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“Para Crecer En Todo Con Lo Que Está Pasando En El Mundo”: Learning Home Language Practices From Padres Mexicanos Para Promover Bilingual, Biliterate, and Bicultural Children

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Abstract

This article reports the findings from a research study of bilingual Mexican-American parents' home language and English language practices with their children. The study raises awareness of how bilingual parents use Spanish and English to raise bilingual and biliterate children. Through the framework of family language policy, the study examines the usage of Spanish and English between parents and their children in the parents' hopes that their children can identify themselves as bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Parents of bilingual first-grade students in a transitional bilingual education program in Central Texas hope that their children can become bilingual and biliterate lifelong learners and share their Spanish and English language practices.

Keywords: Bilingual education, family language policy, Mexican-American, home language maintenance, bilingualism

Introduction

Literature Review

This study is framed within the lines of family language policy. The field of family language policy (FLP) is rooted in sociolinguistics which is the study of language and how it relates to social factors (e.g., include differences in regional dialect, regional class, occupational dialect, gender differences, and bilingualism) where identified languages are employed by families to be used for intergenerational communication purposes. Also, FLP has been defined as the implicit and explicit decisions made by adult caregivers to support the intergenerational transmission of a heritage language in the home (King et al., 2008). Notably, King states that research under this banner has expanded and coalesced in the last 15 years or so, and there is now an ample body of empirical studies on myriad facets of family language policy in a wide range of contexts (Wei et al., 2023). Fishman (1996) states that “most languages are not institutional, but informal and spontaneous. That is where languages [live]. Children live; they play; they laugh; they fall; they argue; they jump; they want; they scream” (p. 89). The word *policy* pertains to the decision made by those in charge (policyholders, the caregivers, parents) who enforce policies on those regulated (children) in the household.

Moreover, other studies have noted that FLPs are not always based on adult member choices (Hiratsuka & Pennycook, 2020). Sometimes, emotions drive language usage decisions. For example, Reichmuth (2024) found in her study that a mother’s decision to use English with her children was related to emotion, as she explained using English was her way of bonding with her children. The COVID-19 pandemic brought close physical contact restrictions to the forefront. Consequently, I took a sharp turn in conducting an interview-based study because the Institutional Review Board (IRB) required me to conduct Zoom interviews with parents since children were considered the most vulnerable. Home visits and in-person interviews were not allowed during this study due to IRB COVID-19 regulations. Parents were allowed to be interviewed only based on IRB requirements, so authentic data was collected.

My study was completed to close the gap in the family language policy field. Research shows that some researchers have focused on documenting the language and literacy practices of Latinx families in their homes (Moll, 1992; Reese, 2012). Additionally, Moll (1992) has shown that household practices are funds of knowledge that inform and shape children’s language and literacy understandings. Furthermore, Moll (1992) found that family language practices used by families of Mexican origin hold onto meaningful cultural knowledge regarding home practices, including planting and herbal remedies. Gonzáles (2001) found that Mexican mothers in Tucson, Arizona practiced linguistic activities with their children. In her study, Spanish was the chosen language when family, food, music, and more were discussed, though the children chose English when communicating with older siblings. Educators and educational professionals can draw from these home practices and engage their students in such practices at school. Notably, Reese (2012) states that familial storytelling could be heard in households. However, in a study by Noguerón-Liu (2017), the role of parents using digital literacy practices with bilingual children were found. Eight Latinx families used school-provided technological devices with their children. Although families had increasing access to tech devices, they still had limitations. For example, some families did not have internet service and preferred their home technological devices. Similarly to the families in the Noguerón-Liu (2017) study, some of the participants in this study had to drive to local restaurants to obtain internet service and complete their school homework. Significantly, the parents in

Noguerón-Liu’s study viewed themselves as “learners” of digital devices the same way parents in my study saw themselves as “digital learners” as parents created more digital opportunities in various spaces for their children.

While previous research on family language policy has explored the family language practices of mothers and the usage of various modes, few studies have investigated the roles of fathers in family language policy. This gap in the literature highlights the need for my study to examine how mothers and fathers use their home language practices to promote bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural children.

