SOCIAL SEMIOTICS, EDUCATION, AND IDENTITY: CREATING
TRAJECTORIES FOR YOUTH AT SCHOOLS TO DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE
AND IDENTITY AS LANGUAGE USERS

by

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DEDICATION

for Laura, Mar, Salomé, Ruth, and Mike Przymus

Girls, “To have a second language is to possess a second soul.”

(Charlemagne)

To be the husband and dad to such beautiful people is surely to possess many more souls.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is comprised of three teacher-researcher studies carried out with the intention of showing teachers how to move beyond the monolingual paradigm to build upon linguistic and cultural diversity in their everyday practice. The monolingual paradigm is linked to ideologies regarding proficiency in English as the principle means of academic success and citizenship. These studies challenge this traditional way of viewing education by treating learning “as an emerging property of whole persons’ legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice” (Lave, 1991, p. 63), whether these are interest-based communities of practice beyond the classroom or bilingual communities of practice within the classroom. In order to recognize and explain this learning and inform teaching practices, I adopt a social semiotic approach in order to explore how meaning is constructed through language, and also through social interactions with all modern aspects of society, including gesture, image, performance, and music (Kress, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2005). I explore how these interactions allow youth to create diverse identities, beyond immigrant, refugee, limited English proficient, learner, and “other”, in three educational arenas: 1) Outside of the classroom in interest-based communities of practice at school, 2) in a secondary dual-language content classroom, and 3) online in an educational transnational telecollaboration project. In all three studies I triangulate quantitative data of student participation and academic achievement with qualitative participant narratives and teacher-researcher observations. What results is insight into the impact of creating multimodal trajectories for youth to perform identities and knowledge as language users in schools, where historically messages of youth’s social identities are ascribed in much more constricting ways (Harklau, 2003). Viewing these youth as language users, rather than learners, sends a message to both educators and youth that in education, identity formation trumps skills development, and this can lead to higher expectations, more engaging learning, and
opportunities for youth to question race-language educational legacies (Malsbary, 2014; Wenger, 1998).
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation, made up of three separate studies, is the outcome of six years (2009-2015) of interaction with culturally and linguistically diverse youth in public schools that span from the American Midwest to the American Southwest and the Pacific Coast of Mexico. For the first three years of this interaction I was an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and advocate for all English Language Learners (ELLs) at a high school in the American Midwest; it was during this period of interaction, observation, and collaboration with high school immigrant and refugee youth that the ideas, follow-up studies, and innovative pedagogical interventions were born. In the ensuing years as a doctoral student I was able to act upon these ideas, support them with theory, and work to create, test, and hone the innovative pedagogy described in this dissertation.

Why Social Semiotics: How a Multimodal Lens Can Facilitate the Recognition and Explanation of Youth Identities that Emerge from Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Communities of Practice

A major theoretical entry point for pursuing the three studies of this dissertation has been the literature on social semiotics in education, the re-conceptualization of text as any semiotic element used to convey meaning (Fairclough, 2011; Kress, 2011; Wilson, 2011), and an educational application of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1993, 1978; Martin, 2000; Norton & Christie, 1999; Ravelli, 2000; Rogers, 2011). “In the era of multimodality semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation and communication” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 46). Yet, from my own observations of teachers in schools who interact with culturally and linguistically diverse youth and from my own introspective reflections on past practice with ELLs, language, specifically the English language, is the main semiotic mode used to define and categorize ELLs in schools and used as the sole instrument that guides programmatic and
curricular decisions that impact the identities and opportunities of these youth. Language is a meaning making system, but “Meaning does not reside in the language; it is produced in practice” (Canagarajah, 2007a, p. 931). This practice makes meaning making social, but not anchored solely to language. Martin (2000) contends, “…we have to consider the relation of language to other systems of meaning (e.g. music, image, kinesics) and interpret texts across a range of cooperating semiotic modalities” (p. 296).

Social semiotics, a theory of critically analyzing the meaning making of all semiotic resources involved in interactions, both between individuals and between individuals and their surroundings, has provided me with an applicable instrument for bringing to light the array of multimodal interactions available to ELLs at school. As a theory, social semiotics “comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems, and it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field” (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 1). With an application of social semiotics to the field of education we augment our understanding of learner identity creation by paying attention to all of the meaning making modes available to learners and the opportunities or lack of opportunities for students to utilize these modes to achieve their desired identities.

**Shifting Identity Paradigms from Language Learner to Language User**

Creating trajectories for youth at schools to perform knowledge and identities that they desire for themselves is especially important for ELLs who continue to be positioned at schools as immigrants and limited English proficient speakers. I posit that the two terms “limited” and “learners” are often consciously and unconsciously collocated and become mutually understood. Use of the term ‘learner’ is often associated with such judgments as limited, incomplete, error prone, and underdeveloped in some way. The simple, but important, shift in viewing ELLs as learners to ‘users’ may prove
to be influential in raising expectations, both placed on ELLs by teachers and those self-given by ELLs themselves. A shift in the traditional identity paradigm of viewing youth at schools as language learners to language users may facilitate the repositioning of linguistically and culturally diverse youth from identities as marginalized recipients of institutional knowledge to valuable and active members of varied communities of practice.

I show how this theoretical shift might become more concrete by investigating 1) how English Language Learners (ELLs) use language in interest-based communities of practice beyond the classroom, 2) how all students in a dual-language classroom become language users through hybrid language practices and multimodal textual interactions, and 3) how students in a transnational telecollaboration project position themselves as language users by constructing bilingual posts through code-switching. I document and analyze how all students can align their diverse semiotic resources (Christie, 2000; Fairclough, 2011; Halliday, 1978, 1993; Kress, 2011; Norton & Christie, 1999) in order to co-create knowledge and social relationships and create identities as proficient bilingual users of content through these three diverse arenas of interaction at schools. Together, with help from teachers and peers, ELLs can display the agency needed to begin to perform new identities and reposition themselves as valued language users (Duff, 2012). The first study of this dissertation explores how educators can facilitate this youth agency in interest-based communities of practice beyond the classroom.

**Recognizing and Encouraging Multimodal Performance of Knowledge and Identity Beyond the Classroom in Interest-Based Communities of Practice**

In the first study, I investigate the impact of a peer mentoring language socialization program rooted in interest-based communities of practice beyond the classroom in order to contribute to the scholarship on how to tap into the interest-based
agency of ELLs at schools. The challenge facing many ELLs comes from trying to achieve a success at schools that has traditionally been highly linked to proficiency in the English language. “Academic English language skills affect students’ abilities to adapt socially at school and are also highly predicative of academic success in the United States” (Surez-Orozco, et al., 2008, p. 141). By default, this immediately positions ELLs as deficient and limited and acts to promote their separation from the mainstream school population, justifies the watering-down of sheltered content, and reinforces their roles as “others”. As such, “the goal of education becomes how to ‘fit’ students constructed as ‘other’ by virtue of their race/ethnicity, language, or social class into a hierarchical structure that is defined as a meritocracy” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 467, italics original).

When language is the main instrument for achieving this, the result for ELLs is often the recurring reproduction of current inequities. Chapter 2 of this dissertation: ‘Imaging and moving beyond the ESL bubble’ addresses the question of how student success and identity can be re-conceptualized to include affiliations and participation in interest-based communities of practice.

The need for ELLs to set down a new joint history with a diverse group of youth at schools is important for their positioned identities in their new environment and for chances for academic and social success. This can often be quite difficult within the constraints of the classroom. Duff (2012) suggests that ELLs “…may be socially and discursively positioned in various ways, sometimes to their disadvantage (e.g., as reticent, hostile, unforthcoming, evasive, or overly direct), on the basis of their group membership” (p. 4). Also, when ELLs miss out on opportunities for intercultural, interpersonal interaction they often can lack the exposure to “…local values, ideologies, patterns of social organization, and cultural preferences…inscribed in everyday discourse and social interactions” (Garret & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002, p. 341). Not only does this classroom assigned identity act to position ELLs as different socially and linguistically, but due to
the watered-down content in some ESL classrooms, ELLs can be positioned as academically deficient as well.

One of the goals of education must be to facilitate students’ formation of what Duff (2002) calls, “…constructive social and academic networks with other students and staff both inside and outside of class” (p. 290). Prior knowledge, skill sets, and interests are the entryways into facilitating these networks. “In all cases it is the individual’s interest that shapes and directs her or his attention and frames what becomes the prompt for engagement, interpretation, and learning. The (always) transformative (and/or transductive) interpretation of the prompt constitutes learning” (Kress, 2011, pp. 214-215). Opening up pathways for participation and language socialization through school-based communities of practice that match the interests of ELLs promotes an active rather than passive process of language learning and identity formation. “Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members’ participation in, and orientation to, the world around them” (Eckert, 2006, p. 1). The aspects of shared interests and a commitment to a common goal as a member of a community of practice are crucial for our understanding of how influential these communities can be for long term language acquisition, cultural adaptation and identity formation. It is true that identity potentially lies beyond ascribed roles and positions, but without real reconceptualization of the opportunities ELLs are afforded at school to multimodally perform knowledge and identities, this view of agentive displays of identity negotiation on the part of ELLs will continue only to reside in the few that combat their marginalized positioned status and search out interaction in communities of practice.

In chapter 2 I describe and research the effectiveness of a peer-socialization model called the ELL Ambassadors program and propose that these kinds of interest-based programs, beyond the classroom, provide a possible solution for ELLs that wish to
combat their marginalized positioned identities at school, wish to imagine beyond the ESL bubble, and make the move to interaction with other like-minded peers who share similar interests. The ELL Ambassadors Program demonstrates how affiliation in a community of practice provides for an immediate and perhaps extended identity beyond ELL or immigrant for these youth as seen by working toward the same common goal as the other members in the community (e.g. soccer team, drama club), but also through “…their orientation to other communities of practice and to the world around them more generally” (Eckert, 2006, p. 1).

Creating Curricular Spaces for Hybrid Language Practices in the Bilingual Classroom

In the second study, I turn the social semiotic lens on identity formation to the dual-language content classroom and address how the traditional monolingual paradigm of education has infected even bilingual classrooms and has acted to create microcosms of society where the voices and opportunities of culturally and linguistically diverse youth are suppressed again in these classrooms. Chapter 3 of this dissertation: ‘Challenging the monolingual paradigm in secondary dual-language instruction’ asks the question, How can creating curricular spaces of hybrid language practice afford all language learners the opportunity to reposition themselves as bilingual content users?

Rigid separation of language and at times language speakers sends the contradictory message of bilingual education that monolingual instructional methods are superior to bilingual teaching strategies (Cummins, 2005). This can lead to power struggles that arise due to steep imbalance and privilege of one language (typically English) over the other outside of school and how to ensure that the needs and voices of ELL students and their families are being heard (Christian, et al., 2000, pp. 259-260). Rigid separation of languages, a traditional programmatic mainstay in dual-language
instruction (DLI) programs, plants the seeds of viewing languages and the speakers of those languages as “others” and actually works against one of the goals of DLI, the development of multicultural understanding. Cummins (2005) argues that even though direct teaching in the target language for large blocks of time can be helpful, it can also impede the cross-lingual transfer important for bilingual development (p. 4). Rigidly separating languages leads to too much of a monolingual perspective that can impoverish cross-language transfer, language awareness among learners, and potential learner identities as bilinguals.

Hadi-Tabassum (2006) suggests that through a move away from structural binaries and rigid separation of languages a more realistic representation of society may emerge; one in which a hybrid, third space where students can position themselves in-between the two languages would better prepare them for the world outside of the contrived, linguistically controlled environment of the school. In these spaces they may develop the agency that they will have to display in creating an identity in society as a bilingual, and not simply accepting an ascribed identity related to one absolute language (p. 274). In these third spaces of language and identity negotiation, students can critically challenge the status quo, the dominant ideology, and learn what it means to assume a bilingual identity in society. A DLI program that allows for this mediation of binary opposites may have the best chance of preparing students not only for academic and language success, but also for the third goal of DLI programs, that students will gain a heightened intercultural awareness and competence. The dissolving of language borders in dual language programs allows students and teachers to flow between the languages when and where needed.

Creating third spaces (De Jong & Bearse, 2011; Hadi-Tabassum, 2006; Kibler et al., 2013; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012) within DLI programs presents an opportunity to promote critical pedagogy that promotes bilingual communication, the
recognition of cultural knowledge beyond language, and the identities that emerge as a result. In chapter 3, I document the potential of the 2-1-L2 model, a dual language instruction model that I developed while a Fulbright Distinguished Teacher in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, México (2010), as a different approach to working within the secondary level implementation challenges. Some of these challenges include the separating of languages by class, teacher, day, and content. The 2-1-L2 provides an alternative to separating language in DLI and offers a potential trajectory for DLI to continue in content classes at the secondary level. Promoting a culture of hybrid language practices within DLI programs presents an opportunity to promote critical pedagogy that fosters bilingual communication and the identities that may emerge as a result.

**Facilitating the Negotiation of Language Use and Identities as Bilingual Users Online in Educational, Transnational Telecollaboration Projects**

In the third study, I address identity that is constructed in computer assisted language learning’s (CALL) *Fourth Phase* (Przymus, 2014), and consider all of the affordances of anonymity and the ubiquitous mobile online interactions with language. The arena of interaction is still educational, but takes place in a transnational telecollaboration between high school youth in the U.S. and Mexico. Chapter 4 of this dissertation, ‘The pedagogical role of purposeful code-switching in transnational telecollaborative exchanges’ focuses on how privileging both phatic and referential communication in a telecollaboration project may produce ‘successful communication’ and how this can be structured through thoughtful and purposeful code-switching organized by the Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE) framework (Przymus, 2014).

The idea of shifting identity paradigms from language learner to language user
becomes concrete when considering how and why individuals negotiate language use bilingually online. Code-switching (CS), “…the seemingly random alternation both between and within sentences”, a practice performed by many of the world’s speakers as part of quotidian social existence, has proven important in the creation and maintenance of personal and professional relationships (Poplack, 1980, p. 581). In considering how hybrid language use, such as code-switching, is influenced by the “perceived norms of the speech situation” (Poplack, 1980, p. 595) and the impact that it can have on the creation and maintenance of relationships, researchers have begun to recognizing the importance of resituating CS in the educational area and specifically in school based computer mediated communication (CMC) or telecollaboration projects (Androutsopoulos, 2013; Mäkilähde, 2014; Przymus, 2014).

A review of some well studied CMC projects (Belz, 2002; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002) uncovers some cultural and linguistic problems that arose as a result of insufficient attention placed on how the participants would be positioned as proficient or non-proficient L2 users, and from a lack of students’ understanding regarding intercultural communication and the importance of sharing language use and relationship building. Even though it is understood that part of the learning process is learning, sometimes through communicative failures, that cultures differ, if the cultural clashes stem from discourse style, instead of content, there is potential for the unwanted formation of new negative stereotypes and attitudes regarding students from other cultures that have little to do with actual student opinions regarding the content of the telecollaboration project. If students fear that their positive face value or “involvement” is threatened by how they are linguistically positioned as a second language (L2) user in the project they may withdraw from interaction or display “independence” face value or negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). This avoidance or hesitation to interact, as observed in Belz’s (2002) study on the telecollaboration between university students in Germany and in the
U.S., can partially be explained as students in CMC activities not feeling at the same proficiency level as their telecollaboration interactants. This may be understood as displays of agency, resistance, and autonomy in preserving their own social stance by not participating. Feelings of insecurity of language proficiency can never be completely erased, but perhaps be mitigated through structuring the language use of intercultural CMC participants accomplished by the equal sharing of language use in messages.

In chapter 4, I explore the potential of the Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE) framework for providing students with the structure to negotiate language use and identities as bilinguals, online. In doing so, I answer the call by some in the literature for a “calculated pedagogical intervention”, needed in order to propel the development of students’ learning (Belz, 2002, p. 75; see also Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Przmys, 2014; Warschauer, 2005). Informed by the recent literature on the use of code-switching for positive online bilingual identity formation (Androutsopoulos, 2013, 2006; Goldbarg, 2009; Lee & Barton, 2011; Mäkilähde, 2014; Park, 2008; Thorne & Black, 2007; Tsiplakou, 2010), I propose a structured framework for code-switching, the FACE framework, which encourages code-switching at the phatic/referential switch in each telecollaboration post. Arming students with strategies to linguistically mediate interactions and negotiate identities gives them the pedagogical framework for constructing their bilingual interactions. These interactions may certainly produce both consensuses and clashes, but it will be the content, not the procedure, that is controversial.

Motivation, Inspiration, and a Call to Action

All three of the studies that follow have allowed me to combine my passion for teaching and my unceasing intrigue of semiotic meaning making interactions in daily life, and funnel these into my personal need to explore how social justice issues of educational
and life opportunities for diverse youth can be addressed and some day solved. Youth agency has always and will continue to inspire my actions as an educator and researcher.

The following studies reflect what I have learned from these youth and what my inspiration has pushed me to explore and invent. Each one of these studies is a call to action for educators to presume competence in youth, become miners of background knowledge and life experiences, and never cease searching for the key to interaction.
CHAPTER 2: IMAGINING AND MOVING BEYOND THE ESL BUBBLE: FACILITATING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE THROUGH THE ELL AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

Forthcoming in Vol. 15 (4) of the Journal of Language, Identity, and Education

Abstract
When educators do not facilitate English Language Learners’ (ELL) social integration in schools, this can perpetuate ELLs’ marginalized status and the plateauing of ELLs’ English language development (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995). This study highlights a program for secondary ELLs called the ELL Ambassadors program that partnered ELLs with non-ELLs based on shared extracurricular interests. Comparing the stories, perspectives, and test scores of five newcomer ELLs from varied countries of origin, I show how program participants strengthened their English language skills and achieved academic success, demonstrating tremendous agency as they gained access to, and were socialized within, interest-based communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Further, I document how youth imagined and claimed new identities moving beyond the insulation and isolation of the ESL bubble to gaining confidence through interest-based learning with other peers. Findings suggest that interest-based peer programs at schools may create important opportunities for ELLs’ academic, language, and identity formation.

Keywords: communities of practice, English Language Learners (ELLs), extracurricular activities, imagined communities, language socialization, newcomer programs

Overview
A lack of support, in facilitating ELLs’ integration into the larger school community can often result into the perpetuation of their marginalized positioned status
within schools and communities and into the plateauing of their English language development (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995). This isolation from the mainstream community often disenfranchises ELLs, making it challenging for them to connect with peers beyond their placement in special English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Structural components of ESL programs at many schools position ELLs as “mere” immigrants and “limited” English proficient by limiting students’ interaction with non-ELLs. Such “ESL bubbles” may act to initially insulate ELLs, but also isolate them from important interaction with non-ELLs. The placement of students within an ESL bubble through particular tracked classes based on English language proficiency tests isolates ELL’s from the mainstream peer population and denies ELLs opportunities to become members of interest-based communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Further, isolation from peers constrains ELL students’ abilities to envision themselves as members of imagined communities, “groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 241). As a result, immigrant students who experience common structural constraints and isolation may self-eliminate from competing academically and attending university (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Kanno & Varghese (2010) stress the need for ELLs to gain access to cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in order to be competitive for entrance in a four-year university.

For ELL students, participation and membership in communities of practice that promote intercultural communicative interaction are essential for developing and claiming desired identities. Some students show incredible agency (Duff, 2012; Zuengler & Cole, 2005) or personal choice in their social and academic decisions, overcoming linguistic and academic obstacles at schools and in creating their desired identities on their own. By building pathways for ELLs’ participation in interest-driven extracurricular activities at school, however, educators can create spaces that welcome such expressions
of agency, increase the number of students who access English language learning beyond the constraints of Newcomer and ESL classrooms, and positively impact students’ feelings of school belonging in their new homelands.

In this article, I show how increased opportunities to participate in school-based out-of-classroom activities help ELLs reposition themselves in the eyes of teachers and peers, and how this contributes to a more equitable social and educational experience. Specifically, I build on the current scholarship of interest-based learning and identity formation, to 1) explore the potential for interest-based extracurricular activities as a context for ELL language socialization, academic success, and identity formation in schools and 2) document a program that facilitated such interest-based participation opportunities for newcomer secondary-aged ELLs. Sharing the stories and school-based performance measures of five ELLs who moved beyond the ESL bubble through participation in the ELL Ambassadors program I illustrate how, through increased interaction with non-ELLs who share the same interests, ELLs can reposition themselves at school, compete academically, and attend university. I combine observations from a three year teacher-research project in which I acted as the participants’ ESL teacher at River City High School (pseudonym) in the American Midwest, with participant surveys and interviews from follow-up case studies, and quantitative data from participants’ academic records to explore the main research questions: How can school programs facilitate ELL students’ increased participation in extracurricular activities? To what extent do such programs help ELL youth move beyond their positions as limited English-speaking immigrants in the ESL bubble, and realize their desired identities as members of interest-based and imagined communities in schools? And how do ELLs themselves compare the kinds of English language and social learning that takes place in classrooms and extracurricular activities?

