CLA to their students and teachers received CLA training in a short professional development program. Finally, I presented

the work of the Brazilian educator, Pablo Freire, whose work and thinking will help to frame the last section of this literature review, plurilingualism.

Plurilingualism

Freire's two-part definition of "problem solving education" (p. 64) illustrates how language awareness, through a program such as CLA, and pedagogy are inextricably entwined. As Freire described, there is the existence of a students' critical analysis of their place in the world – this is where CLA comes into play - AND a realization that this reality is in constant flux. The linguist, Canagarajah (2009), helps to explain how language use fits in to Freire's dynamic conception of education and the connection to plurilingualism. Unlike some notions of multilingualism where languages occupy their own spaces, plurilingualism permits speakers to interact in a way where boundaries between languages are more fluid and languages may influence one another. He emphasizes how "different languages that constitute one's repertoire are part of a continuum, not segregated" (p. 23). Canagarajah also points out that language aptitude is unlikely to be equal in all languages acquired by a speaker nor should equal attainment be considered as a realistic goal. Moreover, the use of language to achieve a defined purpose should qualify as competence and all languages in a speaker's repertoire should be valued for their ability to complete a communicative function or for a social purpose. Freire's philosophy of education and Canagarajah's insights into how language functions for a multilingual speaker provide us with a solid theoretical framework to explore plurilingual pedagogies.

Plurilingual Pedagogies

Garcia and Sylvan (2011) describe a plurilingual pedagogy as "dynamically centered on the individual student's language practices – that is, on the singularity of the plurality in the classroom" (p. 292). In other words, with a plurilingual approach the unique cultural and linguistic singularity of each student is celebrated and promoted within the diverse milieu of the bilingual classroom. The Council of Europe (as cited in Garcia & Sylvan, 2011) provides a broader definition of plurilingualism by stating:

The ability to use language for the purpose of communication and to take part in interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competencies, but rather as the existence of complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw (p. 168).

I will now turn to plurilingual teaching methodologies and explore how teachers are working to leverage the full linguistic repertoire of their students.

Plurilingual Approaches in the Classroom

Comparons nos langues, translanguaging, intercomprehension, and critical cross cultural comparisons are four plurilingual teaching techniques. Comparons nos langues (comparing languages) is a plurilingual approach where students make comparisons

across languages in a variety of linguistic forms, including syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. For example, students may compare a grammatical form like the past perfect in their L1 and another language to identify similarities and differences across languages. The aim is to leverage their linguistic knowledge to promote the acquisition of an L2 or L3 (Galante, 2020). In a Georgian University context, an instructor used comparons nos langues to teach students in an English for special purposes (ESP) class (Gvelesiani, 2023). In this example, the students were working on a translation activity from Georgian to English. Comparons nos langues was used during the discussion following the translation to help students better understand their errors. This was achieved by comparing English grammar and other linguistic forms to their L1 (Gvelesiani, 2023).

Wu and Lin (2019) described how translanguaging was used in a science class in Hong Kong. In a biology lesson about plant transpiration, the teacher used every day semantic information in Cantonese (the L1 of the students) to explain a more complex part of plant transpiration to their students. Interestingly, it is later in the biological process when the translanguaging is used. This is similar to the girls who negotiated for meaning earlier in this paper in their French class (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). In both instances translanguaging is used to solve and explain a process that is more cognitively challenging. In other words, the teacher did not start the lesson in Cantonese, but deliberately used translanguaging for a targeted portion of the lesson. Later in the lesson, the teacher explained the same concept in English and the students responded with a written response in English. Following the class, 18 students were interviewed about their comprehension of transpiration and how the teacher's use of translanguaging facilitated their understanding. Students believed that the translanguaging was effective

in increasing their understanding in both languages, enabling them to respond more accurately to the activity in English.