In this paragraph, I outline the organization of this manuscript. First, in the literature review, I shared the results from several studies centered on family language practices promoting bilingualism and biliteracy. Then, I will describe the method I used to present this study, my positionality, participant information, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness. In the findings section, I will identify two themes: intentional Spanish language practices and intentional English language practices. Next, I will explain how to learn from the agency, urgency, and resources of Mexican parents and, lastly, will describe the implications and conclusion.

Methodology

This study is derived from another work focusing on everyday language and literacy practices of families of Mexican origin and centering within the framework of family language planning. I came to this study from my subtractive school experiences as a bilingual student raised in a Spanish-speaking home and placed in a monolingual English classroom without the option of bilingual education. I had no choice but to learn new concepts through English-only at school. I primarily used Spanish with my *padre*¹ and English with my *madre*.² Growing up, I lived in a “sink-or-swim” school situation as I figuratively came up for air. Years later, when I taught bilingual kindergarteners using the Zoom program, I noticed some of my students were using primarily English at home which made me wonder what family planning policies other bilingual parents were using in their homes and what effects this had on their bilingual children in the Spanish context.

This study is situated on the language practices of the parents, Sra. Blanca Lara, Sr. David Lara, Sra. Maribel Soto, Sr. Ciro Soto, Sra. Eva Moreno, Sr. Adán Moreno, Sra. Isabel Ochoa, and Sr. Sergio Ochoa, all of whom were parents of my former bilingual kindergarten students who chose to raise their children as bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural in a fast urban growing Central Texas area. The question driving this study was, “How do the home language practices of Mexican parents support their children to be bilingual and biliterate?”

Table 1
Participants and their Characteristics

Mother’s Name	Sra. Blanca Lara	Sra. Maribel Soto	Sra. Eva Moreno	Sra. Isabel Ochoa
Language Used Mostly at Home	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish

¹ father
² mother

Father's Name	Sr. David Lara	Sr. Ciro Soto	Sr. Adán Moreno	Sr. Sergio Ochoa
Language Used Mostly at Home	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish

I conducted my study by completing two sets of Zoom interviews with parents of Mexican origin within the span of two months in 2022. Each interview I conducted lasted more than 40 minutes and consisted of preformulated questions to find the families' home language and English usage with their children. I collected field notes from the Zoom interview observations and audio and video recordings of Zoom interviews.

Positionality

This section describes my personal, professional, and scholarly experiences with young emergent Spanish/English bilinguals and their families as a context for my analysis and conclusions. I am a Mexican-American male, a first-year Ph.D. student, and a teaching assistant at a large Central Texas university. Like my participants, I was raised in a Spanish-speaking home in Central Texas and experienced subtractive conditions of schooling at an early age. As a Mexican-American kindergarten student in the early 1980s, I was placed in a monolingual English classroom, without the option of bilingual education as I continued to learn Spanish and English with my parents. I had no choice but to learn new concepts through English-only programs. Generations of Spanish-speaking Mexican-American students have faced similar subtractive conditions (Blanton, 2004; Guerra, 2007; Valenzuela, 1999), and Mexican-American families and bilingual students continue to experience linguistic discrimination and inequities in U.S. schools and society to this day.

I conducted this study because, as a bilingual kindergarten teacher amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, I met my students on Zoom for the first time. Similar to the participants in the study conducted by Deborah Palmer (2017), I wondered why the emergent bilingual children in my virtual classroom were using so much English in a bilingual program. I wanted to follow up on their use of Spanish while they were enrolled in a bilingual first-grade classroom. This study is based on my master's thesis (Saucedo, 2022).

Participants³

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, I was fortunate to teach the participants' children who were in the early-exit bilingual program at school and took note of their language uses in class. Sra. Blanca Lara was born in San Luis Potosí, México and raised in the United States, specifically Texas. She was married to Sr. David Lara who was born and raised in Texas. Together, they had three daughters: Samantha (11), Maria (6), and Aria (3). All family members lived in Texas. Sra. Lara was a stay-at-home mother who cleaned, cooked, handled household finances, and more while her husband was away at work. She would drop Samantha and Maria off and pick them up after school. Sr. Lara worked in foundation repair.