**Literature Review**
Identification, Language Socialization and Communities of Practice

Scholars have shown strong interest in the ways that language learners “do” and perform identities in their everyday lives (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Harklau, 2003; Kramsch, 1997). Multiple scholars have also built on sociocultural approaches to conceptualize the ways that individuals form identities over time within language socialization processes (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986a; Zuengler & Cole, 2005), through participation in specific communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Thorne et al., 2009; Wenger, 1998), and in relation to imagined communities (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001, 2000). The positive effects of interpersonal and intercultural communication on language development, the promotion of academic success, the formation of cross-cultural understanding, and on the creation of learner identity have been well documented. “Over time direct interpersonal communication facilitates the development of one’s linguistic skills and communication behavioral competence, which in turn, enhances one’s sense of belongingness and satisfaction, as well as confidence to meet the external challenges of the environment” (McKay-Semmler, 2010, p.197). This development of linguistic skills, emergence of identity and adaptation to one’s new environment, come from increased opportunities for language socialization and identity development. Language socialization is “…the practice by which children or novices to a community are socialized both to the language forms and through language, to adopt the values, behaviors, and practices of that community” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986a, p.301). Like participation in particular speech communities, participation in a particular community of practice, “…or group of people brought together by some mutual endeavor, some common enterprise in which they are engaged” (McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 71), facilitates the development of learning a language through language socialization.

Communities of practice function as key “resources for organizing our learning
as well as contexts in which to manifest our learning through an identity of participation” (Wenger, 1998, p. 271). Within the insulation of the ESL bubble, such as an ESL Newcomer’s classroom or Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) block, a community of practice is often created among ELLs. To facilitate transformative learning, however, communities of practice cannot be bounded educational spaces, but must interact with the outside/authentic worlds (Wenger, 1998).

What is commonly lacking in these sheltered communities, is what is essential for the repositioning of ELLs’ identities in the larger school setting; interaction with non-ELLs, and key opportunities for students to explore their interests and imagined selves.

**Interest-Based Learning and Claiming Imagined Selves**

As described in Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003), when communities of practice form through shared interests and shared goals, these shared interests and goals have the potential for bringing together individuals who may be quite different culturally and linguistically. Focusing on “mutual interests” allows individuals to move in and out of multiple communities, that they may not have interacted with otherwise, to accomplish goals based on these mutual interests (Canagarajah, 2007a, p. 935). If we understand identities as outcomes of language use we can shift our focus from identities as fixed categories and understand “identification as an ongoing social and political process” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 376). Through participation in school groups, students shape their awareness of how they are positioned, what opportunities they have, what identity roles are available to them and what they have to do to negotiate and reposition themselves (Chen, 2010; Norton, 2000).

According to Kanno & Norton (2003) a drive for affiliation in imagined communities can also provide students with a sense of direction, a raised level of commitment and greater investment in their learning trajectories. As such, educators must encourage ELLs to dream beyond their current status and imagine participation in school
communities that align with their background knowledge and interests. Wenger (1998) uses the parable of the two stonecutters to underscore how learners imagine and create identities. When the two stonecutters were asked what they were doing, one answered, “I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape,” and the other responded, “I am building a cathedral” (p. 176). A communities of practice perspective prompts us to look beyond the specific learning of the classroom to opportunities that offer students “a sense of the possible trajectories available in various communities…Students must be enabled to explore who they are, who they are not, who they could be.” (p. 272).

Current practice that combines some form of peer mentoring with shared interests to promote language socialization can be classified into two distinct domains identified as 1). On-line and 2). At school. Much language socialization on-line, in what Gee & Hayes (2009) refer to as “affinity spaces” do provide for language practice and identity creation. In these online contexts, youth participate in the “specialist language of their domain of interest” (Lam, 2009, p. 303). These spaces, however high in interest-based motivation, do not always provide a local context for immigrant youth, which is crucial for their immediate need of language socialization with peers at school.

At school, spanning from elementary schools to colleges, teachers have implemented peer-mentoring/tutoring programs to help ELLs overcome cultural and linguistic hurdles. However, most of these programs are typified by assigning newcomer ELLs to L1 English speaking buddies, which replaces personal motivation to participate and a high level of engagement that accompanies voluntary interaction based on shared interests, with mandatory participation. These programs lack what I refer to as horizontal intercultural interpersonal interaction or voluntary interaction that initiates between peers, as opposed to vertical intercultural interpersonal interaction that initiates as a mandate from teachers, down to the youth themselves. This raises the question of how school-based programs might help fill a missing gap by offering ELLs opportunities to
connect with others and learn through interest-based activities, and the potential these programs might have for supporting English language and content-area learning.

As I describe below, the ELL Ambassadors program was designed to make face-to-face interest-based learning available to ELLs in school so they could choose among many opportunities for language socialization that are most aligned with their interests. It was also designed to increase equity for ELL students in a diverse school space. Through a range of opportunities, the program built upon students’ extracurricular interests outside of the classroom to provide ELLs with the chance to appropriate language, make it their own, and create identities that were not based on their forced assimilation to their new environment, but rather on strengths that they drew from their experiences, interests and future visions of themselves. As such, the program sought to answer the call for increased interpersonal communication, and opportunities for ELL student participation and imagination in schools.

The ELL Ambassadors Program

I was propelled to develop and research the ELL Ambassadors program after observing the inequalities that ELLs live daily, due to a lack of opportunities for language socialization outside of the ESL classroom, and in response to a federal agency’s call to redress the social and academic inequities that ELLs encountered at my school. In the seven years that I taught ESL classes at River City High School (RCHS), I worked with close to 1,000 ELLs. Many were newcomers, with less than a month in the United States and many had been in the U.S. for years, but had been caught in the quagmire of identity, language and culture and had struggled to both learn English and find their place in school and society. Some were supposedly living with cousins or aunts and uncles, but upon closer inspection, were living alone in trailers that allowed the cold American Midwest wind and snow to enter unimpeded. For months one winter my wife and I
would pick up a student from his trailer to give him a ride to school two miles away. That same student graduated later that spring.

Every day ELLs display incredible agency in staying in school, learning English, succeeding in displaying their knowledge of content in English, and graduating. Many, however, do not ever taste this success, due to the challenges of being an ELL in U.S. schools. Any new student experiences a period of feeling different from the rest, but for ELLs this period can last longer and the feeling felt much deeper due to the many factors that differentiate them from non-ELLs. In the American Midwest, skin color, language, and clothing alone, can create huge chasms between ELLs and non-ELLs in schools. Bridging this chasm to get to know other students and participate with them in extracurricular groups, for many students never happens, which further isolates them and decreases their social and academic opportunities.

Room #823, where I taught, was known on the outside for its sickly looking fig tree beside the door and for the proud display of the several year old banner announcing the performance of the school’s baile folklórico group at the local mall. It was known on the inside for its unfailing strong smell of coffee and constant stream of world music that would shuffle between Mexican banda and Spanish language pop songs to the latest from Somalian pop and hip hop. Room #823 was known school-wide as the ESL social safe-place. From newcomers with one day in the country to former ELLs with more than five years in the country, from 7:00am to 5:00pm, from soccer fanatics with El Shaarawy inspired hairstyles to reserved and quiet, yet incredibly witty, Muslim girls in full Islamic dress, the room was always full of youth who respected one another. Yet, however healthy and positive room #823 was for sheltering ELLs, it also isolated them from the rest of the school, and from meaningful English immersion outside of the classroom. It created what I referred to above as the ESL bubble. While it positively gave ELLs a safe place to be at school, it took away the need to interact beyond the bubble to make other
friendships, and be exposed to the inner activities that offer a portal to success at school, success in the larger community, and to accelerated English language development. As such, it inadvertently placed students at risk of becoming stuck in what Valdes (1998) calls the “ESL ghetto” by not offering enough opportunities for ELLs to find belonging and create trajectories leading outside of their ESL, tracked classes (p. 12).

Because the current research setting, the American Midwest, could be considered as part of the new Latino and East African diaspora (Wortham, et al., 2002), I refer to these spaces at schools as smaller and more defined bubbles, rather than ghettos. Also, I believe these spaces to be malleable and that movement beyond these bubbles is possible, as demonstrated through the vignettes below, if schools can tap into ELLs’ interests and agency. The ELL Ambassadors program provided the structural supports for achieving this by partnering newly arriving ELLs with L1 English speaking and former ELL peer mentors on the basis of shared interests and through the collaboration of group membership and participation.

The Beginnings of the ELL Ambassadors Program

Two events serendipitously coincided during the 2009/2010 school year that sparked the beginning of the ELL Ambassadors program. A critical Office of Civil Rights (OCR) report documenting the lack of ELL participation in RCHS extracurricular activities prompted the school activities director to charge me with the task of encouraging greater participation among ELLs in school activities. At the same time, I was reading a study on the cross-cultural adaptation of Hispanic youth (McKay-Semmler, 2010). McKay-Semmler’s finding that group affiliation and participation made students feel healthier and happier was the precipice for designing a program built around student choice and interests for encouraging greater participation in activities at school.

I began by compiling a comprehensive list of extracurricular activities available at RCHS. I then collaborated with ELL teachers in conducting affective activities that
prompted ELLs to talk about their interests, experiences and skill sets. Students’ interests were cross-referenced with the list of extracurricular activities to find any matches. Over the next several weeks, I attended the meetings of any club or activity that matched the ELLs’ interests. During these meetings I explained the ELL Ambassadors program, spoke with the club members about the benefits of participating as peer mentors and asked for volunteers to participate. Mentor responsibilities were to reach out to interested ELLs, make sure they knew when the club meetings were, try to get the interested ELLs to the next meeting and subsequent meetings, and try to make them feel comfortable and welcomed during the meetings. What happened after that, in terms of friendship formation, language practice and heightened multi-cultural awareness, we left up to chance and mutual agency. The duration of these initial steps was about one month.

The ELL Ambassadors program was based in three fundamental assumptions and desired outcomes that echo key points in the literature above on identification, language socialization and interest-based learning in communities of practice. As initial program developers, my colleagues and I hoped that by placing ELLs in interest-based extracurricular activities, we would be exposing them to meaningful linguistic input and increase their opportunities to communicate with peers and others. We also hoped that this increased communicative interaction would lead to greater academic success through the sharing of academic resources, homework support, and the maintaining of good grades, a common requisite for club participation. Finally, it was the desire that all of this would lead to the ELLs’ increased feelings of acceptance at school.

In the following section, I describe how I investigated the ways that the ELL Ambassadors program shaped the identities, school experiences, and language development of five former ELL participating students. As we will see later in the paper, each of these students displayed and expressed a strong sense of agency through their
participation in school-based communities of practice. They also demonstrated the potential of interest-based peer-mentoring programs for ELL youth in schools.

The Study

Researcher positioning

My long-term caring relationship with the students provided me with a level of trust and intimate insight into their lives that enabled me to represent the stories of these youth at a level of detail and fullness that would not have been possible had I approached this project as an adult researcher with no previous relationship to the youth described here. Throughout the research, I was fortunate to have an understanding relationship built on trust; this trust allowed me to closely observe youth in their everyday interactions over the course of their trajectories in high school, and also to gather insights into youth experiences and ideologies in the follow up study, conducted several years after students’ graduation from high school.

Participants

In my study, I targeted participants who had already graduated from high school, in order to assess how their participation in the program may have impacted their opportunities after high school. Five former students, ranging in ages of 18-23 and from varied countries of origin, as described below, participated in the study. Table 1 in the results section details the country of origin, age of arrival, English language proficiency at arrival to RCHS, group affiliation, language development, academic achievement, and the current status of each participant.

Instruments and Data Collection Strategies

For the overall study, I combined previous teacher-researcher observations, with a follow up survey, phone interviews, and academic records review. Triangulating multiple lines of inquiry, I compared teacher-observations of students’ language development with students’ perceptions of their own learning, identity development, and
socialization in extracurricular activities and classrooms during high school, and compared these qualitative forms of data with evidence of language and content learning based in quantitative test scores and Grade Point Averages (GPA, hereafter).

**Teacher-researcher observations.** The teacher-researcher data come from observations over a three-year period (2009 to 2012). As the RCHS head ESL teacher and participants’ ESL caseworker, I was actively involved in creating and facilitating the ELL Ambassadors program, as I describe above. I also regularly documented my work and the students’ progress by meeting individually with participating ELLs before or after school several times a week, interacting with ELLs daily in an ESL Resource class designed to provide homework help, and through frequent communication with the mainstream and ESL teachers of the participating students. Given my position and multiple roles within the school, I often took a very active position creating school programs and documenting their outcomes as a teacher-researcher. At other times, I participated alongside students in school activities, and/or stood back and simply observed moment-by-moment emergence of linguistic, social and academic change as students interacted with their peers and other adults.

**Follow-up surveys, interviews, and academic records review.** Two years after concluding my teacher-researcher observations, I conducted follow-up case studies with five former ELL participants of the ELL Ambassadors program. I started by inviting students to complete an anonymous online survey, which consisted of 13 open-ended questions designed to elicit participants’ perceptions of how the ELL Ambassadors program shaped: 1) acceptance at school, (e.g. “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact how you felt accepted at school and in the community?”) 2) English development, (e.g. “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact your English language learning?”) 3) academic success, (e.g.) “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact how you
did in your classes?” and 4) identity formation, (e.g. “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact how you view yourself?”). Several additional survey questions are presented below in the discussion section. Participants provided consent at the beginning of the anonymous survey and at the end of the survey in order to be linked to a new survey where they provided contact information and consent for a phone interview.

Through semi-structured phone interviews, I then asked five former students to reflect on roles that they played in extracurricular activities, their relationships with non-ELL group members, and the challenges they faced in becoming group members. I also invited students to share their perspectives on how the ELL Ambassadors program shaped their overall language development, academic performance, identity formation, and sense of belonging in school. The phone interviews were conducted via Skype, recorded using Garage Band, and transcribed. Phone interview responses are shared in the vignettes below.

To provide a quantitative perspective of students’ academic achievement and English language development before and during their time in the ELL Ambassadors program, I obtained and reviewed the complete academic records of each participant from the school, after participants approved the use of their academic records for the research.

**Data analysis.** All survey responses and interviews were coded for incidents where participants referenced identification, language learning, academic success, and perceived levels of belonging based on their participation in extracurricular activities. Comparing data across interviews I identified cross-cutting themes regarding how and when participants were able to gain membership into school-based groups and regarding their perceptions on how this participation influenced their levels of confidence to learn English, succeed academically, and continue to strive to fit in. I also identified instances
where participants’ experiences differed due to the varying levels of encouragement and intervention offered by existing group members. I further analyzed each student’s school records (English Language Development Assessment, state standardized tests, and GPA) at the time of their arrival to RCHS, at the beginning of their participation in the ELL Ambassadors program and at their graduation from RCHS. Students’ interview responses that referenced academic or linguistic gains during schooling were compared to their academic records. I combined my teacher-researcher observations with the analyzed data from the anonymous survey, phone interviews, and school records to create the vignettes below of three of the participants. The vignettes were shared with the participants and they were encouraged to provide feedback. All participants responded with positive feedback and approved the vignettes with no changes.

Results

Table 1 below provides a brief overview of how each participant moved to the U.S. and to RCHS with novice English proficiency. The table also shows what activities the participants participated in while at RCHS, the success that each had academically and in learning English, and the participants’ current status. In order to respect and protect the privacy of the participants, all the names that follow are pseudonyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age of arrival to U.S./Starting Grade in US/Academic Background/English Proficiency Upon Arrival</th>
<th>Group Membership</th>
<th>Academic &amp; Language Development and Achievement</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cristobal</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Arrived at age 19; Started 11th Grade at RCHS in the Newcomers classroom</td>
<td>drama club, Escape Poetry Magazine, National</td>
<td>Graduated 19th out of 285 students with a 3.95</td>
<td>Attends university in Mexico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Age of Arrival</td>
<td>Grade Level at RCHS</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King A.</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>B- average</td>
<td>basketball, cross-country, track, &amp; soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuy</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>B+ average</td>
<td>soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>2.61 GPA</td>
<td>drama club, art club, La</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>ELDA Score</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caiman</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Arrived at age 16; Started 2nd semester 10th Grade at RCHS in the Newcomers classroom; Finished 9th Grade in Guatemala with a C average. Novice-low English Proficiency (Completed 1 semester of EFL in Guatemala with a D)</td>
<td>Danza Cardinal, football &amp; wrestling</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attends university in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above illustrates how each participant started schooling at RCHS with a composite score of 1 out of 5 on the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA). The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) places a program expectation that ELLs make a yearly gain on the ELDA test. The sample data from this study document how these participants made impressive jumps that were two to four times greater than this OCR expectation. The most striking observations made during the three years of teacher-research were how ELLs involved in extracurricular activities were able to maintain diverse groups of friends, both ELLs and non-ELLs and were able to successfully flow...
between these diverse communities. Although I observed that some communities of practice were initially more difficult for ELLs to join, such as with basketball described in King A’s story below, with help from the ELL Ambassadors, most ELLs who wanted to participate in extracurricular activities were able to achieve these affiliations.

To provide a picture of the impact of participation in the ELL Ambassadors program on these participants’ language learning, academic success, and identity formation, in the section that follows I weave my teacher-researcher observations in with the participants’ own voices in reflections made during the follow-up case studies. I conclude each participant vignette with a retrospective review of each participant’s academic records to provide a quantitative picture of how increased interpersonal and intercultural interaction may have facilitated these students’ academic success.

In the following vignettes, the participants’ voices shed insight into the positive academic success presented in Table 1 and the ways that programs, such as the ELL Ambassadors program, can have an important impact on learners’ agentive identity creation.

**Vignettes of Students Seeking Out New Communities of Practice, Identification and Belonging**

**Cristobal learned to raise his voice to be heard.** When he moved to RCHS Cristobal could be described as a tall, slim, 19 year old with a tremendous wave of black hair and a handsome jaw. He came from Mexico with an almost completed high school diploma, but due to his low level of English proficiency, was placed in the high school Newcomers classroom. Unfortunately, many students, such as Cristobal are frequently tracked into lower level academic classes, solely based on English language proficiency. Although many students welcomed my frequent attempts at using Spanish and Somali in the classroom, Cristobal viewed this as slowing him down and greatly desired to be promoted to mainstream content courses. Cristobal’s desire to learn English was so great
that he showed up at my classroom every morning at 7:00am to self-pace work on Rosetta Stone. His serious and thoughtful questions about English grammar would often make me question my own understanding of my first language. It was during these sessions that Cristobal shared with me his great interest in acting and his desire to join the RCHS drama club. In my phone interview with Cristobal, he began by thanking me for following up on his request to be part of the drama club by talking with the drama teacher, who was, unbeknownst to Cristobal, quite skeptical of taking on an ELL in his club.

Cristobal shared that while at RCHS he participated in the drama club, the National Honors Society, the Escape Poetry Magazine and the baile folklórico dance group. He remembered that even though he felt like the new one in the drama club and that he couldn’t understand what the others were saying, that he told everyone “I’m joining because I really like it and I want to improve my English.” After that, the members were very supportive and thought that it was cool that he wanted to join. He recalled going to practice on his first day and seeing a group of students at a table with four chairs and how they offered him a chair, a symbolic gesture not lost on Cristobal. As a new drama member Cristobal had to learn various skills and play different roles, from running the spotlights to how to raise his voice to be heard, to memorizing lines and choreography. Cristobal commented on the close relationships that he formed with the other drama members and how he used to hang out with them at social events, such as the Homecoming dance. He still keeps in contact with them today via Facebook.

Through becoming involved in the drama club, Cristobal gained his voice. Kramsch (1997) refers to this as the act of appropriating language in learning. Multiple researchers have shown how students are introduced to language and how they use it as a tool for co-constructing knowledge and identity through discourse in the classroom (Duff & Early, 1999; Duff, 2002; Harklau, 2003; and Zuengler & Cole, 2005). Cristobal’s actions showed how he used language as a tool for co-constructing knowledge and
identity, but outside of the classroom and ESL bubble. From very early on, Cristobal imagined himself part of the drama club community. Cristobal graduated from high school in the spring of 2010, attended community college in the U.S. and currently is studying theater at a university in Mexico.

Cristobal’s academic records from RCHS evidence how he graduated 19th out of 285 in his class and had a weighted GPA of 3.95. Cristobal also achieved a score of 30 on the Reading section of the American College Test (ACT) and had a composite score of 27. Perhaps most impressive, however, is that Cristobal scored a perfect 5 on all components (listening, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension, and composite) of the ELDA test that he took only a year and a half after moving to the United States and starting his junior year in the Newcomers classroom.

Some might claim that Cristobal was simply an exceptionally bright student and great language learner. However, what is notable is the way that Cristobal himself attributed his involvement and success to the intervention prompted by the ELL Ambassadors program. When I commended Cristobal in our interview on learning English so fast and for achieving academic success, Cristobal said, “It was because you helped me…You went and talked with the drama club teacher.” Cristobal noted how the simple act of facilitating his entry into the club had been influential in his ability to expand his opportunities for more diverse peer interactions.