Intercomprehension is a plurilingual approach to make "cross linguistic" and "cross cultural" comparisons between related languages (Dufour, 2018, p. 71). To achieve this, the researcher explained how students who were novice French speakers were encouraged to make interlinguistic connections between French and English. In one activity, the students read excerpts from a children's book, *Paddington Bear*, in French and used strategies such as "repeating, breaking down, comparing, restating, compensating, and classifying" (p. 78) to identify familiar grammatical forms in the L2, French. Making lexical connections between the L1 and L2 is also supported by studies that we explored earlier in Chapter two (Lee & Macaro, 2013; Levin & Lee, 2020).

Galante (2020) described a plurilingual approach called critical cross cultural comparisons, employed by students to make critical explorations of how language is used cross culturally while simultaneously supporting their efforts to understand their personal plurilingualism. This methodology was also shared by Beaudrie et al. (2021) who developed a related curriculum to explicitly teach critical language awareness to university-aged students. See Chapter Two in this literature review. For further discussion on how the critical language awareness (CLA) is promoted in the classroom, see the subsection of Chapter Two on CLA where I discussed how a Quechua teacher promotes language diversity in their classroom (Zavala, 2015) and when CLA is used in a professional development program for elementary students (O´Halloran, 2015).

Chapter Two Summary

This literature review has reviewed studies in bilingualism, second language acquisition, critical language awareness, and plurilingualism to provide a theoretical and pedagogical framework to help address the research question that is guiding this capstone project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* As the section on bilingualism shows, early theories of bilingualism developed into an understanding of emergent bilingualism and an appreciation for the language skills in both/all languages of students. This understanding is further supported by research that provides evidence of the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and the stronger academic performance of those taught in programs that support the development of two languages in a more balanced way. The section on the related topic of SLA demonstrates that there is a significant benefit to the use of a bilingual student's L1 in the classroom for the acquisition of the target language. In particular, The SLA research in vocabulary acquisition, complex task completion, and the transfer of L1 skills in reading and writing shows the interrelated nature of languages and how a targeted use of a student's first language can further the acquisition of a second language.

The section on CLA discussed the development of language awareness and explored quantitative studies that demonstrated how explicit instruction in this area can raise students' CLA levels. This included the review of an EFL context in Peru where CLA was explicitly taught, and the teacher achieved positive results with students. The section on CLA also broadened the discussion about education, positing that students have the ability to critically analyze their situation to comprehend their linguistic reality more

fully. Lastly, in Chapter Two plurilingualism was defined as an ideology that respects and values the linguistic individuality of all members of the classroom environment while embracing the diversity of the entire educational space. Plurilingual approaches were also discussed, and we considered how language teachers use these techniques in the classroom.

In Chapter Three I will continue to use the research question for this capstone project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* to present the project design for a professional development (PD) program. The project will be informed by the multidisciplinary approach that was presented in the Chapter Two literature review where I reviewed studies in bilingualism, SLA, CLA, and plurilingualism to explore evidence and current teaching practices that have allowed teachers to fully leverage the linguistic potential of their students. The scope of the project will also be informed by my observations as an EFL teacher in a secondary context, best practices for adult PD programs, as well as scholars in the field of TESOL who believe there is a disconnect between calls for greater plurilingualism in the EFL context and teachers' knowledge to carry forth this effort (Ellis, 2013; Galante, 2020).

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

In Chapter Two I reviewed the literature in four related disciplines (bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingualism) to help answer the research question that is guiding this capstone project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* In Chapter Three I will describe the professional development seminars (PD) that share the findings from this capstone project with EFL teachers at an international school in Panama. The PD will be developed in a way that synthesizes the most pertinent information from the literature review while incorporating teaching techniques relevant to adult learning theories and best practices for effective PD seminars for teachers. Chapter Three will also discuss the setting for the PD as well as its participants. The structure and topics of the PD will be discussed and a timeline for the completion of the capstone project and the PD in particular. Following the completion of the PD, a qualitative methodology will be used to gauge how participants in the PD viewed their own development in areas of bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingual approaches in the classroom.