³ All participant names and location names in this study are pseudonyms and are all parents of my former bilingual kindergarten students who attended an elementary school in Central, Texas.

Sra. Maribel Soto was born and raised in Guanajuato, México and was a single mother who used to be married to Sr. Ciro Soto, who was also born and raised in Guanajuato. They had two children: Arturo (7) and Lupita (3). All family members lived in Texas. Sra. Soto was a stay-at-home mother who was the main caretaker of her children. Sra. Maribel cleaned, cooked, handled household finances, and more. She had a small business making *gelatinas*⁴ for the local community and would transport Arturo to and from school. Sr. Soto worked locally as a handyman on various home renovations and took care of his children every other week.

Sra. Eva Moreno was born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México. She was married to Sr. Adán Moreno who was also born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México, with whom she had three daughters: Luna (9), Edna (7), and Ana (5). All family members lived in Texas. Sra. Moreno worked as a stay-at-home mother who cleaned, cooked, handled household finances, and more. She was responsible for taking Luna, Edna, and Ana to and from school. Sr. Moreno worked as a construction worker.

Sra. Isabel Ochoa was born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México. She was married to Sr. Sergio Ochoa who was also born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México. They had two children: Sonia (7) and Abel (2). All family members lived in Texas. Sra. Ochoa was a stay-at-home mother and child caregiver who cleaned, cooked, handled household finances, and more. She would sometimes care for children from other families in her home. She was responsible for her children's transportation. Sr. Ochoa worked as a construction worker.

Data Collection

All data collected was authentic and captured the languaging of all the participants in this study after questions were asked during interviews. Wei et al. (2023) states that “more recent work has tended to examine meaning-making and the language-mediated experiences of multilingual families and thus posed a different set of questions” (p. 45). Similarly to King, I questioned participants to collect meaningful data. The primary data sources for this study were two sets of structured interviews with my participants. The structured interviews consisted of two sets of prepared open-ended questions and prompts guided by thematic sections, and they resulted in deep conversations. The first set of interviews was conducted in April 2022, and the second set was completed in May 2022. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were conducted in Spanish on Zoom due to IRB COVID-19 restrictions.

Data Analysis

First, I selected the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to analyze interview data and field notes with Sra. Lara, Sr. Lara, Sra. Soto, Sr. Soto, Sra. Moreno, Sr. Moreno, Sra. Ochoa, and Sr. Ochoa. As a researcher, I tried to collect as much data as possible. Wei et al. (2023) affirms that “researchers are increasingly interested in how families are constructed through multilingual language and practices and how language functions as a resource for this process of family-making and meaning-making in contexts of transmigration, technology saturation, and hypermobility” (p. 47). Moreover, to learn about the familial perceptions of the Spanish language, English language, and language activities that took place in the homes of the participants many notes were taken during the interviews and analyzed although the interviews were conducted via Zoom.

⁴ gelatinas

After the first set of interviews, I created a table with my research question, the interview questions, and the participants' answers. I then searched for themes or codes that appeared for data analysis. The themes found after the first set of interviews were about maintaining importance of children's bilingualism, speaking Spanish with family elders to keep familial ties, and doing meaningful activities in Spanish and English at home. With this data, I constructed a second set of interview questions to further probe the participants to answer my research question at the end of this study. After the second interview, I created a second table with my research questions, new interview questions, and the participants' answers. I searched for more themes across my data analysis and found they were raising bilingual and biliterate children and maintaining the home language within the family. After that, I created a third table showcasing my research question; I included interview questions from both sets of interviews relevant to my research question and answers from all the interviews to find which answered my research question.