When I asked Cristobal to reflect on how learning language in a club compared to his language learning in the classroom, Cristobal remarked that students join clubs because they have an interest in the content of those clubs and that “When students are interested in something, they have to participate and pay attention to learn it.” Cristobal continued saying that students often do not have this same interest in what they are learning in the classroom.
As we will see in the next vignette, King A experienced much of the same academic, language, and social success, and also saw these as related to his participation beyond the ESL bubble and in a different domain of extracurricular activities, high school sports.

**King A won sporting events and people’s hearts.** I first met King A his freshmen year at RCHS. At the time I was mentoring King A’s first year ESL teacher. The teacher was concerned about King A and frequently shared stories about this boy from Ethiopia who was having a difficult time making friends and who had just gotten into a fight in the bathroom on the morning of one of our conversations. Upon meeting King A, I could not understand why anyone wouldn’t like him. Nothing about him, his big, beautiful smile, kind eyes, wonderful manners, or his energetic motivation to succeed, could be considered contentious. All that is, except for one attribute that King A has always displayed, that could explain the source of his 9th grade alliance building challenges; he had swag. King A always had and still does have, although now more maturely and humbly masked, an unmistakable aura of confidence.

King A wanted to play basketball. He arrived at school an hour early every morning and asserted himself into the group of students that played pick-up games in the gym. At RCHS, the basketball team was not the most welcoming community of practice for new members. In fact, even though King A never missed a practice, he was cut from the roster and told he couldn’t play basketball for any of the RCHS teams. In our phone interview, King A said, “Every time I’d come home, I’d cry.” King A did not quit, however, and he said, “You do not quit the things you like.”

The following year King A tried out for basketball again, and this time he had the support of his peers who were impressed by his persistence and commitment, and he made the team. I recall sitting in a packed gymnasium two years later, listening to a chorus of chants from the student section begging the coach to put King A, at that time a senior, into the game. While he did not score, he did go in. The crowd erupted in
excitement each time he touched the ball, as if their collective voice could will the ball into the net. Later that season RCHS won the State Basketball Championship.

With pride in his voice, King A related to me the biggest risk that he took as a member of that community of practice. After the championship game, King A spoke to a capacity crowd. “I took the podium and told everyone how I stayed on the team, and how they became part of my family. I stay close to them and continue to learn from them.” Emotion filled King A’s voice as he continued saying “I didn’t have any siblings with me at school, I was the only one that went to school, so my teammates became my family. We used to hang out, go out to eat, and sit around the table and talk about my life.”

Throughout King A’s four years at RCHS, he played basketball, ran track and cross-country and played soccer. He currently is a RCHS record holder in several track and cross-country events. King A repeatedly told me that he learned from group members how to do things the right way, how to help others succeed, and that he learned a lot of English. He differentiated learning in group activities, such as basketball, from learning in the classroom by saying that one embodies what they learn through thinking and physical movement; something that is lacking in the classroom setting. “In the classroom you’re just using your mind, not your body, and that’s the difference.” Finally, King A reported that he was sure that others learned from him. He said he taught others his language (Oromo) and how to never quit on something that you love.

King A’s academic files suggest a positive relationship between group participation and academic and language development success. An academic snapshot of the year that King A started to participate in sports shows a three-year growth in reading on the ELDA test and an overall GPA increase from 2.50 to 2.67. Many ELLs do not show yearly gains like these; especially considering the difficulty of course work between the 10th and 11th grade years. King A passed all of his classes at RCHS, was well
regarded by teachers and peers, and graduated in 2012. He currently attends college in the U.S.

From King A’s story we learn that desired participation in communities of practice can be very difficult for ELLs, but can be facilitated through the encouragement of non-ELL students at school. King A’s experiences and assertions about the ways that participation in groups and the identity of affiliation can impact academic and language success are echoed in Caiman’s vignette below. Caiman’s participation in soccer not only positively impacted his content and language learning, but also helped him rise from a subaltern status as a Hispanic immigrant from Central America.

**Caiman found an old friend.** Many things contributed to the quick and close relationship that I formed with Caiman. Having myself lived on the border of Mexico and Guatemala, my Spanish was more similar to a Central American variety, than the Spanish spoken by ELLs from Central and Northern Mexico, and I favored plantains and black beans over tacos and refried beans. I frequently shared leftovers, from my weekly visits to the one Salvadorian restaurant, with Caiman who was always in my classroom listening to music by 7:20 am. In my seven years of working with ELLs at RCHS I saw how being a Guatemalan newcomer was harder, in many ways, than being a newcomer from Mexico and in some ways than being a newcomer from any other country. There existed a tangible caste system of Hispanic immigrants at RCHS that started with Mexicans from Jalisco on top and descended south through Mexico, ending with Central American immigrants on the bottom rung. In classes where teachers did not understand Spanish the derogatory Spanish word *cerote* (turd), used against people from Central America, was uttered under breath occasionally by Mexican students wanting to disrespect their Central American classmates. Name-calling is a common part of adolescent school culture, but from my observations, group affiliation can provide an escape route for students on the receiving end of bullying.
Caiman moved to the U.S. at the age of 16 on a cold day in February and started the second semester of his Sophomore year at RCHS. He likely would have followed the typical progression of spending one year in the Newcomer classroom, one year in ESL 1, another year in ESL 2 and never have experienced college prep courses had not two things happened. One, a guidance office mistake in reading his Guatemalan transcript forced Caiman to skip his Junior year at RCHS and take all Senior level courses his second year and two, he discovered soccer.

In our phone interview, Caiman said that starting to play soccer at RCHS “…was like finding a long time friend.” In some of my earliest conversations with Caiman, it was clear that he imagined himself as a soccer star. The imagery of his greatness was so vivid that I was convinced he would succeed, before ever watching him play. Caiman was very good. In fact, Caiman started on the RCHS team that played for the state championship and now plays college soccer on scholarship. Caiman was able to ascend the immigrant ladder by playing soccer. He remembered that when he started playing soccer, he had more friends, became more popular and started using more English. Since Spanish was the primary language associated with the soccer team, this community of practice afforded Spanish-speaking ELLs an easy entry into group participation, and one might argue, less of a meaningful immersion in English. However, a deeper look at the almost entirely Hispanic soccer team revealed an interesting linguistic phenomenon. Many of the players were Heritage Language Speakers, who considered English to be their first language, but had a good use of social and soccer Spanish. This mix of native and heritage Spanish speakers frequently code-switched on the pitch and their code-switching facilitated Caiman’s experimentation with English. Caiman stated that he had to use English with his coach and with referees during games. Caiman described how English would come out of his mouth more naturally while playing soccer, compared to trying to use it in the classroom. Caiman reported, “If I can relate the words to soccer, I
remember them better.” According to Caiman, playing soccer did help him achieve academically because he leaned on his teammates as resources, and still does now at college.

A review of Caiman’s academic records shows how he moved from the Newcomers classroom and ESL classes to all mainstream classes and graduation from RCHS in a year and a half. He passed all of his courses and graduated with a 2.95 GPA. In this short time span, Caiman progressed from a score of “1” on all components of the ELDA test to more than three years growth in average and specifically a four year growth in writing and a five year growth in speaking. The pride, acceptance, and social capital that Caiman received and continues to receive from playing soccer were undoubtedly major motivations and influences on his academic and language development success.

**Discussion**

*“Somehow It Gave Me Knowledge of Language.”*

Above we have heard three students’ perspectives on the positive ways that participation in out-of-classroom communities of practice influenced their English development and academic success. This connection is further supported by all five participants’ anonymous answers on two survey questions, 1). “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact your English language learning?” and 2). “To what extent did participating in school groups, clubs, or teams impact how you did in your classes?” To the first question participants stated “*When you are in a class, most of the times it is not required that you speak, you only write or do the exercises, but the most difficult part about learning a different language is to speak it, write it and read it is easier. When you participate in a club, it is more than likely that you will have to talk.*” “*Talking in English in the team was not mandatory, but it was nice to talk and learn in a funny way.*” And “*It helped me because it gave me the opportunity of socialize with people from different countries and different cultures, being involved in*
school groups, clubs, and teams give you confidence in what you do and what you’ll be doing...joining on team helped me to improve my English.” These quotes further illustrate how the ELL students in the study perceived the impact of creating identities of affiliation on their language development.

Regarding the second question, focused on academic achievement, the students stated “Somehow it gave me knowledge of language and it made it easy to me to be communicating with teachers and students, the way I’d be learning how to improve in classes and be participating on those.” “Since I was practicing my English while participating in clubs, I learned to speak English somewhat fast, which, in consequence, helped me to get better grades in my classes because the language barrier was not a problem anymore.” And finally, “Sometimes I was required to do well in classes so I could be on the team.” Students’ perceptions of the relationship between intercultural participation and academic success are particularly notable here, given the fact that all of these students have gone on to pursue higher education.

Regarding their acceptance in their new environment, participants’ interpretation of how they adapted, distanced by time and miles from RCHS, could be described as rosy remembrances of power dimensions. In responding to the survey question, “To what extent do you feel that you had to change who you were and turn your back on where you came from in order to participate in school groups, clubs, or teams?” one participant responded “I didn’t really feel that I had to change something because all the people that surrounded me were trying to help me somehow, and I was accepted like I am.” Maybe this is inevitable considering that a focal part of the methodology involved letting the participants tell their stories. In doing so these participants sifted through the memories and emotions of the different power dimensions that they encountered in their struggle to create a new identity and may have chosen to share positive reflections to represent a successful journey. Multiple researchers have also noted how youth, when presented with
research that reminds them of their struggles in high school, may wish to gloss over these struggles to reflect positively on their high school experiences in retrospect. Nevertheless, the stories above suggest that programs like the ELL Ambassadors program that facilitate students’ entry and participation in interest-based learning in schools can help ELLs accelerate their language development, gain increased academic success, and form linguistically and culturally diverse friendships that aid them in feeling less isolated and more accepted in their new environment.

Finally, the most convincing support for programs, like the ELL Ambassadors, comes from responses to the question, “Knowing what you know now, what advice would you have for ESL students who want to participate in school groups?” Participants responded, “I would tell them to participate in school groups because this would help them to improve their English.” “I would say go for it right away, don’t wait to join any club that you want just because of your English. Any club will actually help you improve your English and you will have fun while you do so.” And lastly, “That they tienen que perder la verguenza (they have to lose their shame), try harder, keep going and never give up.” These comments reflect the desire of ELLs to move beyond the limitations of the ESL bubble to gain full access to equitable educational opportunities. Participation in school groups, no matter how difficult, is a concrete path to these opportunities and supported interaction, through the ELL Ambassadors program, may act to alleviate some of the challenges of participation.

**Conclusion**

By reviewing in detail the cases of three Newcomer ELL students and comparing these to a wider set of data, I have shown that in supporting students’ participation in out-of-classroom interest-based activities, schools can promote opportunities for valuable language socialization and identity formation for ELLs. While this was admittedly a small-scale study, the comparative cases and perspectives of students above, combined
with documentation of participating students’ advances in content and English learning suggest the following:

1. ELLs who participate in extracurricular activities that match one of their personal interests, gain exposure to meaningful linguistic input in their L2 and have increased opportunities for communicative practice, which in turn influences their successful and accelerated L2 development.

2. ELLs who participate in these extracurricular communities have increased opportunities to form friendships with former ELLs and L1 English speaking peers that they otherwise may not get to know. These increased opportunities for friendships lessen negative aspects of culture shock, through forming an identity of affiliation that accelerates feelings of belonging.

3. Both the above-mentioned benefits of increased opportunities for meaningful communication practice and friendship formation beyond the ESL bubble, can contribute to students’ greater academic achievement, as students gain access to a larger network of peer support, resources and academic language practice.

The essential strength of the ELL Ambassadors program was that it forced neither L1 English speakers nor ELLs into participation through assigning buddies, but rather worked from the assumption that collaboration will transpire through shared participation in a wide array of interest-based learning and language socialization opportunities. As the stories above demonstrate, participants felt that the ELL Ambassadors program had a strong, positive impact on their English development, academic success, and increased perception of acceptance at school, which in turn emboldened them to seek out full participation in diverse communities of practice. Above I have argued that schools need to find new ways to open social and structural doors, making a wider array of communities of practices available to ELLs, and that we can increase the opportunities for intrinsically motivated language socialization, built on personal experience, prior
knowledge and shared interests, by supporting ELL students’ connections to interest-based extracurricular activities in schools. Also I have shared key steps taken to implement the ELL Ambassadors program, in the hopes of providing information for educators who wish to engage ELLs by tapping into their interests and creating similar opportunities elsewhere.

Through my years as an ESL teacher I have experienced first hand how important ESL, refugee, and migrant services are at schools for creating safe, welcoming environments, providing sheltered language and content instruction and for meeting the many needs of a diverse and complex population. However, additional support is needed at schools if ELLs are to gain access to the same academic, linguistic, and extracurricular opportunities available to all students. Programs such as the ELL Ambassadors program have the potential to disrupt the boundaries that have traditionally excluded ELLs from social and academic learning in formal schooling. They are also a reminder for educators to always presume competence in youth and never stop searching for the keys to interaction that lead to the imagining and participation beyond the ESL bubble.
References


CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGING THE MONOLINGUAL PARADIGM IN SECONDARY DUAL-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: CREATING CURRICULAR SPACES WHERE LANGUAGE LEARNERS REPOSITION THEMSELVES AS BILINGUAL CONTENT USERS

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**Abstract**

This study reports on an innovative approach to dual-language content instruction (DLI) at the secondary education level and introduces the 2-1-L2 model. The context of the study is an American Government class at a public charter high school in Tucson, Arizona, where the 2-1-L2 model was used for nine weeks to structure daily 90 minute lessons into a 30 minute immersion in English, a 30 minute immersion in Spanish, and a final 30 minute section of hybrid language practices. During the hybrid language practice sections, participants’ second language (L2) production was encouraged through translanguaging and multimodal representations of knowledge. The culturally and linguistically diverse participants represented an almost equal division of L1 English speakers and Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners, plus a Newcomer English Language Learner (ELL) who had recently moved from Mexico to the U.S. Through the bilingual structure of the 2-1-L2, all students were treated and valued as emerging bilingual content users as they learned American Government content together, an identity that they claimed for themselves. By focusing this study on content, I attempt to re-contextualize these youth away from the traditional monolingual paradigm that produces labels heavily dependent on language and speakers of some varied proficiency, to users of content. I qualitatively present participants’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the 2-1-L2 for content and L2 language development through formative anonymous online surveys, summative focus-group interviews,
students’ daily journal entries, and through teacher/researcher classroom and school community observations. I quantitatively measure language development using the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) and content development through pre and post assessments with the U.S. Naturalization Civics Test; a test that, due to a new state law passed during this research, all students in Arizona will have to pass to graduate from high school. Findings suggest that the 2-1-L2 model may provide a means for meeting the challenge of transitioning dual-language programs from the elementary to the secondary setting, providing equal access to world language/English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for students in content area classes, and offer an exemplar of innovative bilingual instruction that creates opportunities for youth to question race-language educational legacies.

**Keywords:** 2-1-L2, Dual Language Instruction (DLI), English Language Learners (ELLs), multimodal systemic functional linguistics, Spanish Heritage Language Learners (SHL), translanguaging

**Introduction**

Medium of instruction (MoI) is one of the most powerful factors in maintaining a language and a culture (Fishman & Fishman, 2000). Yet a deeply rooted English monolingual paradigm in education, linked to ideologies regarding academic success and citizenship, continues to favor the transethnification of U.S. schools and leaves little room for the maintenance of non-English languages and the cultural identities inextricably linked to them (Ruiz, 2010). Thirty years on from Richard Ruiz’s seminal contribution on Orientations in Language Planning, arguments for and against bilingual education, specifically in Arizona, the context of this study, are still passionately framed as language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984, p.
15). It may be that the long-standing, deeply rooted effects of monolingualism in the U.S. have produced perspectives of language as an instrument to be used for academic, economic, and political purposes and less of a direct link in the minds of English-speakers to more intrinsic values, such as identity (Ruiz, 2010, p. 164). Seen as such, language gets isolated from identity, and used a means, under the guise of successful assimilation and academic success in English, for the transethnification of culturally and linguistically diverse youth in U.S. schools (Ruiz, 2010, p. 96). Addressing this monolingual paradigm by creating curricular spaces for hybrid language practices in every content lesson may have the impact of reframing language as less of a problem and more of a right for all students and a resource for the educational community.

The overall purpose of this article is to demonstrate how innovative curricular planning and teacher/student practice, through the re-contextualization of learners as users and the sharing of languages through hybrid language practices in every content lesson, can open-up third spaces at schools where youth position themselves as bilingual users and producers of content. In so doing identity is placed front and center with language and content. The context of the study is a required American Government class at a public charter high school in the U.S. state of Arizona, where the 2-1-L2 (Przymus, 2010), a new dual-language instruction (DLI) model, was used for nine weeks to structure daily 90 minute lessons into a 30 minute immersion in English, a 30 minute immersion in Spanish, and a final 30 minute section of hybrid language practices, during which time participants’ second language (L2) production was encouraged through translanguaging and multimodal representations of knowledge.

Situating this study in Arizona, where the educational environment embodies the English only hegemony that has severely limited bilingual programs, provides for a powerful setting to show the impact of innovative bilingual content instruction on youth identities as emerging bilingual content users. Since 2000, the Arizona legislature, with
support of the electorate, has passed anti-bilingual education laws, controversial immigration enforcement laws, and educational policies prohibiting the inclusion of Chicano ethnic studies in public schools. Most notable of these laws are Proposition 203 (English Language for the Children in Public Schools, 2000), which severely limited bilingual education and largely replaced it with Structured English Immersion programs (Combs, et al., 2005; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2009; Ruiz, 2010), House Bill 2281 which prohibited the Mexican/American (Chicano) Raza Studies programs, stating that these programs “promote the overthrow of the United States government,…promote resentment toward a race or class of people, [and]…advocate ethnic solidarity instead of treatment of pupils as individuals” (State of Arizona, House of Representatives, 2010; see also Ruiz, 2010), and Senate Bill 1070, which was interpreted by many as legalizing racial profiling and raised the awareness in the Mexican-American community of the effects of white racism in their daily lives (O’Connor, 2015, p. 33). Within a context that embodies the legal and ideological struggles of bilingual education, it is not hard to find schools where youth yearn for innovative ways to express their knowledge and identities through bilingual interactions in the classroom.

Given this contentious context, it is notable that through participation in the dual-language American Government class described below, students were able to gain the American Government/Civics credit required for graduation and a foreign language credit required for acceptance in a four-year university. This course also included a nine-week telecollaboration project with a high school in Mexico where students interacted bilingually online to compare and contrast their nations’ governments, constitutions, educational systems, and discuss the subliminal influence of their linguistic landscapes on language and race ideologies. This course provides an example of how teachers can directly take on stereotypes in a highly-charged political environment, utilize critical pedagogies to discuss social justice issues, and create spaces for SHL youth to not only
excel academically with their heritage language, but also share knowledge from their families’ life experiences and heritage. Having the opportunity to share their lived experiences, the stories of visiting family in Mexico, the stories of their parents, and the specific cultural insights that the L1 English-speaking students do not have, can make SHL youth feel special and can lift up the status of the heritage language and culture within their school environments.

The need for addressing the monolingual paradigm in U.S. schools and for offering innovative approaches of bilingual education is not only crucial for states like Arizona, where there is a large population of emerging bilinguals, but throughout the U.S. where culturally and linguistically diverse youth are being educated. At 14%, Hispanics have the highest drop-out rate of any major ethnic and racial group; a rate that is three times higher than that of non-Hispanic, White youth (census.gov, 2015). Lindholm-Leary & Borsato (2001), in their study on the impact of two-way bilingual programs on students’ attitudes towards academic achievement, self, and others, suggest that difficulty mastering academic language required in school is one of the implicating factors for this high dropout rate. They also contend that these difficulties arise from the persistence of unfavorable educational conditions for English Language Learners (ELLs) throughout the United States. The challenge facing many ELLs comes from trying to achieve a success at schools that has traditionally been highly linked to proficiency in the English language. “Academic English language skills affect students’ abilities to adapt socially at school and are also highly predictive of academic success in the United States” (Suárez-Orozco, 2008, p. 141). By default, this immediately positions ELLs as deficient and limited and acts to promote their separation from the mainstream school population, justifies the watering-down of sheltered content, and reinforces their roles as “others”. Linguistic ‘otherness’, reinforced through English Only policies and segregation of ELLs in Structured English Immersion (SEI) blocks acts to use language to reinforce “the
subordinated status of immigrants of color” (Malsbary, 2014, p. 337). As such, “the goal of education becomes how to ‘fit’ students constructed as ‘other’ by virtue of their race/ethnicity, language, or social class into a hierarchical structure that is defined as a meritocracy” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 467, italics original). When language is the main instrument for achieving this, the result for ELLs is often the recurring reproduction of current inequities.