Rationale for a PD in the EFL Context

In the International School context in Panama, a teacher PD is appropriate for three principal reasons. The first is the fact that most EFL students are emerging bilinguals whose language practices include English, which is used for academic purposes at school, and Spanish, the language that students use in the community and in their homes. Moreover, since most students will live and work in a Spanish-speaking country as

adults, it is their bilingual proficiency that should be promoted at school. Secondly, the monolingual pedagogies that are promoted to teach EFL at the international school do not effectively or deliberately value the linguistic diversity of the students nor are teachers using pedagogical approaches that value and leverage their students' full linguistic capacity. Lastly, there is an awareness amongst many of the English teachers that their students are bilinguals, and they are not sure how to support their language development in the classroom. Contributing factors to this reality include the lack of support for multilingual or plurilingual pedagogies and a school-wide ethos of English immersion.

While it is true that providing students with rich and varied input in the target language is necessary for acquisition of the L2, this capstone project is exploring why English immersion is not the most appropriate pedagogy in this EFL context. The research reviewed in bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingualism points to a way to educate students that respects their identity as emerging bilinguals, and the PD of this capstone project has been designed to facilitate these approaches. As we have already explored, the evidence that supports the benefits of plurilingual approaches is strong (Galante, 2020; Garcia & Sylvan, 2011; Swain and Lapkin, 2013). It has also been observed that EFL teachers oftentimes do not have the knowledge or training to conduct this type of teaching (Ellis, 2012; Galante, 2020). Thus, it is the explicit aim of this capstone project to fill this gap by creating a PD that covers the related disciplines of bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingualism in a way that is meaningful for both teachers and EFL students at an international school in Panama, Central America.

Setting and Participants

The setting for this capstone project is an international school located in the Republic of Panama. The K – 12 school has about three hundred students, primarily from Panama, South America, the USA, Canada, and Europe. About 75 percent of the students speak a language other than English as their L1 and they study their core courses in an English immersion context taught by teachers from North America, Panama, and Europe. English language arts (ELA), which includes instruction in speaking, listening, writing, and reading is taught at all levels. The director of the school is open to innovative approaches, but since this PD is a departure from the focus on English immersion, a summary of this capstone project will be presented in an effort to promote the training. As reported in Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) a coherency between PDs and the priorities of the school administration is a characteristic of effective PDs. And, since implementation of new approaches has also been recognized as an element of success, a level of implementation will be formally requested before the seminars begin (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The director will also be invited to participate in the PD.

There are seven ELA teachers and three Spanish teachers who work with students from 6th to 12th grades who will be participating in the PD that is presented in this capstone project. The majority of the teachers are from the USA, Canada, and Panama. About fifty percent of the ELA teachers are at least conversant in Spanish. All of the teachers participating in the PD have worked at the school for at least one year; most teachers have been there for over two years. The PD seminars will be held at the school on Fridays from 9 AM to 10:30 AM. Classes are not held on Fridays at the school, so there are open classrooms and a general conducive environment for a PD seminar.

Adult Learning Theories

Andragogy

Since adults were the target audience of the PD, adult learning theories were reviewed

to guide the development of the training. These included andragogy, self-directed

learning, and transformational learning. The most well-known adult learning theory,

andragogy, was popularized by Malcom Knowles (Malik, 2016). According to Knowles,

this theoretical framework was used as early as the mid-twentieth century by adult

educators in Europe who used the term to differentiate adult teaching methodology from

pedagogies traditionally used with children (Knowles, 1980). Knowles came to

understand andragogy as a "model of assumptions about learners" (p. 44). The four

primary assumptions about andragogy include:

> 1) Their self-concept moves from being a dependent personality towards
>
> being a self-directed human being; 2) they accumulate a growing reservoir of
>
> experience that becomes an increasingly rich reservoir for learning; 3) their
>
> readiness to learn becomes increasingly oriented to the developmental tasks of
>
> their social roles; and 4) their time perspective changes from one of postponed
>
> application of knowledge to immediacy of application…" (p. 45)

Other aspects that have become important to andragogy include the assumptions that the

most meaningful motivations are intrinsic and that adult learners prefer to know why they

are learning something new (Malik, 2016). Andragogy is an appropriate theory to help

develop this PD because of its insight into the way adults learn best. In particular, an

adult's ability to build on past knowledge and experiences, intrinsic motivation, and the desire for their new knowledge to have practical applications in the short term.