While analyzing the interview data, I immediately identified the mothers' and fathers' (1) beliefs about bilingualism and (2) the Spanish and English language practices done at home. Next, I focused on the interview data and field notes to identify the Spanish and English language practices completed at home. I noted various modalities (e.g., audio, oral, visual, physical, and written) involved. I then noted how these modalities supported the Spanish, English, bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism of the emergent bilingual children. My study is centered on the analysis of two specific areas: (1) intentional Spanish language practices and (2) English language practices. Table 1 below offers an overview of the study and its relation to the Spanish and English language practices of bilingual parents enacted with their children.

Table 2
Findings

Mothers

Name	Sra. Blanca Lara	Sra. Maribel Soto	Sra. Eva Moreno	Sra. Isabel Ochoa
Place of Residence	Texas, United States (born in San Luis Potosí, México and raised in Texas)	Texas, United States (born and raised in Guanajuato, México)	Texas, United States (born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México)	Texas, United States (born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México)
Work Experience	Stay-at-home mother	Stay-at-home mother and gelatine maker	Stay-at-home mother	Stay-at-home mother and childcare provider
Years Living in the United States	23	11	14	23
Community Type	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Friends	Mexican origin and United States origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin
Family	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin
Extended Family Situation	Located in México and Texas	Located in México	Located in México	Located in México

Fathers

Name	Sr. David Lara	Sr. Ciro Soto	Sr. Adán Moreno	Sr. Sergio Ochoa
Place of Residence	Texas, United States (Born and raised in Texas, United States)	Texas, United States (Born and raised in Guanajuato, México)	Texas, United States (Born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México)	Texas, United States (Born and raised in San Luis Potosí, México)
Work Experience	Foundation Repair	Home Renovation	Construction	Construction

Years Living in the United States	32	14	18	19
Community Type	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Friends	Mexican origin and United States origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin
Family	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin	Mexican origin
Extended Family Situation	Located in México and Texas	Located in México	Located in México	Located in México

Children

Name & Age	Samantha (11) Maria (6) Aria (3)	Arturo (7) Lupita (3)	Luna (9) Edna (7) Ana (5)	Sonia (7) Abel (2)
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Findings

1. Intentional Spanish Language Practices	Reads books in Spanish and reads and writes/types texts in Spanish to family members.	Reads and writes/types/texts in Spanish to family members, attends Sunday church services in Spanish, and watches cartoons in Spanish.	Reads and writes shopping lists in Spanish, and attend church services in Spanish and attended church services in Spanish.	Reads books and plays the <i>Lotería</i> game.
2. Intentional English Language Practices	Reads and writes/types/texts in English to family members, reads books, reads newspapers, reads magazines, surfs the Internet, writes shopping lists, and watches movies on Netflix for kids.	Watches cartoons in English.	Reads books in English, play smartphone application games, and watch cartoons on Netflix for kids.	Reads books in English.

Trustworthiness

Since my qualitative case study uses a small group of participants to generalize an important issue, there may be potential for this study to be called into question regarding validity, reliability, and generalizability. I utilized specific strategies to enhance the truthfulness of this work. The interviews and the final reports have been member-checked. I have received verbal notes for the interviews and transcripts, which helped clarify some points the participants wanted to make. Moreover, this case study points out that all the information presented comes from eight interviews with eight participants. Notably, the findings and implications derived from this case study should be interpreted with the understanding that this is a small group's perspective and ideas.

All the parents in this study supported the development and maintenance of Spanish and the usage of English as they lived in a small rural community that predominately uses Spanish. The findings are based on the narratives the participants shared with me during the interviews in 2022 between March and May.

In the findings section, I will describe how the children in this study engaged in literacy activities at home in Spanish and English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening to learning applications and movies, speaking to familial elders, reading books, and writing shopping lists were among the most common literacies practiced in Spanish. Listening and reading captions on Netflix, speaking English with older siblings, and reading books in English with family members were common activities done in English at home.

Intentional Spanish Language Practices

In the listening domain, most of the children listened to stories and books read to them by their parents. In the speaking domain, all of the parents and children communicated with family elders through the WhatsApp application and practiced their Spanish-speaking skills with grandparents in México and communicated with them often throughout the year. When parents and their children could not travel to México during the holiday season, they quickly logged on to the WhatsApp application and communicated with family members across the U.S.-México border. This finding is in line with the family language framework as the emergent bilingual parents chose the Spanish language so their children could communicate effectively with familial elders in México.