This study draws attention to language status in schools and addresses how these traditionally unfavorable educational conditions for ELLs also position Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners as “different”, due to a monolingual education paradigm that privileges English language content success and successful L2 development only as a valued “add on” for L1 English speakers. As such, these students may undergo educational injustice due to, on the one hand, their bilingualism being viewed as a denigrated circumstance of their life experiences and not as a result of some elite academic choice, and, on the other hand, from their bilingualism marking them as “not as good English speakers” as monolingual L1 English speakers (Mrak, 2014; see also Valdés, 2005). Because of the monolingual perspective of U.S. education and hyper focus on English proficiency, these students who “are competent speakers of English…have been led to believe their Spanish is substandard” (Mrak, 2014, p. 161). He (2010) provides an overview of varying definitions for HL learners and explains, “HL students have been referred to as native speakers, quasi-native speakers, residual speakers, bilingual speakers, and home-background speakers” (p. 66; see also Valdés, 1997). As I will show below, these students themselves provide differing identity narratives regarding what it means to be tugged in two different linguistic and cultural directions. These youth struggle to maintain a connection to their heritage language and to find success at school, where their HL knowledge is often not valued.

In the study within, I show how structuring DL content instruction with hybrid
language practices acts to highlight this group’s ability to perform in both languages and facilitates the re-contextualization of these youth away from labels heavily dependent on language and speakers of some varied proficiency, to successful bilingual users of content. In the following section I provide a brief preview of how this structuring of content with hybrid language practices and the fusing of heritage learners’ life experiences with the content, raised the status of Spanish in the school and why this was important for the plural and evolving identity of these youth (Paris & Alim, 2014).

**We All Sound White: Reversing Heritage Language and Identity Loss and Repositioning Spanish as a Language of Status at School**

During my first extended visit to the Southwest College Readiness Institute of Inquiry-Based Education “SCRI²BE” (setting described below in detail) a male Hispanic student approached me in the halls, asked me if I spoke Spanish. As we began to have a conversation in Spanish, a female Hispanic student approached us and addressed us by saying in English “I speak Spanish too.” The boy turned to me and said “Ella no sabe español.” (She doesn’t know Spanish), to which the girl responded, “I do too, I just sound White.” Without thinking, I said, “I sound White, too.” Immediately realizing that this could have been taken as a disrespectful comment and negative face towards the girl, since I am White, I fell ashamedly silent for a few seconds until the boy broke the silence by saying, “Yeah, we all sound White.” This brief interaction served as a precursor of the narrative that I would hear many times over during my time at SCR²BE, that SHL youth felt that they were losing their ability to use Spanish and therefore felt less attached to their heritage culture.

Addressing the monolingual paradigm in dual language classrooms has the potential of creating curricular spaces for SHL youth to perform not only knowledge in two language, but also share life experiences linked to their heritage. When not allowed
to use or experiment with using both languages, SHL youth continue to get positioned negatively at schools. Even the term Heritage Language Learner continues to focus attention on language and in turn works to position these youth in a constant status of perhaps never being “English” enough and not being “Spanish” enough as well. As I will sow below, when the focus shifts to content and bilingualism, these students, regardless of heritage language proficiency, are given the opportunity to use their full cultural repertoire of heritage semiotic resources, not just language.

Richard Ruiz used to beautifully articulate this idea by relating the following story (personal communication, September 2013). There was once a young boy who lived with his second-generation Spanish-speaking parents and his first-generation Spanish-speaking grandfather. One day a bilingual, Anglo Ethnographer, who was conducting research on linguistic competencies within a predominantly Spanish/English speaking community, was interviewing the family and inquired as to why the young boy didn’t speak Spanish. The grandfather answered the question with a riddle. *Cuál animal anda con una pata?* (Translation in footnote and not here, as not to give away the double meaning of *anda*). As the ethnographer puzzled over the riddle, the young boy immediately ran over to his grandfather and whispered the correct answer, *un pato* (a duck).1 What this story demonstrates is that when educators focus solely on language, HL youth, can become marginalized, but when their cultural content knowledge is validated, they can positively set themselves apart from others.

A review of the history of dual-language instruction (DLI) programs and specifically two-way immersion (TWI) programs, shows that this one specific form of bilingual education, defined as programs where native speakers of two languages learn content together, immersed in a language other than English for at least 50% of

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1 The Spanish verb “*andar*” can mean to walk, but also to “hang out with or even go out with.” The young boy understood this and applied the second meaning and correctly answered that a boy duck “*un pato*” would be the animal that would “go out with” a
instruction, and strive for bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence (Lindholm-Leary et al., 2007), can offer a promising means for addressing the aforementioned educational and life inequalities for ELLs and HL youth. For close to half a century the United States has witnessed the astounding effectiveness of dual-language instruction (DLI) programs for promoting grade level and in many instances above grade level content and language development (Collier & Thomas, 2004; De Jesús, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, et al., 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2002) for all students involved. These programs also have the potential to make bilingual education politically acceptable for policy makers and voters due to their success in providing a more functional, meaningful, and successful approach to foreign language instruction in the U.S., an increasingly popular language ideology of “languages other than English (OTE) as endowments” (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, et al., 2015, p.1, italics original).

Even though these programs have had much success at either addressing the ideologies of language as right or language as a resource or both, they are still relatively few in number and the implementation of DLI programs at the secondary education level has consistently met debilitating challenges. While there were 458 Two-Way Bilingual Immersion (TWI) programs in 31 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. as of September 2015, only 82 of these programs continue into middle school and even fewer, 17, continue on through high school (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015). In the following section I address both the need to re-thinking language instruction at the secondary level and how addressing the monolingual paradigm, found even in traditional dual-language instruction, may provide a means for overcoming the structural obstacles for implementing DLI at the secondary level.

**Structural Challenges and the Monolingual Influences Facing DLI: A Need for a Re-thinking of Secondary Implementation**
The structure of secondary education presents a crossroads of complex scheduling, more rigorous content instruction, and often times the beginning of traditional foreign language instruction in the United States. It is in successfully navigating this intersection of factors where a re-thinking of all secondary level language instruction is needed. According to Montone & Loeb (2000), complex scheduling, lack of student participation and motivation, minority language student attrition, the lack of bilingual teachers within secondary content domains, and skepticism among parents who have concerns about their children’s ability to learn more rigorous content in two languages, all are factors that add to the challenging nature of secondary DLI implementation. I would argue that we could add a traditional and deeply rooted monolingual orientation to education in the U.S. to this list.

Much of a colonial mindset of considering local languages (in the case of this current study, Spanish for ELLs and HL learners) irrelevant for learning English and content, still exists and drives language of instruction decisions (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Phillipson (1992) calls this the “monolingual tenet”, which is described as the belief that English should be the only MoI for language and content instruction for ELLs (p. 185). This widely accepted tenet has “not only prevented ESL/EFL learners and teachers from putting to use their excellent L1 linguistic resource to serve the cause of their second language learning and teaching, but also privileged native speakers of English, most of whom do not share the language of their learners” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 542). This further results in disparate and unequal views of Spanish language learning and achievement at schools, where L1 English speakers, whose attempts and varying levels of fluency success is heralded, compared with SHL learners, whose Spanish language skills are often viewed as detrimental in their attempts to learn content in English. This difference (for L1 English-speakers) and deficit (for SHL learners) dichotomy is a long-
standing effect of the monolingual paradigm that has infected how language and culture has been traditionally understood and studied (Halliday, 1978).

This monolingual paradigm has done very little to support successful ESL and Foreign language instruction, typically still based on a bottom-up approach to developing proficiency, in the U.S. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Michell & Vidal, 2001). These frustrating results should be a call to action to address these monolingual perspectives and low expectations for L2 language learning, but the paradigm is strong. Myriam Met, former director of the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland, argues for a more content-based language learning approach to teaching foreign languages (2004). Met states that this approach ensures that students receive more instructional time immersed in the target language and that student engagement in learning is increased due to the purposeful language use in learning content area courses in their second language. These benefits of cross-linguistic transfer have been echoed by many scholars working in diverse contexts (Cummins, 2008; Krashen, 1999; Rebolledo-Recendiz, 2006 in Hornberber, 2008).

Unfortunately, this monolingual paradigm finds its way into DLI programs as well. Rigid separation of language and at times language speakers sends the contradictory message of bilingual education that monolingual instructional methods are superior to bilingual teaching strategies (Cummins, 2005). Without adequately addressing the status, corpus, and acquisition planning of both languages, this can lead to power struggles that arise due to steep imbalance and privilege of one language (typically English) over the other outside of school, raising challenges in ensuring that the needs and voices of ELL students and their families are being heard (Christian, et al., 2000, King, et al., 2008; Martinez, 2000; Valdés, 1997; Zentella, 1997). Rigid separation of languages, a traditional programmatic mainstay in DLI programs, plants the seeds of viewing languages and the speakers of those languages as “others” and actually works
Cummins (2005) argues that even though direct teaching in the target language for large blocks of time can be helpful, it can also impede the cross-lingual transfer important for bilingual development (p. 4). Rigidly separating languages leads to too much of a monolingual perspective that can impoverish cross-language transfer, language awareness among learners, and potential learner identities as bilinguals.

Indeed, scheduling and the availability of content certified bilingual teachers are hurdles of secondary DLI implementation; however, less of a focus on the rigid separation of languages in DLI programs may make these hurdles shorter. Through a move away from structural binaries and rigid separation of languages, a more realistic representation of society may emerge; one in which a hybrid, third space where students can position themselves in-between the two languages would better prepare them for the world outside of the contrived, linguistically controlled environment of the school, and for developing the agency that they will have to display in creating an identity in society as a bilingual, and not simply accepting an ascribed identity related to one absolute language (Hadi-Tabassum, 2006, p. 274). In these third spaces of language and identity negotiation, students can critically challenge the status quo and dominant ideologies which naturalize English monolingualism as the norm. A DLI program that allows for this mediation of binary opposites may have the best chance for preparing students for not only academic and language success, but also for the third goal of DLI programs, namely that students will gain a heightened intercultural awareness and competence. The dissolving of language borders in dual language programs allows students and teachers to flow between the languages when and where needed, address the plural and evolving nature of youth identity, and perhaps has potential to be a culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014).

Discussion on the need for hybrid language practices have taken diverse names

Promoting a culture of hybrid language practices within DLI programs presents an opportunity to promote critical pedagogy that promotes bilingual communication and the identities that may emerge as a result. In this study I will further the discussion by proposing a pragmatic way for achieving secondary level DLI programs with a new model that is built on the idea of hybrid language practices: the 2-1-L2 model, which I explain in the following section and elsewhere (Przymus, 2010).

**The 2-1-L2 Model**

If a goal of language learning is bilingualism, instructors should present classroom activities as bilingual activities, where both languages play important roles and both are privileged in dialogue (Sebba, 2013, p. 105). The 2-1-L2 bilingual model challenges traditional monolingual language ideologies and doubts in the language competencies of nascent language learners at the secondary educational level, by proposing a modified dual-language approach to using both languages in every lesson. Table 1 below illustrates that the language of instruction is given in three distinct instructional movements of immersion, starting with English, ELL’s second language (2), continuing with immersion in ELLs’ first language (1), and ends with time for content and language practice in either language or the (L2) of all of the students (see Appendix A for a 2-1-L2 sample lesson plan).
The first two movements provide for enough immersion to produce the cognitive stretch (De Jesús, 2008), “a perpetual intellectual environment, which forces students to think inferentially”, and the third movement provides for a third space where learners can negotiate language use and identities as bilinguals (p. 208). During these movements of immersion, new content is taught and reviewed in both languages, to provide both linguistic groups the opportunity to check for understanding. However, beyond these two short review sections to provide L1 review for students and quick formative assessments for teachers, no content is repeated. This is an important point in light of the critique that using both languages during the same class will decrease the amount of material covered (De Jesus, 2008). In contrast to this critique, an initial study in which I piloted this model yielded results showing that students actually covered more content compared to previous years of teaching the same class (Przymus, 2010). This may be the result of increased student attention during class, increased student motivation to learn the content and language, and higher student self-esteem as language learners and confidence in understanding the content. The first two movements mirror traditional DLI models by separating languages and providing enough sustained immersion so that students cannot just wait for the content to be repeated in their L1, such as in the case of concurrent translation, defined as a methodological approach where everything said in one language

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<tr>
<th>Lesson Movements</th>
<th>First Movement (15 - 30 minutes)</th>
<th>Second Movement (15 - 30 minutes)</th>
<th>Third Movement (15 - 30 minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language of Instruction</td>
<td><strong>English</strong> (new content)</td>
<td>-presentation</td>
<td>-review + new content</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-think</td>
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**Table 1**
The teaching movements and components of the 2-1-L2 Model

The 2-1-L2 Model Framework
is translated to the other (Irujo, 2004).

The 2-I-L2 model contains many of the same strategies as other models used for content and language instruction, such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Short, et al., 2008) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Dalton-Puffer, 2011), but adds a bilingual component. In this sense it is similar to other DLI models in that it is an additive approach to bilingualism, but differs from traditional DLI models by sharing both languages during every lesson and therefore promotes greater cross-lingual transfer.

The name of the model originates from it being specifically designed to make content classes available at the secondary education level for ELLs through the partial and consistent use of their L1 in every content lesson. However, in order for the model to be accepted in the political and social environment of U.S. schools, the English language, the second language of these ELLs, is the language used in the first immersion section of every lesson. Doing this minimizes the anxiety of L1 English speakers, not used to being immersed in their L2, by providing an overview and the first part of the content to be taught during the whole lesson, first in English.

The following research questions for this study are informed by the above literature on creating third spaces, promoting hybrid practices, addressing the two monolingual solitudes in DLI, rethinking traditional foreign language instruction in the U.S., and from positive results of pilot projects using the 2-I-L2. They are proposed here in order to research, document, and test the effectiveness of the 2-I-L2 as a potential trajectory for DLI to continue in content classes at the secondary level in the United States:

1. How does the inclusion of two language immersion sections and the use of hybrid language practices in every lesson influence students’ content area learning?
2. How does this structure influence students’ target language learning?

3. How does this support students’ identity formation as successful bilingual content users?

Below I describe how I explored each one of these questions by examining an American Government class that used the 2-1-L2 to provide this innovative bilingual pedagogy and curricular space for translanguaging.

**The Class**

**Setting and Profile of Participants**

**Setting.** In order to respect and protect the privacy of the participants, all institutional and personal names are pseudonyms within. The secondary level dual-language instruction (DLI) content class described in this study took place at the Southwest College Readiness Institute of Inquiry Based Education (SCRI^2BE), a public charter high school in Tucson, Arizona. Charter schools vary widely within and across specific contexts and political environments. In order to adequately and fairly portray SCRi^2BE for this study, I spent over one year talking with the principal on and off about the structure, philosophy, and goals of the school prior to beginning to teach at SCRi^2BE. I also made six months of occasional short visits to the school, and conducted daily classroom observations for the two and a half months directly leading up to the nine-week implementation of the 2-1-L2 American Government class specially created for this study. I attended after school soccer games, parent nights, and end of the semester seminars, where students had the chance to demonstrate class projects. Taking the time to build relationships with school office and technology staff, parents, teachers, administration, and students allowed me direct and honest insight into this school and helped them get a sense of who I was a doctoral student, teacher, and bilingual before I even taught the first 2-1-L2 lesson.
SCRI\(^2\)BE is a high school that prepares students for college readiness and civic engagement by providing an inquiry-based curriculum solidly founded in interdisciplinary explorations and real-life experiences. The four-period day consists of structured seminars of math/science, language arts, engaging electives that range from improv comedy to economics, and a daily small group advising period. The dual-language American Government described in this study was scheduled during the elective block, but as noted above, students were able to gain American Government/Civics credit required for graduation and foreign language credit required for attending a four-year university. Located in mid-town Tucson, a mid-size American Southwest borderland city, SCRI\(^2\)BE’s demographics well reflect those of the city as a whole. In any given year, approximately 45% of SCRI\(^2\)BE’s population of around 140 students is comprised of minority students, including Hispanics, Native Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans. Approximately 75% of the students qualify for Free/Reduced lunch and although students are eligible to attend SCRI\(^2\)BE on an open enrollment, first-come, first-served basis, the school is committed to serving a diverse population, reflective of the city.

**Participants.** During the two weeks leading up to the American Government class “Crossing Linguistic & Cultural Borders”, I interviewed all 21 students in order to identify what they considered their first language (L1) to be and what languages were spoken at home; I also asked them to relate their ‘language story’ regarding their history with learning and using a language other than English. Gathering this information provides youth the opportunity to write their own identity narrative, that perhaps may differ from and be more complex than information based on existing school assessments and from how teachers and other youth view these students (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). Twelve participants identified Spanish as their L1 and placed themselves, during their stories, on a continuum of Spanish language social and academic proficiency that ranged
from very proficient and bilingual to a few students who were only able to produce one to three words in Spanish on the pre-Spanish language assessment with the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT-described below). None of these Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners felt very proficient in academic Spanish and as described above in this paper, all but three of the students shared some variation of feeling that they were losing their ability to use Spanish altogether.

Of the remaining nine participants, eight were self-identified L1 English-speakers and one was an ELL who had very recently moved to the U.S. from Mexico and started attending SCRI²BE one week into the teaching intervention. Only two of the L1 English-speakers expressed having any meaningful prior experience studying Spanish, and even those students felt that they that were novice Spanish learners. In relating their language story, many of these students expressed excitement about the opportunity to learn Spanish through content, such as one comment from Elyse, who offered “I can make a sandwich in Spanish from my time working at Subway and that’s why I’m excited to learn Spanish through content and not in a traditional foreign language class format.”

The one ELL, Samuel, had very little English proficiency at the beginning of the course and after observing for a few days and appreciating that he was able to use Spanish to learn content for a structured amount of time each lesson, chose to enroll at SCRI²BE and take the Crossing Borders class. Samuel quickly asserted himself during the Spanish immersion sections by giving his perspective as someone who had grown-up in the Mexican educational system and by correcting my mistakes in Spanish. This allowed Samuel to create an identity as an expert, for at least part of each class. This opportunity to learn grade-level appropriate content with L1 English-speaking peers differs from the experience of many newcomer ELLs who are commonly isolated from the mainstream population and academically not challenged due to structural and ideological components of ESL programs at schools (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Przymus,
forthcoming). At the end of the study, Samuel expressed his acknowledgment of this opportunity, stating “I just want to say that this class helped me learn a lot of English, cause it is a Spanish class, but that helped me learn English.”

2-1-L2 Implementation procedures. The American Government/Civics class “Crossing Borders” met for 105 minutes every day for the complete nine-week fourth quarter of 2015 at SCR12BE. The complete curriculum of a Spanish language American Government textbook, *United States Government: Democracy in Action, Spanish Reading Essentials and Study Guide* (Glencoe, 2010), was covered and included topics ranging from the first documents and theories that influenced the structure of the U.S. government to state powers vs. federal powers, the duties and responsibilities of the three branches of government, and all of the steps for how a bill becomes a law. Class activities were informed by the English Language Arts Common Core Standards and the inquiry-based approach of SCR12BE and manifested in activities such as students writing and defending their own governments for their school, passing a law as a class, and forming political parties, running a campaign, and electing a president and cabinet for their class. Lessons were designed with S.I.O.P. strategies to ensure that content was made comprehensible for all students. Each lesson began in English with key vocabulary, an activity to engage students’ prior knowledge on the subject, a teacher-led presentation, small-group work, and small-group presentations to the large group. These components were repeated with new content continuing the lesson during the second immersion section in Spanish. Finally, each lesson ended with 30-45 minutes of hybrid language practices made up of guided and independent practice and the answering of the daily journal prompt. Students were encouraged to interact and write in both languages during this final section (See Appendix A for a sample 2-1-L2 lesson plan from this course).

Another weekly component of the class curriculum was a telecollaboration project between SCR12BE students and students at a high school in the central Pacific
coast of México. The goals of the telecollaboration project were for students to compare the U.S. and Mexican governments, discuss controversial laws, and to learn about each others’ cultures while practicing Spanish and English through highly motivating content. This project, considering that it corresponded in time with the beginning of the U.S. presidential campaign, was a powerful outlet for students to explore and contest negative stereotypes targeted towards Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. This critical pedagogy provided for opportunities to disrupt the deficit talk regarding Mexican and Mexican-American culture and promote a strength-based education. I followed the lead of my Mexican classroom counterpart in framing this project around these issues and named the project, “We are so much more than…”

Methodology

Instruments and Data Collection Strategies

To capture and document exact Spanish and English language of instruction times each day, I used an online language-timing application called Code-timer. Triangulating multiple lines of inquiry, I also compared teacher-researcher observations of students’ language and content development with students’ perceptions of their own learning in daily journal entries, end-of-study focus-group interviews, and online anonymous surveys and compared these qualitative forms of data with evidence of language and content learning in quantitative pre and post assessments, as I describe below.