Self-Directed Learning

Building off of the first assumption of andragogy - self-direction - Merriam (2017) described the adult learning theory of self-directed learning (SDL) as distinct from how younger learners learn. A learner's autonomy increases with age, and SDL captures this by describing a learning process that is directed and sustained by the individual. Early researchers in this area discovered that the vast majority of adults participate in SDL throughout their everyday lives, whether it be officially sanctioned at a workplace or in their own time. Success in online programs is also correlated with self-directed learners.

SDL is oftentimes a part of higher education programs as well as continued educational programming. Moreover, there is a significant body of literature on SDL that includes examples of how it has been conducted in distinct learning contexts as well as assessments to measure levels of self-direction of learners (Merriam, 2017). SDL is an important theory for this capstone project because of the insight it provides into how SDL can be interwoven into the PD and as a way for adult learners to pursue topics of personal import that are related to plurilingualism.

Transformational Learning

Transformational learning, or "learning that results in a change in the way we see ourselves" (Malik, 2016, p. 49) is an adult learning theory that leads to new realizations about oneself and an ability to change. Freire´s (1993) conception of transformational learning has already been presented in the literature review of this capstone project as it

relates to CLA and plurilingual pedagogies. The sociologist, Jack Mezirow, has received credit for developing this theory. According to Mezirow and other theorists, the terms "habits of mind" and "disorienting dilemma" are key parts of this theory (Malik, 2016, p. 49). Habits of mind are an individual's assumptions that function as a filter to give meaning to a person's daily experiences. And it is a person's reconceptualization of these habits that leads to transformational learning (Malik, 2016; Merriam, 2017).

This learning often occurs after a "disorienting dilemma" (Malik, 2016, p. 49). This is a particularly trying or challenging period in a person's life. This is not to say that a disorienting dilemma is a traumatic event or major milestone. In fact, an academic research question posed to a student for a project can be sufficient. The process of intellectual discovery may challenge and change a person's habit of mind in a way that leads to transformational learning (Malik, 2016). Transformation learning is significant for this capstone project because a teacher's ability to challenge their conception of their students' linguistic potential is at the heart of the motivation for this project. Without an open mind to reimagine their habits of mind, a teacher will be less effective in their ability to pursue the plurilingual pedagogies discussed in this project.

Characteristics of an Effective PD

In an effort to create a meaningful PD for the teachers in this EFL context, research into how to create an effective PD was completed. A review of studies of successful Professional Development Programs by Darling-Hammond et. al. (2017) identified seven characteristics of an effective PD for teachers. They defined successful programs as those that "changed teacher practices and improved student learning outcomes" (p. v. of executive summary). Effective PDs were "content focused, incorporate active learning,

support collaboration, use models of effective practice, provide coaching and expert support, offer feedback and reflection, and is of sustained duration" (p. v. of executive summary). The design and duration of the PD of this Capstone Project will strive to incorporate six of the seven elements described by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017). Coaching and Expert Support (element #5) will not be included in the PD. However, there will be opportunities for teachers to learn from and support one another in each of the three seminars.

Structure and Topics of the PD

The PD for this capstone project will be conducted over a four-month period starting during the teacher orientation week in August and continuing in September and October. Four monthly professional development seminars will be held during this time and each seminar will last for two hours. The four-month design is based on evidence from Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) who posited that PDs conducted over a period of time as having a greater impact on teacher's ability to change their teaching practice than PDs of shorter duration. There is also evidence in support of PDs that follow the same format over time. This is likely due to the fact that teachers have repeated exposure to the material from the PD and are able to experiment the ideas in their classrooms between seminars.

The following topics will be covered at each PD: Seminar #1: bilingualism, Seminar #2: SLA, Seminar #3: CLA, Seminar #4: plurilingualism. Each seminar will follow the same six-part format and incorporate the adult learning theories discussed in this project. An overview of Seminar # 1 is included here to demonstrate the format of each

workshop. Before each seminar, teachers will be assigned a paper related to the topic of the seminar. Paper #1 will be on the topic of bilingualism.