As for the reading domain, most of the children read books in Spanish at home and church. The well-beloved Mexican *Lotería* game was used in the Ochoa household. Sra. Ochoa knows that Sonia enjoys playing *Lotería* and will often let her read the words on *Lotería* game cards. Sra. Ochoa stated, “*Cuando [Sonia] juega la Lotería es cuando usa el español.*”⁵ Using *Lotería* game cards as the mentor texts, Sonia used the visual mode to look at the cards, her linguistic mode to decode Spanish, the active listening mode to hear herself and others read off the cards, and her verbal mode to read aloud the words from each *Lotería* card. Sra. Ochoa and Sr. Ochoa often let Sonia lead the *Lotería* game using her various modes of communication in Spanish with her family and drawing on her linguistic repertoires so that she would be successful. Sra. Ochoa and Sr. Ochoa offered Sonia multiple successful opportunities with Spanish, and this valuable resource was a platform where she could develop her Spanish more as these literacy experiences were meaningful and authentic to Sonia and her family.

In the writing domain, some of the children wrote shopping lists with their parents before purchasing items at grocery stores. For example, Sr. Moreno explained, “*Cuando hacemos listas de compras, ¿verdad? Todo. Casi la mayoría de cosas son todas en español.*”⁶ King and Lanza (2017) state language practices are de facto FLPs and are chosen by the parents in a household. Language practice is what parents decide to do with their children. The parents in my study pointed out that learning Spanish is a prerequisite to learning a second language and becoming bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural in a country where English is the dominant language. In this case, the parents do most activities in the home language (Spanish) and place its importance in meaningful familial interactions across borderlands.

Moreover, the parents exercised the utilization of digital tools so their children could engage with Chromebooks, smartphones, tablets, laptops, and television—for example, Sra. Lara and Sr. Lara ensured that Maria often visited San Luis Potosí, México to communicate with family members in Spanish. Samantha, Maria, and Aria participated in WhatsApp video conversations with grandparents and cousins in México. Similar to the families in the Noguerón-Liu (2017) study, the parents valued technological devices in their home as literacy resources for their children. Throughout the discourse of my study, I noted how all the parents pointed out the importance of their children’s ongoing effective communication with their grandparents and the interconnectedness of family through Spanish. This reality strengthens the concept of family language policy as being at the forefront of raising bilingual and biliterate children.

⁵ “When [Sonia] plays *Lotería*, she uses Spanish.”

⁶ “When we create shopping lists, right. Everything. Almost the majority of things are all in Spanish.”

Intentional English Language Practices

By using a family language policy framework, as a researcher, I took note of how parents chose English in certain situations so that their children could learn concepts through English. In the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains, the parents utilized technology as a vital resource they could tap into as their children utilized learning applications in English on their journey to becoming bilingual and biliterate. Furthermore, the Laras and the Morenos expressed how their children watched Netflix regularly to expand their learning of English. Sra. Lara stated, “*Ellas tienen Netflix para niños y Disney Plus. Tienen su YouTube de niños también y ven lo que es caricaturas y películas.*”⁷ The parents intentionally allowed their children to use their auditory mode to listen to entertainment in English, the oral mode as the children spoke direct movie quotes, and the linguistic mode to read the captions in Spanish and English, which let the children use modes simultaneously, activating their dynamic bilingualism and biliteracy. In my questioning during interviews with the parents, I found some of the children spoke English regularly with older siblings and read books in English at home with family members.

All the parents in this study wanted their children to learn English. Sra. Isabel Ochoa expressed, “*Pues, yo pienso que el inglés es bueno porque es otro idioma para ella, para su futuro para que sea bilingüe y puede agregar mucho más buenas oportunidades para crecer en todo con lo que está pasando en el mundo.*”⁸ Although Sra. Ochoa was concerned about how her children experience and respond to world events, she believes it is good for her children to learn English and be bilingual and biliterate in a complex world. Sra. Ochoa held a strong stance toward teaching her children to be bilingual and defend themselves as they leveraged all their linguistic repertoires in difficult situations with other children, primarily bullies at school. Sra. Ochoa never held back any concerns for her children.