*Code-timer.* Theoretically, most DLI programs measure and allocate a desired balance of time of instruction to both languages by separating the languages by class, teacher, day of week, or even by quarters and semesters (Christian et al., 2000). This practice reinforces the monolingual paradigm by constructing two monolingual classrooms. Furthermore, this practice can become difficult to maintain, leading to an
imbalance of English used in the classrooms and outside of school (Christian et al., 2000). Commonly, other programs claim to represent traditional 90:10 or 50:50 models, but leave the separation of languages completely in the hands of the teachers. This practice mirrors that of the New Concurrent Approach (Jacobson, 1981) and although reflects much more accurately the nature of societal bilingualism, it too proves to be difficult for measuring the percentage of each language used for overall instruction.

To address this need, I worked in collaboration with a software developer to create Code-timer (www.codetimer.com). Code-timer is an internet-based, chess-like timer, which has a simple interface with a Spanish button, an English button, a stop-timer button, and a save-session button. At the beginning of each 2-L2 lesson, different students volunteered to be the code-timer for the day. The “code-timer” either used a smart phone or the instructor’s laptop and clicked between the language buttons on code-timer as I instructed class, as students spoke during instruction, and as students worked in large-group class activities. Small-group work and the hybrid language sections at the end of lessons were not measured, due to the simultaneous variety of language use. Total instruction time in each language was saved and documented at the end of each lesson.

**Teacher-researcher in and out of class observations.** In order to document the impact of my own presence as a teacher-researcher in the school on students’ and faculty members’ actions, and to consider the influence of my own participation in the classroom on students’ content and language learning, I wrote detailed journal observations after each lesson. These observations mostly reflect the activities of the classroom, but also include conversations over-heard in the halls and between myself and students and faculty members before and after class.

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2 These numbers reflect the allocation of each language in the DLI program, e.g. in a 90:10 DL model, the minority language is used 90% in the first year and this allocation becomes 50:50 by the end of elementary school.
**Daily student journal prompts.** During the last five minutes of each lesson students were given a journal prompt. They were encouraged to write in either Spanish or English or both to prompts such as “What did you do to understand the section in your L2 today?” and “Journal about your confidence level regarding learning content in two languages.” Asking students to journal at the end of each lesson was meant to further engage them in reflective practices and as a way to end each learner-centered lesson with a focus on each individual. All journals were collected at the end of the quarter and analyzed for responses indicating students’ thoughts regarding the structure of the class and their perceived language and content learning and their identity development as bilinguals.

**Summative focus-group interviews.** After the completion of the nine weeks, I separated the students into a SHL learner focus group and a L1 English-speaking focus group and each group was interviewed separately by another SCRI2BE teacher. The semi-structured focus group interview questions varied from asking the students to relate stories about a time when they described this class to another student or family member, to whether or not they would recommend this course to another student, how they perceived the effectiveness of the 2-1-L2 for facilitating language and content development, and whether or not they would choose to take another required content class instructed bilingually with the 2-1-L2 model. I transcribed the recorded interviews and analyzed the responses for comments that address the above research questions on the effectiveness of the 2-1-L2 for content and language development and for impacting students’ identity formation as bilingual content users.

**Formative anonymous online surveys.** Participants completed three anonymous online surveys, one after two weeks, another after five weeks, and the final survey after nine weeks, in order to formatively measure their perceptions throughout the nine-week teaching intervention with the 2-1-L2. The anonymous surveys allowed students to give
feedback for the instructor to make needed changes throughout the course. Participants were given a series of Likert scale questions that asked them to rate how successful they felt they were doing in the course, followed by open-ended questions regarding what components of the course made them feel this way, and what strategies they used to understand the content and demonstrate their knowledge of the content in their L2.

**Pre and post Spanish language assessments.** In order to quantitatively assess participants’ development of typical and functional Spanish language use, I utilized the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) software and administered the same language assessment individually to each participant prior to the 2-I-L2 teaching intervention and at the end of the nine-week course. SALT is a powerful assessment tool for formatively measuring student language production through the analysis of language transcripts that reflect students’ language use in the community, with friends, at school, and at home (Miller et al., 2011). The Spanish language assessment consisted of me reading a two minute story in Spanish about the presidential line of succession, a lesson that I would later teach mid-way through the course, and the participants were asked to relate their understanding of the story back to me in Spanish. I recorded, transcribed, and uploaded each student’s language production to the SALT program and used the software to analyze syntax/morphology by reporting the number of mean length utterances (MLU) in words and in morphemes, lexicon/semantics by reporting the number of total words and the number of different words, and the syntactic complexity of participants’ language production by reporting the subordination index score of each utterance (e.g. SI-0 = meaningful utterance that is not a complete sentence; SI-1 = a simple, complete sentence). I also included intra-sentential code-switching in the analysis as a means for recognizing participants’ full linguistic competence. Students completed the same assessment after the nine-week course and both their pre and post SALT transcripts were linked and
analyzed for L2 and HL growth (See Appendix B for examples of pre and post linked SALT reports).

**Pre and post American Government content assessments.** Early in 2015 the state legislature of Arizona passed a law making it the first state in the U.S. to require all high school students to pass the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Civics Test in order to graduate. I decided to use this test as the pre and post content assessment in order to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of the 2-1-L2 for content instruction in two languages and to begin to prepare students for this change in the law that will take affect beginning with the class of 2017.

**Results**

**Language of Instruction Totals**

The Crossing Borders American government class met 37 times throughout the fourth quarter of the 2015 Spring semester at SCRI2BE. The teacher’s language of instruction and the language used during large-group interaction was recorded and documented each day using the Code-timer online application described above. English was used as the MoI for a total of 14 hours, 12 minutes, and 15 seconds and Spanish was the MoI for 12 hours, 9 minutes, and 59 seconds. At 54% English and 46% Spanish, the totals of this course fall just shy of the 50% use of both languages criteria set by the Center for Applied Linguistics for a program to be considered a Two-Way Immersion DLI program. This can mostly be explained by the structure of the 2-1-L2 that builds in 30 minutes of English immersion, 30 minutes of Spanish immersion, and a brief review of the content taught in the Spanish section in English at the beginning of the third section focused on hybrid language practices. Although the totals do not reflect a perfect 50/50 balance of language of instruction, I would argue that 46% of Spanish used to teach content throughout nine weeks is more meaningful immersion in Spanish than most students receive in typical Spanish as a Foreign Language classroom, since the students
used language as a means for learning required American government content and had weekly opportunities for authentic communication with peers in Mexico, which is uncommon in typical language classrooms. This assumption is supported by the students’ comments regarding their perceptions of the course below. Furthermore, these totals do not reflect the language used in the daily third section of hybrid language practices, where I observed an increasing amount of L2 production from the students who felt the freedom to experiment with using both languages through encouraged and supported translanguaging.

**Qualitative Results From My Own Observations, Student Daily Journals, Summative Focus Group Interviews, and Formative Online Surveys**

*Teacher-researcher observations.* One of the most salient learner behaviors I observed from the first day on was ubiquitous code-switching (CS). There is no question that this linguistic feature was encouraged and facilitated by the structure of the 2-1-L2 model that builds in cross-linguistic transfer from the close distance between immersion sections and the time to simultaneously use both languages during the hybrid language section at the end of each lesson, which included CS that I used and encouraged in the student. I utilized a multimodal systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978, Martin, 2000) framework to document after each lesson how CS was used by the SHL learners as a textual metafunction for fusing the ideational metafunction of creating and sharing content and linguistic knowledge with the interpersonal metafunction of establishing identities as competent bilinguals. CS, as a mode or channel (textual) for co-constructing content (ideational) with other bilinguals, also served to create relationships of camaraderie (interpersonal) with other SHL youth as unique students who were able to effortlessly flow between languages. I observed this daily as these students were positioned positively with identities as peer interpreters for their L1 English-speaking
classmates, and it was typical for these students to gather at the beginning of class to flow between English and Spanish in recounting the events of the previous day, such as the much awaited Mayweather vs. Pacquiao boxing match. CS was also used frequently and early on in the course by L1 English-speaking students as a textual metafunction for enabling them to begin to bilingually share their content and language knowledge (ideational), thus positioning themselves with identities as successful bilinguals and allowing them to join into the relationships founded in CS and bilingualism with the SHL learners in the class (interpersonal).

Scholars such as Fairclough (2011) call for the need to observe and document concrete interactions of youth identity and knowledge, beyond language (see also García & Wei, 2013; O’Connor & Brown, 2013). I call the SFL framework that I utilized multimodal because I documented how students’ textual metafunctions, or their semiotic modes of interaction beyond language, also included their spatial representations in class (where they sat, how they sat in their chairs or on tables), their bodily movements (gaze, gestures, nods, expressions), and their artistic textual representations (art on notebooks, dancing, singing, Claymation, etc.). These textual metafunctions provided these youth with outlets of content and language expression (ideational) needed to created relationships and identities as successful content and language users (interpersonal). I frequently observed how L1 English students utilized head-nodding and confident smiles to be included in shared understanding. One L1 English student, Van, wrote, practiced, and performed a bilingual rap about the bill of rights and this performance not only successfully positioned him as a legitimate user of both languages, but one who could use his bilingualism for blending social and academic purposes. The many more observed examples of singing songs that the students and I wrote about the constitutional amendments and of dancing salsa and bachata during musical shares allowed students to tap into their skill sets to comfortably express their bilingual knowledge (see Appendix C
for an example of the multimodal SFL model used). Rymes (2011) suggests that mass media, including music, social network sites, video, etc., presents mediums for identity reification through repeated exposure to popular linguistic phrases and other semiotic resources that represent an affiliation that some youth aspire to gain. In recognizing what learners are “doing” with these phrases and performances, teachers can validate this experimentation with identity (see also Rampton, 2006 for the potential of music and popular media culture in the classroom; Dimitriadis, 2009; Hill, 2009 for a discussion specifically on hip-hop in the classroom).

Perhaps the most exciting results for the potential of the 2-1-L2 for language/content development and identity creation come from observing the one newcomer ELL in the class, Samuel. On several occasions Samuel commented how this course facilitated his English learning and made him feel more comfortable and confident. After class one day he expressed the following to me (in Spanish, which I render here in English): “I have to listen hard in English and don’t always get everything, but since the content continues in Spanish, I can piece together what was taught in English and I feel that I am learning a lot of English in this way.” Also, due to being able to use his L1 for a sustained section of immersion every lesson and then again during the hybrid language section, Samuel was able to position himself from day one as a knowledgeable contributor; an opportunity that he took full advantage of. As he became an interpreter for L1 English speaking students, even the SHL learners started asking Manuel how to say words in Spanish that they didn’t know.

**Student journal entries & focus group interview responses.** All of the students in the focus group interviews said that they would recommend a content class taught with the 2-1-L2 model to students. SHL students’ journal entries and focus group comments were especially favorable towards the model and could be typified by the following
comment by a male student named Joaquin regarding the increased status of Spanish in their school environment:

“Whenever at school when we have a Spanish class it usually just focuses on the traditional way of learning it, so to me it feels like it doesn’t have any importance outside of learning the language, but with adding it to American Government/Civics it kind of added another level and made it to where it was important to us outside of prepositions and pronouns and how to conjoin verbs and all of that crazy stuff that you learn in traditional Spanish classes. This kind of gave it another layer, in order to connect better with the students.”

L1 English speakers also described their own perceived language and content learning throughout the semester and although not always directly stated, their identification as emerging bilinguals also came out in comments, such as the following provided by Elyse in a journal entry: “I definitely didn’t expect to be able to understand as much Spanish as I do!”

In the following section, students’ voices are shared regarding what the re-contextualization of ‘learner’ to ‘user’ means first for SHL youth allowed to use Spanish to learn content and then for L1 English-speakers to learn and practice Spanish in a meaningful way that doesn’t limit them with bottom-up foreign language instruction and belittle them with what some describe as traumatic interactions with learning grammar.

*The 2-1-L2 as a tool for reversing heritage language & identity loss:* Joaquin, a Hispanic boy finishing his Freshman year at SCRI2BE, repeatedly expressed his gratitude for this class and documented this with journal entries and interview responses such as the following,

“I’ve tried every kind of language learning out there. I’ve tried speaking Spanish with my grandparents, my parents, everything and I’ve absolutely done anything to regain the knowledge of Spanish and none of it has worked as effectively as
this class. Um, it makes it more natural, not being forced to speak the language, but just being exposed to it and immersed in it, um feeling more like in a natural setting in the classroom it isn’t as intimidating I feel and so with that feeling of comfort or being comfortable it then makes it easier to connect with the language as a language, rather than this intimidating thing that you’ve been trying to learn since like forever, cause you just don’t get it…this class definitely did give me the feeling of understanding it again and it gave me the words to use it in a more practical way.

What is notable about Joaquin’s comment is that it puts a personal face to the discussion on orientations of language as a problem, right, & resource (Ruiz, 1984). His comment about prior experiences of being forced to speak a language, whether it is English at school or Spanish at home, gives insight into language a problem. His confession of past language learning failures and persistence gives insight into how he believes it to be his right to learn and use his heritage language and how he summarizes how this class offered a practical approach to learning Spanish taps into how innovative bilingual pedagogy can be an educational resource.

Ysabella, a sophomore at SCRI2BE shared the response that she received from her family when describing this class.

Well, I was telling my mom about it and she was kind of excited, because, as I’m frequently just using English in school, I’m starting to forget some Spanish and ways to communicate like that, not really bad, but to a certain extent that I’m not able to translate or not able to really understand what they’re saying and so my mom said that “Yeah, you should do this, you might be able to get back your background and you could get back more understandings about what things mean and why they’re there.”
Here, Ysabella’s comment gives insight into how L1 Spanish-speaking parents may feel about the education of their children. Many of these parents struggle between wanting to maintain Spanish at home and frequently receiving the societal message that English only is best for their children’s success at school and in life. This comment acts as proof that perhaps they can wish for both continued Spanish development and academic/life success for their children.

Finally, other students attributed having the opportunity to improve their academic Spanish in a personal sense as a direct line to feeling and being seen as more intelligent. The comment by Daniel below gives some insight into how the monolingual paradigm in U.S. schools can make SHL youth feel that their Spanish is not valued, and what the impact of that can be on youth’s self-identification.

So, this class, ok, so I know Spanish and all that, but like the bigger words in Spanish, like the ones we talked in this class, I learned, like the more formal Spanish instead of street Spanish, it was kind of different from that. I mean like, I want to be able to give a speech in Spanish, and sound smart. I’m not smart like that, I mean good.

It is quite telling that Daniel relates “good” with bigger, more formal, and not street Spanish. This may be a result of traditional foreign language instruction that privileges “standard”, text-book Castilian over local varieties of Spanish, especially those used in borderland communities, such as the American Southwest. It is my hope that by opening up more opportunities for students to learn content through their valued L1, that some of these unfavorable ideologies can be contested.

In order to have a pulse of how students’ own ideologies regarding learning content in two languages progressed throughout the nine weeks, students were asked to complete anonymous online surveys. I used these surveys as feedback to better tailor instruction to meet the expressed needs of the students. In the section that follows, we
can observer the students’ trajectories of confidence from the first week to the ninth and get an idea of what strategies they used throughout the quarter to be successful.

**Putting Pieces of the Puzzle Together and Gaining Confidence in Using Bilingualism: Student Perspectives from Anonymous Online Surveys**

**Anonymous survey #1.** After two weeks, 66.7% of the participants indicated on a Likert scale question that they felt either very or somewhat confident that they were doing well in the class. Sample comments (all comments shared are verbatim from the survey) at this early stage in the course include, “The class has been engaging and easy to follow along and the content has been of content I enjoy”. “I feel as though I am doing fairly well in this class because even though I am not a fluent Spanish speaker I do understand a lot more than I expected and this language is beginning to feel natural to me”. And:

I feel like I'm doing alright. I've been having a lot of fun with the class, at least, because it's been feeling like a puzzle. I know little Spanish, but I've been personally putting all my effort into trying to piece together what the Spanish portions of the class have been meaning. I'm not sure if I'm learning a lot of Spanish, but I'm at least getting skills in figuring out what people are saying in different languages while not knowing the language itself.

Very early on in the quarter I began to notice L1 English-speakers make guesses at what was being taught in Spanish, at times answer questions during the Spanish immersion section even before the SHL students, and begin to turn down offers of interpretation from their SHL peers.

Likert scale questions regarding students’ perceived levels of confidence were followed by open-ended questions asking the students to explain their level of confidence.

When asked what aspects of the class contributed to the students’ confidence level in
class, one student commented, “Being immersed in two languages to learn useful tasks and content.” An L1 English speaking student responded that

The topics we learn in class start in English, go to Spanish, and then the mixed portion at the end. That format makes it interesting to me; I know that day's topic from what's said in English, and once it moves into Spanish, I know the topic but not the words and phrases used. Despite that, I can still decipher what's being said.

It is clear to see that early on in the class, the Heritage Language (HL) learners experienced feelings of positive identity creation as a result of getting to learn content in Spanish. One student wrote in the week #2 survey, “It makes me feel successful because I understand everything you’re saying since I know Spanish.” This same sentiment of increased confidence and self-esteem was shared by L1 English-speakers as well, as one student stated, “The fact that we are learning in a language I don't even know is awesome to me.”

One finding that came through in the formative surveys was how being in a content class shifted the focus from language and the anxiety that students shared with me during their pre-project language stories about learning in traditional foreign language classes, and placed the students’ attention on learning content. This shift also allows students to use their prior knowledge to be successful in the class, while learning in two languages. This is supported by the following survey response. “I am somewhat confident because I have studied the American Government and am pretty knowledgeable of our documents and decisions. I also am picking up a lot of the Spanish, which is a surprise, but I am excited for where I will be in the next couple of weeks.”

Teaching language through content, such as American Government, which touches all of the students’ lives in some aspect, facilitates the teacher’s task of connecting the language and the content to students’ prior knowledge and experiences. Even the students who had
not studied American government prior to this class, could connect and feel comfortable and confident with the content through daily small-group work that asked students to relate lessons to their daily lives.

**Anonymous survey #2.** After five weeks of the bilingual American Government course the participants completed their second anonymous online survey. At this time, the percentage of those who felt very confident or somewhat confident that they were doing well in the class dropped some to 57.2% and the remaining 42.1% stated that they felt neither confident nor unconfident. This slight drop in perceived confidence might be explained by the “newness” of the innovative class wearing off and just the normal increasing workload that comes with any class as students progress through an academic quarter.

Students’ comments remained positive regarding both their content and language development as demonstrated with typical comments to open-ended questions such as “I feel like I am doing well and have begun to make good strides in my Spanish speaking skills.” And “I feel like I am catching on to more words and phrases, and feeling more comfortable speaking them.” Also, interestingly the use of code-switching started to appear in the students’ survey responses. This was most likely due to the ubiquitous translanguaging in class by students and the teacher and the weekly class activity of interacting with high school students in Mazatlán, México, via a telecollaboration project where code-switching was encouraged. In the following survey response we see an example of intra-sentential code-switching. “I feel like I'm doing all of the work, but es difícil (it’s hard).

Also on the five-week survey, students continued to identify, in open-ended questions regarding their stated level of confidence in the Likert scale responses, the characteristics of the course that made them feel confident in this innovative educational experience. In responding to the question *What aspects about this class made you feel*
this way?, the following survey responses highlight the structure of the 2-1-L2 as facilitating students’ feelings of success.

“It’s the two languages, and the handouts.”

“I suppose the two language pieces and the 20-30 minutes in Spanish.”

“We have begun to get more chances to speak in whatever language we choose during the classes so it is our choice to practice what we will.”

“The review at the end of class where he talks about what he said in Spanish in English.” And, “that I know both languages and that I am learning to read and write in Spanish.”

These responses support a major desired goal of using the 2-1-L2 model; that students’ will experience increased confidence in learning and using their L2 because they always have the security of also learning and reviewing in their L1.

**Anonymous survey #3.** Finally, I emailed the participants a link to one last anonymous survey at the end of the quarter. Regarding the Likert scale question *How confident do you feel learning in two languages in this class*, results showed that 78% of students felt very confident or somewhat confident that they did well learning in two languages in the course. Sample comments explaining their feelings include, “I feel I am doing good I am participating more than in the beginning of the class. I also feel a little more than I normally do with Spanish.”

“I feel like I’m doing amazing in this class.” And, “Well, I’ve been participating and attempting to code-switch in my interactions with people. So pretty well.” Although not every student felt as successful as the students above (dissenting voices will be shared in the final section of the paper), these favorable comments were typical of how most of the class felt about having the freedom to code-switch and experiment with both languages.

Project-final comments regarding the aspects of the 2-1-L2 structure for facilitating language and content learning again point to increased levels of SHL students’ status at school and the identity pride of all of the participants as emerging bilinguals.
Anonymous comments include,

“I get the opportunity to speak my native language.”