Plan for the PD

The following is the plan for the first of four seminars on 1. Bilingualism 2. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) 3. Critical Language Awareness (CLA), and 4. Plurilingualism. While each seminar will have separate topics, they will all follow the same six-part plan as outlined below.

Seminar #1: Bilingualism

Part 1 Reflection: Teachers discusses A. individual experiences with language learning; and B. bilingualism at an international school in Panama.

Part 2 Presentation on Research: Researcher presents on bilingualism.

Part 3 Debrief/Collaboration: Small groups discuss a topic from the presentation and consider implications of their topics for their teaching practices.

Part 4 Present Findings: Each group presents their findings to the full workshop.

Part 5 Implementation/Collaboration: Teachers discuss with the entire group and share ideas for the implementation of bilingual approaches in the international school context.

Part 6 Follow up Assignment and Reading: Teachers are encouraged to experiment with one bilingual lesson and complete Paper #2 on a SLA topic.

Assessment and Reflection

Following each seminar teachers will fill out a short google forms questionnaire to reflect on 1) how their beliefs about bilingualism, SLA, CLA, and plurilingualism had changed as a result of the training, 2) implications for their teaching, and 3) the potential to affect their students' outcomes in the area of the training.

Timeline for the Capstone Project

2018 to 2023 – Developed ideas for this project based on my work experience at an international school in Panama, Central America. Specifically, my teaching experience with bilingual students and conversations with other teachers at the international school led to my interest in the research question: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?*

2021 to 2022 - Conducted initial work in the areas of critical language awareness (CLA) and second language acquisition (SLA) while taking courses in the MATESOL program at Hamline University.

Summer Semester 2023 – Completed research in bilingualism, CLA, SLA, and plurilingualism. Chapters One, Two, and Three of the Capstone Project were completed.

October through December 2023 – Completed the professional development program (PD) of this capstone project.

End of fall semester 2023 – Completed the capstone project at Hamline University as the culmination of the MATESOL program.

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter Three described the professional development program (PD) of this capstone project, and a discussion of why a PD is an appropriate plan for training teachers at an international school in Panama. There was a description of the PD which included the topics of each of the four seminars. PD seminars included: bilingualism, critical language awareness (CLA), second language awareness (SLA), and plurilingualism. Adult learning theories of relevance to the PD - andragogy, transformational learning, and self-directed learning - were explored and there was a discussion about how they would be integrated into the PD. Literature related to best practices for a PD was reviewed and discussed within the context of this PD. The assessment plan highlighted new teacher learnings from the seminars as well as how teachers think students' outcomes will benefit from lessons learned during the PD. Lastly, a timeline was included that recorded the sequence of events of this capstone project. The timeline began with the conception of the project through its implementation.

Chapter Four will continue to be guided by the research question: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?*   I will discuss what I have learned from the capstone project experience, including aspects that were unexpected.   The literature review will be revisited where I will highlight sources of importance both on a personal level and to identify studies and authors who had a significant impact on the course of this capstone project.   Implications of this capstone project for teachers and students at the international school in Panama and EFL teaching contexts in general will be discussed. This will include a plan for communicating the results of the capstone project with all

stakeholders – members of the international school community in Panama, related EFL

communities, and the TESOL community. Finally, the limitations of this capstone project

will be discussed, and areas of future research will be considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reflection

Introduction

My experience as an EFL teacher in an international school in Panama, and my earlier classes at Hamline in the TESOL program, piqued my curiosity to pursue the research question that ultimately guided this project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* In my teaching context at the international school, I had seen a disconnect between the English immersion pedagogy of the school and the reality of many of the bilingual students. Their language practices included English, which was used for academic purposes at school, and Spanish, the language that students use in the community and in their homes. Since most students would be living and working in a Spanish-speaking country as adults where their Spanish skills would be equally, if not more, important than their English skills, English immersion didn't seem like the best approach. In my estimation, a pivot towards bilingual proficiency for students at the international school seemed like a prudent choice and worthy of consideration.