All the parents pointed out that learning English as a second language would benefit their children as they grow older. As noted by Mitchell (2005), the English language has been used as a tool for colonialism. English is viewed as the official language of business, advancement, intellect, enlightenment, and school. Living in a transient part of Texas where Spanish-speaking individuals move in and out year after year, all the parents see the benefits of bilingualism from an academic, economic, and social standpoint. Moreover, Sra. Ochoa explained, “*Aprender el inglés es algo bueno que les ayuda tanto como a nosotros y para que tengan un buen futuro más adelante y no batallen. Que se defiendan por cualquier cosa que necesitan defenderse.*”⁹ Her comment indicates how the importance of being bilingual in the United States.

Sra. Ochoa shared about the times she has had to reprimand Sonia in English at home so that her daughter could fully understand her mother’s reasoning. Sra. Ochoa stated, “*Cuando [Sonia] se comporta mal o hace algo mal, nosotros preferimos a llamarle la atención en inglés. Si la corregimos o le llamamos la atención en español, a la mejor no captura una palabra en español y no comprende lo que estamos hablando. Luego, cuando siempre se comporta mal o no sabe algo o no más la corregimos por lo que hizo o por lo que ella dijo, le decimos por que y le decimos en*

⁷ “The girls have Netflix for kids and Disney Plus. They have YouTube for kids also and they watch cartoons and movies.”

⁸ “Well, I think English is good because it is another language for her, for her future so she can be bilingual and have more opportunities to grow with everything that is happening in the world.”

⁹ “Learning English is a good thing that helps them like us and so they can have a good future and not have a hard time. They can defend themselves against anything they need to defend themselves against.”

inglés para que captura toda la razón.”¹⁰ Sonia used her auditory mode to understand the important lessons her parents were communicating with her. Similarly, to the mother who used English to bond with her child in the Reichmuth (2024) study, Sra. Ochoa used English to communicate the importance of appropriate behavior with her daughter. The *padres mexicanos*¹¹ expressed their agency in learning English as a second language for their children and wanted them to be bilingual and biliterate. Most parents spoke a little English but intentionally used English through literacy and technological means at home to promote bilingualism.

Fortunately, based on the trustworthiness and respect built in this study, all of the *padres mexicanos*—Blanca Lara, David Lara, Maribel Soto, Eva Moreno, Adán Moreno, and Isabel Ochoa—in my study expressed how they assisted and supported their children’s bilingualism and multiliteracies as all family members participated in multiple Spanish activities, and some of the families completed English activities at home so their children could become bilingual and biliterate. As the former bilingual kindergarten teacher of the children of the participants in this study, I took many in-school anecdotal notes of the Spanish and English language uses of their children. After being their teacher of record, I found that two of the children spoke Spanish fluently at school, read many Spanish books, and wrote simple Spanish sentences and very few English sentences with teacher assistance. The other two children spoke English fluently most of the time, read beginner English books, and wrote some simple Spanish and English sentences in the classroom with teacher assistance.

Para crecer en todo con lo que está pasando en el mundo—Isabel accelerated forward the important parental dialogue in this qualitative study as she regularly stressed the importance of raising strong-willed bilingual and biliterate children that can grow in an ever-changing *mundo*, raising their voices, and defending themselves within their given rights. Moreover, researchers view, understand, and define language, bilingualism, and multiliteracies as a reflection of our human body and our existence. González (2021) states Anzaldúa’s expression on language shows “language is at the heart, literally and metaphorically, of who we are, how we present ourselves, and how others see us. ‘I am my language’” (p. xix). Language as a right should be at the heart of those who research language practices, and when parents activate their family language policy practices, language change can happen at home to promote bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural children.