“The learning in 2 languages part is making me feel somewhat confident with my English.”

“That I am bi lingual and learning.”

“I like that I have been able to talk to people in multiple languages which I didn't think I could do.”

One of the most telling comments regarding the impact of translinguaging and learning came from a student responding to the question, ‘What changes would you like to see the instructor make in order to support your learning?’, to which the student offered, “More constant code-switching would help my brain fire off more often.”

All of the above comments go a long way in showing that students will appreciate learning in two languages if given the chance and that they understand the cognitive benefits of becoming bilingual. Applying a “translinguaging lens has the potential to transform structures and practices of educating bilingually, which would have implications to change society (García & Wei, 2013, p. 2).

Although powerful and personal, the above qualitative teacher-researcher observations and youth voices may not be enough to convince policy makers, voters, and even bilingual parents who are influenced by negative rhetoric and myths regarding bilingual education (Cummins, 2014; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2009). In order to address these concerns and ideologies, often heavily influenced by a focus on evidence-based results and standardized test scores, in the following section I report on the quantitative data from pre and post L2 language and content assessments.

Quantitative Snapshots of L2, Heritage Language, and Content Development

*American Government content development.* Table 2 below summarizes participants’ American government content development based on the results of the pre
and post-assessments using the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Civics Test. The pre-
test consisted of a sample of 10 questions from the complete 100-question test. The students completed all 100 questions for the post-test.

We can see from Table 2 that all but three students made gains of an average of 19% from the pre-test to the post-test and that 16/21 students would have passed the forthcoming 2017 state law requiring a 60% or greater on this test to graduate from high school. Although as educators we would like to see 100% of the students pass such assessments, I must note here that this test was not the focus of curricular instruction. Because the Arizona legislature passed the law requiring this test for future graduation requirement several weeks after I had started teaching the course, there was no explicit attempt to specifically teach the content of the Immigration and Naturalization test. I had only serendipitously chosen to use part of the assessment (10 questions) for the pre-content assessment and then chose to use the whole 100 question test for the post-content
assessment after having learned of the new law. Student results likely would have been even higher had this assessment been figured in to the development of the course.

With this said, several students still made tremendous gains of 42-58%, including the one newcomer ELL student who almost passed the post-test with 58%. This result demands some attention for demonstrating the effectiveness of allowing ELLs to learn content at least partially in their L1, considering that the student in this study had only been in the U.S. for eight weeks when he took this very difficult post-test, all in English.

These pre and post content tests were only used to measure content development and were not figured into the grades of the students. Due to the inquiry-based curriculum at SCR12BE, students’ grades were almost completely based on performance-based assessments, individual and small group projects, and presentations. All of the students passed the course with a mean class final grade of 96%.

**L2 Spanish & HL development.** Table 3 below shows the participants’ Spanish language development in terms of the changes in syntax/morphology (MLU), lexicon/semantics (Total/Diff), and syntactic complexity (SI) between the pre and post-tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Length &amp; Complexity of Pre &amp; Post Spanish Language Spoken Transcripts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-MLU</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words/Morphemes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>4.20/4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>8.33/3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>2.33/2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>9.83/10.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>12.50/13.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>1.00/1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>3.50/3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>11.00/11.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>1.00/1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>20.56/21.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>7.57/8.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>13.00/13.17</td>
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<td>Participant 13</td>
<td>8.09/8.27</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 14</strong></td>
<td>7.90/8.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 15</td>
<td>1.83/2.17</td>
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<td>Participant 16</td>
<td>1.00/1.00</td>
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<td>Participant 17</td>
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<td>Participant 18</td>
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<td>Participant 19</td>
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<td>Participant 20</td>
<td>9.00/9.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 21</td>
<td>6.25/6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Participants with Post-test Gains: 76%

*SI-X = Isolated vocabulary, non-meaningful utterances
**ELL (results reflect analysis of English language transcripts)
Isolated Participants = L1 English-speakers

Pre & Post Systematic Analysis of Spanish Language Transcripts
Table 3 shows that most of the students demonstrated gains from the pre-test to the post-test across the three aspects of language measured. Mean length of utterance (MLU) in words and morphemes are found by calculating the number of words and morphemes an individual speaks in 100 utterances. A higher MLU usually indicates a high level of language proficiency (Klee et al., 2004). An increase in total words and total different words can also be observed from this data. Although the use of more words in the post-test may at first glance seem to be an accurate indicator of language growth, it is a possibility that some students who did not use more words during the post-test felt more confident about the content and did not need as many words to re-tell the story. I would argue that the most encouraging indicator of language development is the gain that 86% of the participants showed in syntactic complexity. Syntactic complexity is an aspect of proficiency that shows a user’s ability to combine a wide range of sophisticated grammatical structures in order to communicate more complex ideas. By focusing language learning through content, learners get more meaningful chances to see how language is used in complex ways, copy it, and produce it themselves through their own ideas regarding the content.

Although analyzing language transcripts provides educators with a powerful tool for assessing functional, and in this case, academic language, the quantitative assessment above only describes participants’ expressive language development. Throughout the nine-weeks, students were often asked to perform tasks involving writing, listening, and reading, as well. Many of these examples of L2 language development and insight into students’ own perceptions of language, content, and identity development were captured in the teacher-researcher observations, students’ daily journal entries, focus group interview responses, and anonymous online surveys and are reported on above. In the final section I will share students’ voices once more, and this time try to capture two competing sides of perspectives regarding learning content and language with the 2-L2
model. Considering these competing voices will be important for my own and other bilingual educators future implementation of this model.

**Final Competing Voices**

**This Class Doesn’t Make Me Want to Cry: Comparing the 2-1-L2 to Traditional Foreign Language Classroom Experiences**

Re-thinking secondary level language learning from an emphasis on the L2 as the sole emphasis of the class, as in the case of traditional ESL and Spanish foreign language classes, to language as the means to learning content had a positive impact on students’ identities as emerging bilinguals at school. When asked in a focus-group interview to compare learning Spanish in this class to a traditional Spanish as foreign language (FL) class, all of the students who had previously taken a FL class said that it was very different. Elyse, whose comment on language learning is shared above, was actually taking a Spanish foreign language class at a community college during this same quarter and offered the following story comparing the two classes:

I know that for me, this class has been super duper different, because I’m actually taking a traditional Spanish class and this class at the same time and let’s just say that I’m learning a lot more in this class, because learning demonstrative adjectives and consonant-vowels, bla, bla, bla,…so like it’s not helpful at all to learn it that way, because I get distracted by the fact that I don’t know what a demonstrative adjective is, then I feel overwhelmed and it makes me feel angry and I want to cry. And this class doesn’t make me want to cry, so…

Other L1 English-speaking students commented that learning Spanish through content was a more engaging way to learn a language and provided them with a different kind of credibility at school among bilinguals. Van, the student who wrote the bilingual rap, shared that he explained this class to a L1 Spanish-speaker, not enrolled in this class, at
school and that she thought it was “very cool.” Finally, Andrea, an L1 English-speaker aptly captured the feelings of many students by comparing this class with traditional Spanish classes by saying:

I think that’s one of the major flaws with most Spanish classes…they focus on like the memorization of facts when, it is a language. It is not as easy as a memory. It’s like trying to memorize a dictionary in English and then trying speaking it. You may understand what they mean, but you don’t know how to use them. And so with this class it was a more practical approach to learning the language. It gave me more understanding and made me work to understand it and that improved my speaking and understanding.

The SHL youth compared this class to traditional foreign language classes as well and appreciated that they were able to be challenged by content and not forced to learn bottom-up grammar and vocabulary in Spanish that they have known since they were very young. Although certainly there are some Spanish as a foreign language teachers that do engage students with communicative methods, recognize the experiences that SHL youth bring to the classroom, and even some schools have created special Spanish for Heritage Language Learners courses, these experiences are not the norm for SHL youth studying Spanish at schools. In a review of the curricular components of undergraduate Spanish language education in the American Southwest, Schwartz (2009) found that widely “institutional ideologies and daily classroom interactions work to socialize and, in fact, encourage students to ignore the existence and contributions of local Spanish-speaking populations and imagine Spanish as foreign (p. 11, italics original). The impact of viewing Spanish as something foreign to all of the students in the class, results in teaching it in a way that attempts to level the playing field for all students, regardless of prior knowledge, forcing SHL students to reproduce language that they have known since they were young in a demeaning manner and question their own
These SHL students’ journal entries and interview responses focused largely on how this class challenged them and how they understood the cognitive effects of learning in two languages, such as this comment by Rolando, “I don’t know if there’s anything scientific about it, but I felt that my brain was more activated.” Joaquin supports this difference in thinking by harkening the “cognitive stretch” discussed above, stating, “You’re kind of forced to look at it in both ways and learn how both sides see it and translate it in their own way and it makes you focus in a way that you normally don’t do.”

These SHL youth appreciated having the opportunity to position themselves as academic Spanish users through this class and offered comments directed towards this, such as this comment by Francisco,

Um, I think that we should have more classes like this in schools, because it is a different approach to learning Spanish. I know Spanish from my family growing up and I basically just know what my family says to me, so I learned a lot of new words in this class that I hadn’t known before, cause my family doesn’t talk much about the government. So it was really interesting to be like, I know Spanish, but I’m still learning. So I think we should have more classes like this with other subjects as well.

Not all students and their family members, however, expressed their support for this innovative approach to content and language learning and their dissenting voices are important to consider in order improve the implementation of such creative pedagogical approaches.

**It Was Painful and Torturous: Dissenting Voices**

The strong grip of the monolingual paradigm not only has influenced how teachers organize and teach language classes in the U.S., but has also had an impact on
what students and their parents expect from L2 instruction and outcomes, severely lowering expectations. Of course, every day students display agency and overcome this monolingual perspective to reach high levels of L2 fluency and multicultural competencies. Many students and their parents, however, find it “ignorant” to teach content through another language; the very thing that is asked of ELLs everyday, if indeed they get the chance to take grade-level content classes. During the L1 English-speaking focus group interview, the students were asked if they could tell a story about a time when they told someone, like a family member, about this class and to explain their reaction. A boy named David related the following story, “I was talking to my mom and she’s like, she finds it ignorant. She said that she didn’t know how anyone could possibly learn that way and she also said a lot of other words, um…that I’m not going to repeat.” Another student, Andrea, chimed in at this point with,

Yea, I was talking to my mom about it and she thought it was kind of weird because she, like, knows Spanish and she was talking about if like she was in our position she doesn’t think that she would learn and she thinks that classes would be better…(Interviewer: More traditional classes?) Yea, but that’s her opinion though.

Such opinions on the one hand betray the hidden monolingual paradigm prevalent in the U.S. and on the other hand give an insight into the English only political environment of the American Southwest and the accompanying narrative of “English for the Children” (Arizona Proposition 203, 2000) that many Spanish-speakers in the Southwest have accepted as the best way to provide educational and future success for their children.

Even though there existed a palpable undercurrent of dissention and backlash from one or two L1-English speakers, such as when David described the class as “painful and torturous” even these students provided comments of surprise at “ah ha” moments of L2 language and bilingual identity development. During the focus group interview,
David mentioned that “I like got some of the words and that was pretty exciting and like my family speaks Spanish and I like started piecing it together and that was pretty weird.” David also exhibited subtle representations of pride as an emergent bilingual throughout the semester, such as the time when he told a HL classmate that he had responded in Spanish on the class Google group and when he volunteered to pilot the online bilingual chat with me during class. I learned that I had to find a way to support David’s bilingual identity development in a way that did not draw attention to him, which was opposite from my normal displays of excitement and encouragement for others’ bilingual production.

These dissenting voices do inform this line of research and future studies using the 2-1-L2 model for content teaching will need to include diverse content classes varying in kind and rigor of content and in the language proficiency levels of the L1 English-speaking students. To date I have only used the model with novice language learners, such as my work with English as a Foreign Language students at a Mexican university (Przymus, 2010), my work with Indigenous Mexican educators learning English at a university in the U.S. (pilot study, Przymus, 2013), and with novice Spanish as a foreign language learners in the American Midwest, (Przymus, unpublished MA Thesis, 2008). Although I have purposefully only used this model with novice language learners in order to test its effectiveness as a pedagogical approach for providing newcomer ELLs with access to grade-level appropriate content classes, future studies may show that including higher level L1 English-speaking foreign language students, such as replacing a Spanish 5 class with a 2-1-L2 instructed biology class, may act to positively address these dissenting voices.

Conclusion
It may be that the long-standing, deeply rooted effects of monolingualism have produced perspectives of language as an instrument to be used for academic, economic, and political purposes and less of a direct link in the minds of English-speakers to more intrinsic values, such as identity (Ruiz, 2010, p. 164). While the nine-week length of this study represents an admittedly short amount of time to measure the effectiveness of a new pedagogical approach, the quantitative and qualitative measures of language and content development and positive identity formation reported here do support the potential impact that the 2-1-L2 might have in schools for reframing how educators view dual language instruction at high schools.

The students’ voices and stories included in this study provide a continued narrative started by others who have called for the inclusion of third spaces at schools for hybrid language practices where students can draw on their full linguistic repertoire and life experiences to experiment with their desired identities as bilinguals. A re-contextualization of these youth in schools from underdeveloped learners of language to successful bilingual users of content may have the latent effect of spilling into how these youth are viewed outside of the school walls. Future studies need to explore the long-term effects of learning content and language with the 2-1-L2 model. In a post-study interview with the principal of SCRI2BE, she expressed her enthusiasm for how the course went and posited her belief that the students will retain the Spanish learned in this course for a longer period of time as a result of using Spanish as the medium of content instruction as opposed to the sole focus of instruction.

One final story from the classroom sums up what happens when educators open up opportunities for students to linguistically and multimodally perform content and language knowledge. While acting out the legislative process of moving a student proposed bill (legislation aimed at requiring the teacher to bring doughnuts to class on all remaining Fridays of the term) to becoming a law, the members of the student created
sub-committees launched into a debate and the proposition was raised that if the teacher violated the law by forgetting to bring doughnuts to class on Fridays that a potential consequence would be that the students could pick how they learned for a day, such as only in English or only in Spanish. After a short debate, all the students fought for the integrity of the 2-I-L2 structure of using both languages and decided that, in the words of Joaquin, “it’s just too important to be on the chopping block.”
References


CHAPTER 4: THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF PURPOSEFUL CODE-SWITCHING IN TRANSNATIONAL TELECOLLABORATIVE EXCHANGES

Abstract

This study asks the question, what role can purposeful code-switching have on promoting communication in transnational telecollaboration projects situated in public high school classrooms? The majority of telecollaboration projects reported in the literature describe telecollaborations at the university language classroom setting and the varied dysfunctions that may lead to “failed communication” (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013) or “missed communication” (Ware, 2005). In contrast, the study within describes the successful impact of a pedagogical intervention, theoretically guided by systemic function linguistics (SFL) and social semiotics, that fostered intercultural understanding among public high school students located in a U.S. high school American government class in the Southwestern United States and students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class in Mexico. Findings within demonstrate how teachers can promote the purposeful use of code-switching to mitigate what I call here the cultural clash of discourse styles in computer assisted language learning.

Keywords: Code-switching, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), face, Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE), Phatic Communication, Referential Communication,

Introduction

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I took a drive around the mid-size city in the American Southwest where I live and counted the billboards that advertise enrollment in local charter schools and public school districts. The billboards trumpeted their respective schools as “tech savvy”, “digitally connected”, “leaders in 21st Century Skills
and communication”, and “globally connected.” As a former English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish as a Foreign Language high school teacher in a school on the cusp of transitioning to a one-to-one environment, I can relate that the pressure for teachers to design and implement computer assisted language learning (CALL) pedagogy is great. The opportunity to connect classrooms with schools in other countries, seemingly at the fingertips of teachers, is a tempting panacea for meeting these tech savvy, digitally connected claims and for preparing students for competitive futures in a globally connected world.

Yet, the history of telecollaboration projects, or the “use of Internet communication tools such as email and chat in order to support prolonged intercultural exchanges between groups of students in various institutional settings who might otherwise not have the opportunity to interact” (Belz, 2005, p. 4; see also, Belz & Thorne, 2006) is filled with more accounts of ‘failed communication’ than success stories (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013, p. 623; see also Belz, 2001, 2002, 2005; Belz & Müller-Hartmann, 2002, 2003; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; O’Dowd, 2003, 2005; Ware, 2005; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

In this article, I take a critical look at the perhaps too eager desire of teachers to jump into transnational telecollaboration projects in order to capitalize on new technologies that facilitate intercultural communication. By doing so, they may actually set up their students for communicative challenges and failure from not taking into full consideration the cultural ideologies and behaviors that students must successfully intersect in intercultural telecollaboration partnerships (Belz, 2001). I show how increased understanding of mobile and ubiquitous communication in CALL can extend the work of Warschauer’s (2000, p. 64) “third stage” where the Internet and multimedia provide new authentic discourse activities for language learning, and Bax’s (2003, p. 13) “third phase” projecting the normalization of CALL in schools. Specifically, I argue for
the importance of carefully considering how the use of CALL might impact social
interactions, and promote language teaching and learning with a greater focus on the
kinds of knowledge, relationships, and identities that might be co-constructed in
telecollaboration projects. Importantly, I also show how the use of a specific pedagogical
intervention, the Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE)
(Przymus, 2014) addressed the sociocultural aspects of co-constructing knowledge and
students’ identities as emerging bilinguals, and led to successful communication and
increased intercultural awareness among students in a high school Spanish-English
telecollaboration project. Below I show how through the FACE intervention students
promoted the equal sharing of both Spanish and English in the project and placed an
emphasis on relationship building through phatic communication in their online
exchanges. Participant perceptions of the project from semi-structured focus group
interviews, daily journal entries, and online anonymous surveys are triangulated with
direct teacher-researcher observations, and an analysis of all of the telecollaboration posts
to address the following research questions:

1) To what extent does purposeful code-switching (CS) and the attention to
phatic/referential switches in a transnational telecollaboration project facilitate
students’ ability to communicate in their second language (L2)?

2) To what extent do students perceive that this purposeful CS aids in creating
and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with their
telecollaboration partners?

3) How might purposeful CS facilitate students’ increased intercultural
competency development, and facilitate students’ L2 learning and
practice?

Findings suggest that the FACE framework can provide educators with a pedagogical
intervention for structuring telecollaboration projects in a way that recognizes potential
challenges that accompany sociocultural interactions involving knowledge construction, identity formation, and power sharing, and thus avoid negative cultural clashes that cause telecollaboration to end in “failed communication” (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013, p. 623).

**Getting the Right Kind of Cultural Clash**

Developing global competency involves creating respectful and productive interactions that cultivate knowledge for understanding our world across disciplines and diverse geographies (Reimers, 2008). Based on a 2003 Spanish-English telecollaboration project, O’Dowd “found that the essential difference between the successful and unsuccessful partnerships was whether students had the intercultural competence to develop an interculturally rich relationship with their partners through the creation of effective correspondence” (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013, p. 626). I believe it is important here to ask the question, what is ‘effective correspondence’? Is effective correspondence analogous with the absence of cultural clash? It can be argued that any cultural clash, such as an imbalance in phatic communication use between students (Belz, 2002, 2005; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002) or initial student proficiency positioning, implicit value judgments of superiority, and an imbalance in language use or liguicism (Belz, 2002; Vincent, 2008), can at the very least produce authentic target language and culture practice that moves learning beyond contrived dialogues in textbooks. Belz (2003) echoes this sentiment stating, “It is very important to understand that these contextually-shaped tensions are not to be viewed as problems that need to be eradicated in order to facilitate smoothly functioning partnerships. ... Structural differences frequently constitute precisely these cultural rich-points that we want our students to explore” (p. 87).

However, it is understood that not all cultural clashes are positive for foreign language learners’ linguistic and intercultural development and identity formation. How
can educators be prepared and in turn prepare their students for authentic interaction in CALL’s fourth phase, in a way that minimizes the cultural clashes that ultimately lead to avoidance practices, students’ negative self-perceptions as language learners, the reinforcing of existing negative cultural stereotypes, and the creation of new negative stereotypes? In establishing a need for the specific pedagogical intervention described in the study below, I first provide here a distinction of three kinds of cultural clashes found in transnational telecollaboration projects, 1) clashes of setting; 2) clashes of content; and 3) clashes of discourse styles, and argue that only the cultural clashes of content provide for the kind of cultural rich-points of exploration that teachers desire for their students and that clashes of discourse styles and setting should be purposefully mitigated. These three kinds of cultural clashes are similar to and compliment O’Dowd & Ritter’s (2013) 10 factors and four levels of ‘failed communication’ in online exchanges and together further the discussion on why so many projects end poorly and what options of intervention are available to educators.