Through my earlier classes at Hamline, I was also aware of the research in the related fields of bilingualism, SLA, and CLA that all pointed to the benefits of bilingualism and the use of the students' L1 in the L2 classroom. Another motivating factor was the fact that most of the teachers at the international school had not been trained in linguistics or language acquisition, nor did they have the skills to effectively support their bilingual students. All of these factors led me to explore plurilingualism as an alternative

pedagogy to support bilingual students' learning. The Professional Development Seminars (PDs) are designed to provide teachers with the background and the tools to promote their students' full linguistic potential.

In Chapter Four I will also reflect on my learning that has taken place during the course of researching and writing this capstone project, including a summary of the key research and researchers from Chapter Two, and why their work stands out for me. I will also discuss the implications and limitations of this capstone project. Finally, I will consider further research in this area, and the benefits of this capstone project for the TESOL profession.

Major Learnings

Bilingualism and plurilingualism were newer topics of exploration for me, so it was both personally gratifying and important to pursue these topics. Learning about the history of bilingual education in the USA, including the early thinkers like Lambert and Cummings, helped me to understand how the thinking in the field has developed over the past fifty years from deficit thinking to a place where students' full linguistic repertoire is promoted. It was also meaningful to learn about the distinct types of bilingual programs and their relative effectiveness in being able to achieve academic success. It was especially interesting to learn how the research in bilingualism has shown significant benefits in cognition and academic success for bilingual students.

Although I had already learned about plurilingualism through my past course work at Hamline, research in this area allowed me to further explore this concept. Ofelia Garcia has written extensively about its policy implications in the USA, and it has also been

implemented in Europe through the Council of Europe, which acts to promote multilingual and plurilingual approaches. This includes curriculum, textbooks, assessments, and as a resource for the diffusion of this information.

Overall, the experience of writing the capstone project allowed me to identify a problem in my teaching context, develop a research question to address this problem, and develop a plan (the professional development series) to provide ways to solve this problem. The research allowed me to become more informed on four distinct, yet related, topics. This allowed me to take a multidisciplinary approach to the problem. It is my hope that this capstone project will provide other educators with tools to gain a better understanding of their bilingual students and how to best support their learning.

Revisiting Chapter Two

The literature review covered four major topics: bilingualism, SLA, CLA, and plurilingualism. Two of the four, SLA and CLA, were topics I had studied in earlier classes at Hamline, so the capstone project was an opportunity to delve deeper into these topics in a way that addressed my research question. This was fruitful, and I believe this research allowed me to solidify and further my understanding in a way that helped to create my PD seminars. The bilingual researcher, Ofelia Garcia, stands out as an influential thinker for me because of the way she differentiates between English learners and emerging bilingual students. The emphasis placed on bilingual competencies is important to understand in a context like the international school where most students are indeed emerging bilinguals. Her writing is also important because of the way she chronicles the history of bilingual education in the United States, leading up to the development of plurilingual approaches.

Merrill Swain was another researcher that played a significant role in my capstone project because of her work with languaging and her paper describing how two students use their L1 to create meaning and advance in their L2, French.   This Vygotskian concept of language as a mediating tool – in this case the L1 – is one of the focal points of my Chapter Two. It was also impactful to dig deeper into Swain´s work after being introduced to the scholarship in an earlier SLA class at Hamline. The description of the languaging of the French students was one of the best examples of students' use of their L1 to learn an L2 that I have seen.

I was also affected by the work of the Welsh educator Cen Williams and his development of translanguaging in his language classroom where students were learning Welsh. He was likely the first person to describe how students and teachers can promote the use of their L1 in the classroom to promote the acquisition of the L2. This was another topic that I had been exposed to in an earlier Hamline class and it was meaningful to explore other studies where translanguaging was being used to acquire skills in a second language.

Implications

This capstone project has implications for teachers working in an EFL context, as well as other settings with bilingual learners. In the international school context, this capstone project has the potential to address an area of the schools' pedagogy that has not embraced the potential to promote plurilingual approaches in the classroom. The hope is that the PD of this project will be able to facilitate this change. I believe that other schools with significant bilingual populations could also benefit from this project. In

particular, other EFL contexts where they have not explored pedagogical approaches to support their bilingual students.