Learning From Mexican Parent’s Agency, Urgency, and Resources

In writing this work, I hope the authentic voices of the parents’ ring through. I highly respect the *padres mexicanos*’ agency for their children becoming bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Grosjean (2015) states that prior bilingual research has put stress on the “bi” of bilingualism and biculturalism, when in fact there are many people who use more than two languages in their everyday lives that themselves take place in more than two cultures. The parents in this study used available literacy resources to continue the “duel” of ensuring biliteracy in their homes daily. Petrovic (2010) states that language-as-a-resource orientation, as Ruíz argues it, is a win-win outcome. The language and the languages of minority groups benefit not only the

¹⁰ “When [Sonia] acts bad or does something bad, we prefer to call her attention in English. If we correct her or we call her attention en Spanish, she probably will not capture a word in Spanish and will not comprehend what we are saying. Then, when she always acts bad or does not know something or we just correct her for what she did or for what she said, we tell her why and we tell her in English so that she can capture the reason.”

¹¹ Mexican parents

capitalistic trade and global expansion missions of the dominant group but also the maintenance of the primary languages and cultural identities of minority groups (Ruíz, 2010). The parents acknowledged and supported their children’s linguistic repertoires at home. Educators can draw upon household practices and implement such language activities in the classroom. García et al. (2017) claim that if we want bilingual students (and especially Latinx students) to be successful U.S. citizens, we must provide them with educational spaces—with translanguaging classrooms—where all the features of their language repertoires are valued and leveraged in ways that support and strengthen learning. As Freire (2008) argues, the translanguaging classroom recognizes not just a harmonious *cariño*, but an “armed love” to “fight, to denounce, and to announce” (p. 209). Translanguaging can be dynamically fluid in classrooms and homes.

It is important to note that in this study, parents supported their children’s usage of digital tools as the children learned a second language. The children watched Netflix, Disney Plus, YouTube, WhatsApp, and movies daily. Since most of the parents did not speak English, technological devices helped navigate them in a world of English and other languages. The parents also viewed themselves as digital learners in the digital age learning alongside their children.

Implications

There are three “avenues” to creating a more bilingual and biliterate environment for emergent bilingual children by drawing on the literacy backgrounds and biliteracy strengths of bilingual families:

1. *For teachers who want to learn from family language practices:* Ask parents about their at-home language and literacy practices. Parents are willing to share their home literary practices when there is a positive and encouraging relationship between themselves and their child’s teacher. Bilingual parents can “open the doors” to their homes and share the literacy resources used as they raise bilingual children and collaborate with ideas and “connect,” or “bridge over” with educational professionals.
2. *For teachers who wish to implement family language practices in the classroom:* Implement the home language and literacy practices such as sharing stories and reading favorite books in addition to the curriculum already in place at the start of an academic school year. By melding home language practices and classroom literacy practices, educators support language and literacy practices children do at home with their families to create a robust school learning environment with many educational possibilities.

Juntos,¹² educators and *padres mexicanos* can further collaborate by sharing digital resources.

3. *For teachers who would like to use digital tools in the classroom:* Ask parents early on about the digital tools their children use at home. Share YouTube videos, movies, and literacy applications that support the child’s learning at school. Although there may be some technological non-negotiables in schools, teachers can sprinkle in other technological practices that will further advance children’s literacy and language in the classroom.

¹² Together

Conclusion

With bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism being the end goal for emergent bilinguals, educators and families can work as a team to transform classrooms. Although most of the parents in this study did not speak English, they used the various literacy and digital resources in their homes to support their child's bilingualism and biliteracy. Their voices were heard and honored foremost to capture the authentic dialogue they had throughout the study.

With so many studies done capturing mothers' voices, I wanted to include the fathers' stories as well. I kept quiet at times, spoke less, and learned more. I did not want their stories to be untold or forgotten. In learning the various intentional Spanish language practices, English language practices, and digital tools from bilingual families, educators could learn from these practices and collaborate with parents in the future. By putting the research readings into practice, implementing such language and literacy activities can benefit emergent bilinguals for a lifetime and ensure they will be lifelong learners who will share their passion for learning for generations to come.

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