I will start with clashes of setting and second what others have found that many clashes precipitated by differences in access to technology, class schedules, and institutional expectations, can be solved through the development of a close and transparent relationship between the teachers of both classrooms (O’Dowd & Eberbach, 2004; Müller-Hartmann 2000a, 2000b). Clashes of content explain the tensions that stem from students writing something, which perhaps give a direct insight into their culture, but may be seen as offensive to their project partner. Cultural misinterpretation of terms, such as ‘racism’ seen in the telecollaboration between German and U.S. university students in the aforementioned 2002 study by Belz, and a controversial statement made by a U.S. student in the current study regarding his belief that Mexicans are lazy, are examples of this kind of cultural clash of content.

Clashes of discourse styles represent miscommunications that can be explained
[to cultural differences in communication styles] is often the major factor responsible for
a deterioration of rapport and for the mutual attribution of negative personal traits which,
in turn, effectively prevent any recognition of real differences in cultural values and
norms” (p. 147). Kramsch & Thorne (2002) describe a tension that arose from an
American/French telecollaboration that utilized email exchanges, as a misunderstanding
of cultural specific genre (p. 428). Kramsch & Thorne reported that the American
students used more phatic communication in order to build peer camaraderie and that this
discourse style did not make for good discursive arguments compared to the well crafted
academic and dispassionate style of writing produced by the French students. A similar
clash of discourse can explain another tension experienced in Belz’ (2002) study between
American and German university students. In that study, German students complained
that the American students were too focused on finishing the task and did not place
enough time and effort in the phatic communication needed to establish relationships. I
believe that these kinds of clashes of discourse styles could be and should be mitigated by
educators providing upfront lessons on cultural specific discourse styles. In so doing,
they would not be sheltering students from provocative statements of content that might
arise.

Indeed part of the learning process is learning, sometimes through
communicative failures, that cultures differ. Clashes are needed, but so is a balance.
Arming students with strategies to linguistically and culturally appropriately mediate
interactions and negotiate identities seems to me to not prescriptively control what they
say, but rather give them frameworks for saying what it is that will produce both
consensuses and clashes. Let’s let the content, not the procedure, be controversial.

The Internet does offer enticing approaches for going beyond existing physical
and ideological borders. However, simply going beyond borders with our students does
not in itself ensure a positive language and identity forming experience. Cultural clashes precipitated by students’ preconceived ideas of their partners’ language proficiencies and strengthened by insufficient phatic communication and sharing of languages, create negative learning experiences for students in projects and lead to the reinforcing of old and the creation of new negative cultural stereotypes (Belz, 2002, 2005; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; see O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013 for a detailed discussion on ‘failed communication’ in telecollaboration projects). To avoid negative clashes of discourse styles I propose below a Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE) for promoting the sharing of languages in telecollaboration projects and for placing greater attention on relationship building through greater prominence placed on phatic communication (Przymus, 2014).

The Role of Code-switching in Ethnography of “Online” Communication

We have a rich history of understanding face-to-face communicative interactions in specific contexts. Gumperz & Hymes’ ‘ethnography of communication’ (1964) influenced how we examine specific usage of language in certain contexts and cast a light on users’ social identity (Duranti & George, forthcoming). We now have a better understanding of the influence of speech communities (Gumperz, 1964; Labov, 1966), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; see also Bucholtz, 1999) and now also understand that speech communities can exist without face-to-face interaction in imagined communities (Anderson, 1983; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001, 2013). We, also, understand much about how individuals position themselves in communicative interactions with Goffman’s (1955, 1967) notion of face and Brown & Levinson’s (1987) universals of politeness.

Over a decade ago, Duff (2002), writing about a high school context, claimed that a reanalysis of ethnography of communication “as a culture- and context-sensitive
method for conducting research on classroom discourse” had been underway for some time (p. 289). Part of this ongoing reanalysis must be a critical look at how learners communicate, create anonymous identities, negotiate these social identities, and learn or do not learn, online. There is a need for a greater understanding of the ‘ethnography of “online” communication. Some researchers have written about this ethnography of online communication, (see Vincent, 2008 for a discussion on English *linguicism* on the internet; Shin, 2006 for negotiation of social selves, and Androutsopoulos, 2013, 2006; Goldbarg, 2009; Lee & Barton, 2011; Park, 2008; Tsiplakou, 2010; Warschauer et al., 2002 for a discussion on identity formation through code-switching online). According to Androutsopoulos (2013), “Code-switching and code-mixing are common linguistic practices among bilingual and multilingual people and therefore easily find their way into communication via digital media” (p. 667).

Code-switching could be seen as a dialogic pattern utilized for establishing norms that protect and preserve new bilingual identities. What previous studies on telecollaboration problems have taught us is that there has been a lack of establishing norms and a lack of alignment among participants. In a study of transnational email exchanges, Tsiplakou (2010) defines the online purpose of CS as “linguistic signaling of symmetrical social alignment” (p. 381). This definition of CS foreshadows the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978; Martin, 2000) discussion below on the alignment of interpersonal and ideational metafunctions through the textual metafunction of CS.

Many of the problems reported above in telecollaboration projects have to do with the concept of *face*, or “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself” (Goffman, 1955, p. 213), brought on largely by clashes of discourse. What does face work look like online? If gestures, expressions, body positioning, etc. are no longer in play to create a positive social value, what gets pushed to the forefront and takes on
more crucial strategic roles online? The lack of contextual clues, described above, constrain students’ face work in telecollaboration activities and I argue here that code-switching (CS) is one such sociocultural phenomena that can be used to enhance each other’s face in an online intercultural interaction. In doing so, extra import is given to multilingualism and an identity of the bilingual participants in the interaction.

Park (2008) states that effective interpersonal communication, the foundation of an educational telecollaboration activity, is extremely important for successful collaboration (p. 2052). Park continues by calling for the analysis of sociointerpersonal communication in understanding how participants improve their stance, create a positive identity as a language user, and save face. Park points to how CS can be used as a face-work strategy for both “face-saving” (protecting the bilingual identity of the CMC writer) and “face-giving” (recognizing and praising the bilingual proficiency and identity of the interactant for whom the post/message is intended) (see Brown & Levinson, 1987).

An analysis of CS for face-work in intercultural, educational telecollaboration activities can be further understood through a combination of multiple lines of theory. First we can look at how a student, alone in front of a computer screen, uses telecollaboration for face-work through Brown & Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, where the concept of face is “…the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p. 61). Secondly, if telecollaboration activities are to be considered as online communities of practice, we can view CS through Goffman’s (1967) notion of face, where focus is placed on language use in terms of relationships with social groups and the public (Park, 2008, p. 2052). Finding some sort of common ground, shared knowledge, and creating an in-group language, all might serve to create this positive relationship and may be accomplished through CS, as a way of drawing attention to a shared ability of emergent bilingualism.

Brown & Levinson (1987) discuss two opposite aspects of face that are
interconnected and important in our understanding of student face-work in intercultural telecollaboration activities. First, let us consider the use of CS to create positive face or the “involvement” aspect of face (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). According to Brown & Levinson, this is “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants” (p. 61). The other aspect of face discussed by Brown & Levinson (1987) is the “independence” face value or negative face (p. 61). This avoidance or hesitation to interact, as observed in Belz’s (2002) study discussed above on the telecollaboration between university students in Germany and in the U.S., can partially be explained as students in telecollaboration activities not feeling at the same proficiency level as their partners. This may be understood as displays of agency, resistance, and autonomy in preserving their own social stance by not participating. Feelings of insecurity of language proficiency can never be completely erased, but perhaps be mitigated through structuring the language use of telecollaboration participants accomplished by the equal sharing of language use in online exchanges.

What was largely missing in the German and U.S. students’ interactions (Belz, 2002) was the involvement aspect of face that acts to create positive relationships. To create positive relationships, is to pay attention to others through the use of phatic communication. This politeness tactic was missing in many of the American students’ messages to their German counterparts, and was the source of many German students’ complaints (Belz, 2002). I posit that phatic communication in each message would be a natural part of the message for CS, which in turn would be a social signal of creating an in-group of emergent bilinguals, and the key for creating stronger partner relationships.

A Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE)

As Sebba (2013) adroitly points out, if a goal of language learning is bilingualism,
activities should present themselves as bilingual activities, where both languages play important roles and both are privileged in dialogue (p. 105). Some have looked at the practice of CS in computer-mediated communication utilized personally and professionally between adults (see Androutsopoulos, 2006, 2013 for an overview), but few have looked at student use of CS in educational telecollaboration projects. If we assume that one of the goals for language learners is to be recognized as a proficient L2 user, then CS during planned, asynchronous exchanges provides students with the opportunity to construct aspects of that desired identity. As we will see in the current study below, after weeks of purposefully CS in asynchronous email exchanges, the participants also naturally CS during the synchronous chat and live videoconference sessions.

The pedagogical intervention used in the current study was the Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE), a multi-theoretical approach that combines CS, Jakobson’s (1990) speech functions, and systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Warschauer & Grimes (2007) discuss something analogous to this when they refer to CS (which would be the mode in SFL) as a strategy for “exercising authorship” on web 2.0 platforms, by considering the form of text “artifact” (which would be the field in SFL), and by considering the “audience” (which would represent the tenor in SFL), which is often multilingual, global, and almost always unseen/imagined in order to ultimately exercise authorship and create an online identity (p. 3).

The FACE framework organizes the flow of a telecollaboration exchange into three parts, accomplished by two phatic-referential switches. Figure 1 below illustrates the FACE framework and an example of how it was used in a post for a theme on “interactions with tourists/transnational consumers” during the current study. The first phatic contact at the beginning of an interaction is an extended greeting. This extended greeting is important for the establishment of a positive tenor, or interpersonal
relationship in the telecollaboration. This can be done in either the composer’s L1 or L2, and will determine the language of the referential function as the opposite language.

Figure 1. The FACE framework

Switching languages from the first phatic contact to the referential part of the interaction sends a natural message that the focus will now shift to a more educational discourse related to the topic or theme of the lesson to be discussed. This first phatic-referential code-switch also sends the message that both languages will be shared in the dialogue and that the writer assumes a bilingual competence of the interactant that acts to position neither as superior or inferior in second language proficiency. A code-switch back to phatic information to end the exchange serves two purposes. First, in considering the three metafunctions of SFL, we can see that this referential-phatic switch at the end of the email is an example of the textual flow, or mode, of the text once again fusing the ideational resources with the interpersonal resources in order to strengthen the positive tenor at the end of the interaction. Secondly, since most referential (thematic) parts of an interaction will likely be longer than the initial phatic connection, returning to the phatic
function at the end works to balance the amount of each language used in the exchange, thus privileging the L2 competencies of both interactants and enhancing the positive bilingual face of both. The FACE framework requires the alternation of the initiating language in subsequent telecollaboration exchanges. This gives each individual the opportunity to demonstrate L2 proficiency in both the phatic and referential functions of interactions over an extended correspondence.

Goldbarg, in a 2009 study, reveals a similar need for analyzing the functions and effects of CS in emails. Goldbarg found that “switches to Spanish functioned to personalize otherwise transactional or work-related English-dominant emails” (p. 9). Goldbarg states,

Email greetings and closings as a CS phenomenon have received little attention in the literature. Yet, from both the sender and the recipient’s point of view, these brief switches may be among the most obvious acts of CS as a way to lessen distance and/or identify oneself with one’s interlocutors (p. 10).

I refer to this as the phatic-referential switch, and indeed from my own data in a past study (Przymus, 2014), and in the current study, I have found this to be a natural location for CS within a bilingual email.

In the following section, I describe how I, from the standpoint of a researcher and theoretically informed teacher, investigated the ways that purposeful CS, using the FACE pedagogical intervention, shaped the identities, intercultural experiences and understanding, and L2 development of high school students in the American Southwest and the Central Pacific coast of Mexico. As an invited researcher and teacher in the U.S. school, it was my goal to gain first hand experience with the work and pressures that are part of everyday lesson preparation, student interaction and assessment, and project preparation and maintenance, including the very important relationship maintenance with my counterpart teacher and institution in Mexico, and while doing so, continuously cross-
check these experiences with the critical voices in the literature regarding the dysfunctions of telecollaboration projects. In this way, I balanced the generations-old split in education studies, which Iyengar (2014) describes as “on the one hand, those whose voices are most heard regarding educational matters (i.e., those who are permitted to speak authoritatively about education)…and, on the other hand, those who actually perform the embodied labor of teaching” (p. 3).

**The Study**

**Type of Study**

For this research, I adopt a *case type design*, which Ballén (2014) describes as “a qualitative research strategy whereby a phenomenon is investigated in its real life context through empirical enquiry” (p. 14; see also Yin, 2013). To develop this case-type research, the following methods, discussed below, were used and upon gathering and analyzing the data, the categories of online L2 identities, positive intercultural relationships, and L2 and target culture learning immerged, and in turn informed the above research questions.

**Data Collection Instruments**

*Student journal entries.* Each day before, the day of, and the day after a telecollaboration exchange, students were given journal prompts in order to 1) anticipate the kinds of interactions they thought they would have, 2) summarize the current day’s exchange, and 3) interpret the previous day’s interaction. These journals were collected and analyzed for recurring themes on language learning, development of intercultural understanding, status of relationship with partners, and perceptions on project success.

*Synchronous and asynchronous exchanges.* The 149 synchronous chat posts were analyzed for occurrences of CS and for content that positioned interactants as either
more or less proficient in their L2. The 141 asynchronous email exchanges were analyzed for the same linguistic and discursive features.

*Anonymous online surveys.* The American students completed three formative/summative anonymous online surveys, one after the first two weeks of the project, the second after the fifth week of the project, and the final survey at the end of the nine-week project (Appendix D). The Mexican students completed an anonymous online survey after the completion of the project (Appendix E). All survey responses were analyzed for the same recurring themes of language learning, project impact on intercultural understanding, the status of the relationships between partners, and participant perceptions regarding the success or failure of the project.

*Focus group interviews.* For the purpose of measuring the impact of the dual-language American government content class, specially created at the U.S. school, the American students were separated into two focus groups and interviewed at the end of the project. Both the interviews, with the Spanish Heritage Language (HL) learners’ focus group and the L1 English speaking students’ focus group, contained questions regarding the telecollaboration project (Appendix F). As part of a Fulbright Alumni Grant, I was able to visit the Mexican high school and spend two weeks interacting with the Mexican students. My teacher-researcher observations and the content from an interview (Appendix G) with all of the Mexican student participants was analyzed for patterns matching the above discussed constructs on L2 identity, project success, and target language and culture learning.

*Teacher-researcher journal observations and journal entries.* Finally, the above data were triangulated with my own teacher-researcher daily observations and journal entries.

Table 1. Multi-strategy research data types
### Types of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participant journal entries</td>
<td>• Simple forms of counting, e.g., occurrence of code-switching in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chat transcripts</td>
<td>email correspondence and chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Email correspondence</td>
<td>sessions composed per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American students anonymous online surveys</td>
<td>group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mexican students anonymous online survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American Spanish Heritage Language learners focus group interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American L1 English speakers focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mexican EFL students focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher-researcher observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simple forms of counting, e.g., occurrence of code-switching in email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correspondence and chat sessions composed per classroom group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Profile of Participants and Setting

In order to respect and protect the privacy of the participants, all proper names-institutional as well as personal-have been changed. The networked American-Mexican learning community reported on in this study consisted of a high school dual-language immersion American government/civics class (specially created for this research study) at the Southwest College Readiness Institute of Inquiry Based Education (SCRI²BE), a charter school in the Southwest of the United States and a high school, advanced level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class at the Colegio Cima de Triunfo (CCT), a wealthy, private high school in the Central Pacific coast of Mexico.

Embedded within this networked learning community were 21 American and 20 Mexican high school students. Even though the Mexican class was comprised of all advanced EFL students and the L1 English speakers at SCRI²BE were all incipient Spanish language learners, it would be too simplistic to describe this project as having a linguistic imbalance. The linguistic diversity of the SCRI²BE classroom, with 11 Spanish HL learners (all falling on a wide continuum of social and academic Spanish proficiency) and nine L1 English speakers, with very little Spanish as Foreign language class.
experience and no previous experience learning content in Spanish, made for a rich and complex telecollaboration experience for both classrooms, one where the calculated pedagogical intervention of purposeful CS served a needed role.

**Pedagogical Procedure**

Phase 1 consisted of six weeks of asynchronous email exchanges via a Google Group called “*Atravesando (Crossing) Borders*”. Both classrooms visited their school’s computer labs on Thursdays each week, but due to a difference in time zones and class scheduling, the exchanges were separated by several hours with usually the CCT class posting first. The asynchronous themes were designed in collaboration between the two teachers, with input from the students, in order to develop critical thinking among the students with the goal of dispelling myths regarding each other’s country and culture and to question both local and intercultural language/race ideologies. The themes spanned from students re-writing the narrative of how their country may be viewed internationally to comparing and contrasting their governments and constitutions and critically analyzing their linguistic landscapes. Image 1 below shows a post from an L1 English-speaking student in the U.S. to his Mexican counterpart and is a typical example of the kinds of critical language awareness discussions that arose from the linguistic landscape theme. Image 1: Analysis of Spanish language street signs in the U.S.
We can observe in this post that the student shares both languages, switching between phatic language and referential language, and is able to bilingually take on an important topic regarding wealth and stereotypes in his local context. Other students, both in the U.S. and in Mexico made connections and drew conclusions regarding the use of other languages in wealthy neighborhoods and how the linguistic landscape can have subliminal influences on language ideologies regarding status, racism, disparate classroom language of instruction policies, and educational and life opportunities. A
description of all seven asynchronous themes from Phase 1 can be found below in Table 2.

Phase 1 lasted seven weeks, with one week without exchanges due to Semana Santa (Holy Week) break in Mexico. There were in total 141 asynchronous Google Group exchanges during Phase 1 (SCRI^2BE = 99; CCT = 42). A greater number of posts from the American students can be explained in part by having one more student than the Mexican class and because the American students wrote more “checking in” posts during Spring Break. The American students, who were instructed in the FACE model, followed the model by code-switching in the majority of their posts at the phatic-referential switch of each exchange. The Mexican students also received pre-project instruction in the importance of sharing languages, and as a result code-switched in the majority of their posts. Total number of code-switching by classroom is provided below in the Findings section (Table 4).

Table 2. Phase 1 asynchronous Google Group telecollaboration themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange Theme</th>
<th>Theme Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>“We are so much more than…” Posts meant to contrast what others might think about the students’ country with what they know about their own country. Prior to writing their posts, students read Carl Sandburg’s (1916/1992) “Chicago” poem as an example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Curious messages in our linguistic landscape Students walked around their neighborhoods and took pictures of street signs and billboards in other languages. American students wrote about “mock Spanish” in Tucson (Hill, 1995) and Mexican students wrote about the bilingual signs in tourist zones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Educational system Students compared and contrasted their country’s educational system and wrote how they would develop a student-based curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Our Constitution Students compared and contrasted their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 5
Spring Break check-in
Posts meant to maintain phatic communication.

Week 6
No theme/No exchanges- Holy Week

Week 7
Interactions with tourists/transnational consumers
Students related their own experiences interacting with tourists and immigrants. They shared their opinions about foreigners in their countries and how they interacted with them.

Phase 2 was made up of one live-chat session during the eighth week of the project. The Mexican class received permission to meet at a different time in order to interact synchronously with the American students. It was predetermined by the teachers, with input by the students, that the theme of the chat session would be the same as the first asynchronous exchange theme, “We are so much more than….” In total there were 149 chat exchanges during a 35-minute session (SCRI²BE = 82; CCT = 67).

Phase 3 consisted on one video conferencing session via Skype. Again, the Mexican class re-configure their schedule in order to hold the live Skype session. Prior to the Skype session, each teacher, in collaboration with his or her students, identified five possible questions (Table 3) to be used during the videoconference.

Table 3. Skype session questions by classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCRI²BE (U.S.)</th>
<th>CCT (Mexico)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you like to do for fun?</td>
<td>1. Which career would you like to pursue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is your school really like?</td>
<td>2. Now that this Intercultural-interaction project is coming to an end, how has your perspective changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you wear uniforms, what is your schedule, what does your school look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you think about immigration? Immigration into Mexico from Central America, immigration from Mexico into the U.S.?</td>
<td>3. What do you think about the misconception that all Mexicans are lazy and wear a big sombrero?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you know anyone personally who has immigrated to the U.S.?</td>
<td>4. What is your opinion about people who discriminate Latinos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you know anyone who has grown up in the US, but was deported to Mexico and now</td>
<td>5. Which is the reason why you call yourselves Americans?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As is notable in the table above, students’ questions contained a combination of phatic content regarding hobbies and future goals and much more critical referential/theme-based questions regarding racism and immigration that showed, among other things, U.S. based students’ interest in controversies surrounding immigration and immigrant status and Mexican students’ awareness of the stereotypical discourses about Mexicans that circulate in the U.S., as well as both sets of students’ interest in discussing related, controversial topics with one another. The critical nature of these questions also speaks to the comfort level that the students had with their partners at this final stage in the telecollaboration project and that they felt that they could ask these hard questions. Students’ comments below point to how CS gave the students a sense of being on an equal footing with their partners.