Having recently moved to a new school in Minnesota with a significant bilingual population, I can also see the implications in a non-EFL context. While the Minnesota context where I now work is distinct from the international school, I have seen that many teachers have not received training in the topics I have covered, nor has the school incorporated the promotion of bilingual competencies. Since it is not a bilingual school this is not surprising, but a large number of students (greater than 25 %) speak a language other than English at home. I am confident that many of the teachers at the school in Minnesota are open to learning more about bilingualism and ways in which students' L1 can be used to promote their academic progress in English. I suspect that any context with a bilingual population, or interest in how the L1 can be used to promote the L2 – as in translanguaging – would also benefit from this capstone project.

From a policy standpoint, I think this capstone project raises the question of which teaching approaches are appropriate given the context of the learners. In the example I have presented here, I have advocated for a move towards plurilingual approaches at an international school where the majority of the students are bilingual and will likely be operating in a linguistic context where Spanish is the dominant language. However, every context is unique and pedagogical approaches should match the reality of the context. For example, in my present context in MN many of the bilingual students are not as fluent in their home language as the students at the international school and the language spoken in their communities is predominantly English. Is there a need to promote their

bilingualism? If so, who should make those choices? I believe students and their families should have a voice in making these decisions.

Limitations

This capstone project was designed and written with one specific context in mind: an international school in Panama with a large population of EFL students. I believe it is best suited for this setting and contexts that are similar. However, it is also true that many ESL contexts may also benefit from this capstone project since I touch on topics in SLA, like the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom and programs to raise CLA levels of language learners. These topics, and others, would be appropriate for many learners who are pursuing the acquisition of an L2.

I also believe that this capstone project is just the start of the conversation for a school like the one I have featured in this project. I have identified the problem as I see it, reviewed the relevant literature, and developed a series of professional development seminars to educate the school community and consider plurilingual approaches for teachers to implement in their classrooms. It will be up to the school and its administration to decide how they would like to incorporate these new learnings into the pedagogical approaches used at the school, as well as the long-term plans to promote the bilingual competencies of students. They may also decide that the status quo is the best path forward.

Further Research

This capstone project has contributed to the literature in bilingualism and the field of TESOL in that I have developed a multidisciplinary approach to address the shortcomings of an English immersion program at an international school in Panama. This fills a gap in the research because it has been found that teachers do not have the necessary skills or the training to adequately potentiate the full linguistic repertoire of their students when it comes to the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. It is also the case that many teachers working with bilingual students have not received explicit instruction in ways to support their students' emerging bilingualism. This capstone project provides a review of the relevant scholarship and suggests pedagogical approaches to remediate these shortcomings.

In the international school context, I have identified the disconnect between the English immersion approach used by the school and need for a greater focus on bilingual competencies. To develop these competencies most effectively, it would be helpful to explore the unique linguistic context students at the international school will encounter in the future. This may involve studying bilingual work settings to identify the tasks that are involved and the languages that are spoken to complete these tasks. Based on the findings from these studies, the school would be able to develop a curriculum that would adequately prepare the students for their future in the workplace.

Another area for further research is the question of how students and families view the bilingualism of their students and which, if any, aspirations or expectations do they have. In the context where I am presently teaching, many bilingual students speak a language other than English at home, but it is not the predominant language in the community.

How do families and students view this reality and what role does the school have in preparing students for their future? Does this future include a greater focus on the students' L1 and their bilingual competencies?

Chapter Four Summary

This capstone project has been important because it has allowed me to explore topics in bilingualism, second language acquisition, critical language awareness, plurilingual pedagogies, adult education, and professional development project design, all of which have contributed to my personal growth as a bilingual speaker and as a professional in the field of TESOL. I believe the research question that guided this capstone project: *How can we develop a pedagogy for emerging bilingual EFL students that leverages their full linguistic potential?* helped to keep the project focused on research-based solutions that would most effectively provide educators with the knowledge to better serve their secondary EFL students. A change in my personal teaching context in the midst of the project has also made me realize that this capstone project has the potential to inform educators in a variety of settings, including EL. Clearly, each linguistic context is unique, and it is incumbent upon schools, teachers, and families to determine if plurilingual approaches would best serve their student populations.

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