In the session itself, the two teachers decided not to place rigid guidelines for language use during the Skype session, but encouraged the students to take turns speaking Spanish and English. This was accomplished by rotating through project partners who sat in front of the main computer that was connected to a projector. Each partner asked one question and the classes as a whole provided bilingual support to their spokesperson in answering the question.

Below I relate the findings of the study, by phase and mode of interaction. Quantitatively I report the number of CS from an analysis of all the project’s asynchronous and synchronous exchanges and report the percentages of participants’ perceptions regarding the success of the project and on their interpretations of language learning and intercultural development. Qualitatively, I draw on responses from the anonymous online surveys, semi-structured focus-group interviews, journal entries, an analysis of all of the archived Google Group asynchronous email exchanges and
synchronous chat posts, and my own teacher-researcher observations to report on participant and my own perceptions regarding the project’s success, target language and intercultural competency development, identity formation as proficient bilinguals, and the role of purposeful code-switching in all of these aspects.

**Findings**

**Code-switching in the Asynchronous & Synchronous Exchanges**

Pedagogical instruction on how and where to CS in the telecollaboration exchanges was provided to each class before the beginning of the project and then simple reminders were given as the project progressed. Beyond this instruction and encouragement, however, the participants had complete autonomy on how to construct their emails and chat posts and students demonstrated a high percentage of overall CS, they did not CS on every exchange. Tables 4 & 5 below show the total number of CS by classroom and the language of the non-CS asynchronous and synchronous exchanges.

The American students CS more than the Mexican students during Phase 1, the asynchronous exchanges of emails, with a total of 72% (71/99) of their exchanges containing some CS, compared to 67% (28/42) of the Mexican students’ emails containing some CS. When the American students did not CS, they favored Spanish as the sole language of the email in direct contrast to the Mexican students who almost completely favored English as the language of non-CS emails. Perhaps one of the most fascinating findings of these non-CS emails was that 100% of the non-CS emails written by the Mexican students (13) were direct response to all Spanish language written emails, published first by their American counterparts. Both the Mexican and American students were more likely to CS in response to an email containing CS from their partner and were more likely to respond to an email written solely in their L1 with their own email constructed solely in their L2.
Table 4. Code-switching by country in asynchronous discussion board exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Posts with CS</th>
<th>All English Posts</th>
<th>All Spanish Posts</th>
<th>Total # of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCRI²BE (U.S.)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT (Mexico)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants also demonstrated CS during Phase 2, the synchronous chat session, although they did not CS with the same high frequency as shown in Phase 1. This, perhaps, is not that surprising considering that asynchronous email exchanges afford students more time to think about what they are going to write and more time to construct bilingual emails. Whereas, in synchronous chats students are more likely to get caught up in the immediacy of the conversation and content and think less about the bilingual structure of their posts. During the chat session, the Mexican students CS with far more greater frequency than their American partners, with 46% (31/67) of their chat posts containing some CS, compared to just 23% (19/82) of the American students’ posts containing some CS. Considering the immediate demands to produce written language during a chat session, these findings suggest that the Mexican students were more proficient and comfortable writing in their L2 than the American students. This is indeed supported by looking at the language of the Mexican students’ non-CS chat posts. Of the 36 non-CS chats posted by the Mexican students, 32 (89%) were written solely in English.

The language of the American students’ non-CS chats was more balanced with 36 (57%) all in English and 27 (42%) written all in Spanish. The chat session was quite difficult for the L1 English speaking students at SCRI²BE, who were beginning Spanish language learners. Some acknowledged that it would be difficult, but that they could copy certain linguistic aspects (phrases and words) of their partners’ chats and learn more that way. In an anonymous online survey response one American student wrote, “it was fun to write to them but i don't really know how to write in Spanish but i was learning by
doing the cmc [computer mediated communication].” In the same anonymous online survey another American student related that “I feel I at least know some basic terms because I’ve been able to copy my partners dialogue.” The chat session brought the issue of the Mexican students being more proficient in their L2 to the forefront as evidenced by the following anonymous online survey response by an American student,

“Yes there has been a lot of code switching, and I think this is because they are doing a lot of English learning and are really good at code-switching. I feel like my partner did a lot better than me and I regret that I don't know more spanish to be able to better share languages.”

There is a sentiment of lament in this response by the American student in realizing that she/he is not able to share languages as much through using more Spanish, but also a sense that she is not as able to position herself as much as her partner as a proficient bilingual. There also is an unwritten sense that CS has sheltered her somewhat from being completely positioned as linguistically inferior with her partner.

Chatting synchronously in Spanish was also a challenge for some of the Spanish HL learners at SCRI²BE. As stated above, these students possess a large variety of proficiency in spoken social and academic Spanish, but most struggle with writing and reading in Spanish. This idea of using CS to position oneself as proficient L2 users comes out in a journal entry written by Joey, a freshman HL learner at SCRI²BE, who expressed in the focus group interview that his Spanish language abilities, prior to this class, had almost all faded away. In answering a journal prompt asking students to think about how they will interact in the following day’s chat session, Joey writes,

“My strategy for tomorrow is code-switch as frequent as often. I don’t know many words in Spanish aside from what I have learned in class, so I’m going to representar any words I know en español in Spanish so that way yo can minimally get an understanding of how to code-switch on a more advanced level.”
We can see from the italicized Spanish words in Joey’s journal entry that Joey was using his journal prompt to practice CS for the next day’s chat session.

Table 5. Code-switching by country in synchronous live chat exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Posts with CS</th>
<th>All English Posts</th>
<th>All Spanish Posts</th>
<th>Total # of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCRI BE (U.S.)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT (Mexico)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code-switching in the Skype Session**

Phase 3, the Skype session, was by far the most popular mode of interaction among the participants. All of the Mexican students and American students in their separate focus group interviews stated that they liked the Skype session the most, that there should be more Skype sessions in future projects, but that it was very difficult. In the Mexican post-study interview, a female student, Sandra, related that Skype was the best because “You can see their reactions...you can see what the person is thinking and you can see their expressions.” In the same interview, a male student, Tomás, conjectured that it depends on what you want to practice, between writing or speaking, remarking “In chat you can correct your mistakes, but on Skype you feel nervous awkward.” In my own observations, I noted that this nervousness felt by the students and the awkward feeling, caused in part by frequent freezing of the screen and background noise impeding the students hearing each other, made the sharing of languages much more difficult. The Mexican students were capable of using both languages to ask and answer questions and although several L1 English speaking American students attempted to use Spanish during Skype, a Spanish HL learner classmate had to clarify in all cases and repair broken dialogues.

The Skype session, although popular with the students, did unmask the real language proficiencies that CS in asynchronous and synchronous written exchanges worked to create, and thus was a larger threat to the positive face (Brown & Levinson,
1987) of the L1 English speaking students from SCRI²BE. The fact that this imbalance of L2 proficiencies and threat to the L1 English speakers’ identities as Spanish language learners did not come up as a main topic in either the focus group interview or the final online anonymous survey, could be explained by the impact of situating the Skype session as the final phase of the project. I posit that prominence placed on developing interpersonal relationships through consistent adherence to the FACE approach, code-switching at phatic-referential switches during the first two phases, may have worked to create positive relationships between partners that were strong enough to weather the awkward, face-to-face interaction via Skype. Pamela, a freshman female student at SCRI²BE, supported this idea by claiming in the L1 English speaking focus group that she developed a close relationship with her partner because her partner would write a lot in both languages and that this made her feel good about trying to some write in Spanish, knowing that her partner would respond in a similar way. Pamela, who attempted a few words in Spanish during the Skype session, went on to say in the interview that “Yeah, my partner, I just saw on Skype and she had to go real quick, but I was like ‘hey I’m your partner and she was like ‘OH!!’ and we got to know each other like what she likes, like music and food.” This sentiment of finally seeing their partners’ face was expressed by many participants from both classrooms during interviews and online surveys, and it seems that the ability to put a face to the relationship that they built over the previous eight weeks outweighed any negative threat of positioning each other as either more or less proficient. Any positioning that took place did not appear to negatively impact the students’ perceptions regarding the success of the project.

On the Success of the Project & Maintenance of Positive Intercultural Relationships

Findings from all sources of data collection indicate that the participants saw this project as a success and wished for it to continue into the next school year. According to
the responses to the formative and summative anonymous online surveys, after two weeks into the project, 79% of the American students evaluated the project as either “very” or “somewhat successful”, with the other 21% indicating that the project was “neither successful nor unsuccessful”. At the end of the project 88% of the American students rated the project as either “very or somewhat successful”, with the other 12% reporting that they saw the project as ‘neither successful nor unsuccessful’. The Mexican students also assessed the project in favorable terms. In a post-project anonymous online survey, 71% of the students felt the project was “very successful” and the remaining 29% reported that the project was “somewhat a success”.

The above participant assessments of project success come from questions on the online anonymous surveys where participants were asked in general terms to rate the success of the project. More specific findings regarding project success linked to language learning, learning about partners’ culture, and the formation of friendships arose in the focus group interviews and in student journal entries. In the post-project class interview in Mexico, Mateo, a male student at CCT described the success of the project in terms of intercultural understanding and referring to the telecollaboration theme ‘We are so much than…’, stating “We learned from other cultures and they really learned about our culture.” During the same group interview, Liliana, a female student at CCT, registered her feelings that the project was a success saying, “It makes us more confident and comfortable talking in English.” The idea of being more confident and motivated to use the target language was also expressed by American students, as well, as a marker of the project’s success. José, a senior Spanish HL learner at SCRI2BE expresses his satisfaction with the project in the following journal entry,

“I though that today’s CMC [computer mediated communication] was very fun getting to see what others thought of Mexico and what they felt their stereotypes were. I also realized that I should start trying to read Spanish more than I have
and I enjoy this as a chance to get to do it more often, plus writing in Spanish also feels good.”

An inference that might be drawn from these comments is that purposeful CS could provide a safe and comfortable structure for trying to communicate in one’s L2. Below I share student voices regarding specifically their experience using two languages in the project and how this impacted their learning.

**The Impact of CS on Target Language Learning**

The terms ‘phatic’ and ‘code-switching’ were new terms to all of the students at the beginning of this project. It was important to discuss students’ prior life experiences with using two languages and to begin to dispel the myths that CS is somehow a ‘mixed-up’ or ‘confused’ way of communicating. This had a positive impact on all students, but it specifically emboldened the Spanish HL learners (SHLL) at SCRI²BE, who reported having been made fun of for what others called their ‘bad Spanglish’. Armed with a positive view of CS, students throughout the project acknowledged CS as a tool for successful communication and a bridge towards improving their L2 development. Joey, a Spanish HL learner at SCRI²BE commented the following in a journal entry, “I think that it will be a new approach to a language that I have struggled with for 16 years. I think that code-switching will help me see which context to use Spanish words in.”

Several comments posted to the final anonymous online survey by the American students support CS as a tool for language learning. The following is a partial list of comments regarding language learning as CS.

“I feel that code switching has positively impacted me in using both English and Spanish.”

“I feel like when it does happen it really does help my brain feel more active in the process.”

“I believe the code switching is good because I get to hear 2 languages.”
“It’s easier to go between languages”

“It has allowed me to learn the same or similar content in different languages which I feel just helps my brain activity.

“I have learned to do the casual talking in Spanish and this will help me use it in everyday life like talking to family who doesn't speak English.”

“I like code switching. It relieves the pressure of being correct in every word of Spanish that I speak.”

“Melding two languages together, when I already know one language well, is really helpful, at least.”

The Mexican students also commented on how CS facilitated the success of their overall communication in the project. One student posted on the anonymous online survey that “la verdad me gusto mucho eso porque si no sabíamos como expresar una palabra en ingles o una frase lo podíamos decir en español.” (“The truth is, I really liked that [using two languages] because if we didn’t know how to express a word in English or phrase, we could say it in Spanish”). Another Mexican student expressed a similar sentiment on the same survey, stating “Me pareció muy bien, porque teniamos que hablar en los dos idiomas seguido, lo cual ayudó a sentirnos más confiados y seguros.” (“It seemed very good, because we had to talk in both languages together, it helped us feel more confident and self-assured”). It is specifically this feeling of self-assurance and confidence that educators want to have their students experience while learning, in hopes that they will develop positive identities as emerging bilinguals and what to continue learning and using their L2.

I now turn to the students’ voices regarding how interacting bilingually, through CS, helped them negotiate their online identities and address the first research question: To what extent does purposeful code-switching (CS) and the attention to phatic/referential switches in a transnational telecollaboration project facilitate students’
ability to communicate in their second language (L2) and position themselves with identities as competent L2 users?

**Self and Group Positioning with Bilingual Identities**

Marcos, a 17 year old male student at SCRI²BE, summed up well the potential positive impact that CS might have for learners’ identity formation in the Spanish HL focus group interview stating, "people see you differently if you just speak English or you just speak Spanish or you speak both. And I feel like everyone categorizes, naturally people categorize each other, so doing that [CS] it’s like they see you differently, then they know that you speak Spanish and English." For the American students learning for the first time, this project and their relationships with their advanced EFL partners in Mexico, at times was very difficult. Several students mentioned that they felt dumb because they could not write with the same amount of depth and intellect in Spanish as they could in English. However, I posit that the simple fact that the FACE approach encouraged these students to write in Spanish on every post, kept these students from falling into the self-imposed or partner-imposed positioning as a less proficient L2 user, which past studies have shown leads to withdrawal, lower motivation, less L2 practice, and negative attitudes regarding the learning of another language (Belz, 2002; Müller-Hartmann, 2000a; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013). To lend support to this claim, Pamela, an L1 English speaking student from SCRI²BE who frequently CS during the project, acknowledged in a journal entry that “It [CS] positioned me as an L2 user because I have never written both languages in an email before and it felt cool to wright it like that.

If CS aided in students claiming positive social identities, what impact might it have had on the overall success of the project, which so often is indicated by the kinds of relationships formed between partners. I will now look at the findings to address the second research question: To what extent do students perceive that purposeful CS aids in
creating and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with their telecollaboration partners?

Positive and Respectful Relationships for Project Success

It is important to include a brief observation about the cultural differences of communication that I have witnessed, which may influence learners’ amount and tendency to use phatic language, if no pedagogical intervention were implemented. Many Spanish speakers, at varying levels depending on country and region, place an importance on creating a personal relationship before getting to the ‘business’ of a dialogue (Fant & Grindsted, 1995; Grindsted, 1994, 1995; Placencia, 1998, 2005). Androutsopoulos (2013) has shown that “…CMC interlocutors use code-switching, style shifting, and other manipulations of written signs in order to accomplish pragmatic work that would be accomplished by phonological variation, prosody, gaze, posture, and other cues in ordinary spoken conversation” (p. 670). The social alignment, accomplished by giving time to phatic communication through CS may have created relationships in this telecollaboration project based on deeper engagement in getting to know the project partners. In an anonymous online survey, a Mexican student suggested as much, by writing,

“The fact that most of the students did have a mixture of languages and we also put forth the effort to do so in order to aid in their learning as well. Along with the fact that I felt everyone put in an effort to share things of interest when writing to their partner.”

After just two weeks into the project, an American student responded to the online survey with the following explanation why he/she thought the project was at that point a success.

“The depth of the posts, the use of both languages, and the high level of phatic communication used to create relationships.”
Finally, below I take a look at how CS might positively impact the two goals of telecollaboration projects; that students develop both linguistic and intercultural competencies (Belz, 2005; Belz & Thorne, 2006). In doing so, I address the third research question: In what ways might students perceive that this purposeful CS facilitated their increased intercultural competency development, deepened their understanding of their partners’ culture, and facilitated their L2 learning and practice?

**Target Language and Culture Learning**

Telecollaboration projects are seen as an essential 21st century practice for expanding learners’ knowledge of and interaction with L1 speakers of the target language, and for exposing students to authentic language use, such as the practice of CS (Thorne & Black, 2007). Students in both countries tended to perceive that this project energized their language learning and provided authentic language and ‘real’ cultural learning. Several American students self-reported on the anonymous online surveys that “I have always wanted to be a fluent Spanish speaker but I never want to put the time in. Now that it's part of a class, I feel more motivated to do so.”; “I learned that the stereotypes that I placed on Mexico and their way of life are not true and I'm glad I had the chance to know that their [sic] are limits and restrictions within their country.”; and “from my partner I learned new things about Mexico that they never show on the news.” This last quote is especially positive for the potential ‘real’ learning that can take place in successful telecollaboration projects, in light of the timeline of this course corresponding with the lead-up to the U.S. presidential election and all of the anti-immigrant (mostly Mexican) rhetoric that students were exposed to on the news.

The role that purposeful CS played on language and intercultural learning was not lost on the participants. A Mexican student punctuated this writing the following on an online survey, “La verdad que me agrado mucho el proyecto y siento que fue un exito
por que interactuamos con distinta gente e intercambiamos conocimientos de los dos idiomas” (“Truthfully, I really liked the project and felt that it was a success due to the fact that we interacted with people different from us and exchanged knowledge in both languages”). An American student showed gratitude for the purposeful CS with the following survey response, “We have the opportunity to write in English or Spanish every time we write, and my parents speak Spanish so I can practice with them.” These quotes lend support to the potential of purposeful CS as a pedagogical intervention that promotes ‘successful’ communication in transnational telecollaboration projects. The voices shared above and their perceptions of intercultural learning and relationship building offer harmony amidst the cacophony of stories about failed and missed communication traditionally reported on in the literature.

**Conclusion**

Questions of how much target language or the mother tongue to use in educational telecollaboration projects go beyond pedagogical decisions of language learning and practice and tap into issues of power, privilege, and identity. Past studies analyzing telecollaboration projects and online communication have shown that the privileging of one language in use and status, in turn positions the identities of the participants as either more or less proficient (Appel & Mullen, 2000; Belz, 2001, 2002; O’Dowd, 2005; Ware, 2005) and implicitly gives more prominence to the culture and the speakers of that language (Przymus, 2014). Duff (2012) points to “how interlocutors’ actions, perceptions, and *language use* serve to position language learners/users and their investments in particular ways…the focus is not just the ‘objective’ identities of individuals but how certain aspects of their identities are construed subjectively by others” (p. 8; see also Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Above, I have related a positive account of intercultural communication in a high
school Spanish-English telecollaboration project that stands in contrast to several seminal articles that focus somewhat on what educators might actually do to improve intercultural communication, but mostly on the dysfunctions that explain past ‘failed’ communicative interactions in telecollaboration projects (O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013; Ware, 2005). Indeed there have been calls for “calculated pedagogical interventions” for successful communication via telecollaboration (Belz, 2002, p. 75; see also Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001), but in describing the use and possible positive impact of the FACE approach, this study represents one of the first to put forth such a calculated pedagogical intervention.

Successfully communicating in next generation education demands that educators consider how online and ubiquitous mobile interactions afford learners to construct anonymous identities. This article points to the need for what we might call a Fourth Phase of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) (Przymus, 2014). The Fourth Phase extends the work of Warschauer’s (2000) “Third Stage” and Bax’s (2003) “Third Phase” in the evolution of CALL’s history in language teaching and takes into consideration how normalized, mobile use of CALL impacts social interactions and what implications this has for language teaching, language learning, and identity formation. In a web 2.0 environment, where users can contribute content and co-construct knowledge available on the internet, it is imperative that we take a critical look at how users negotiate their language use globally and what identities they develop both globally and locally (glocally) as a result of this interaction. Can CS online perhaps lead to CS offline and to a hybridity of identities mixing the global with the local? According to Warschauer (2005), the activities that students carry out with the tools of language use and choice, become transformational activities for students’ identity formation in new ways, through less traditional means for communicating and creating relationships, via computer mediated communication projects (p. 42).
This study is a call to action for educators to rethink language learning and practice in CALL. Code-switching in telecollaboration provides teachers and learners the opportunity to go beyond “static depictions of culture and monolithic target-language identities”, to the analysis of and participation with “quotidiana realities of multilingualism…and the multiplicity of meaning and identity” (Belz & Thorne, 2006, p. x). Through interacting with others online “we find out who we are and who we are making ourselves to be” (Kramsch, 2000, p. 83). Are our students different people with their fingers on a computer keyboard or when their thumbs are stroking and jabbing at the screen of a phone? Belz (2005) states “If one adopts a social semiotic perspective on language…in which ideology (attitudes, beliefs, values) is thought to be reflected in linguistic structure, then a close examination of the linguistic details of interaction is essential in order to gain insight into the attitudes encoded in that structure” (p. 7). As this telecollaboration project continues into its second year, I believe that CS is one such linguistic detail of interaction that deserves and will continue to receive much attention.
References


CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The three studies above show that by making multiple semiotic resources more salient in the minds of teachers and students, beyond the classroom in diverse interest-based communities of practice, in third spaces of hybrid language practices in the bilingual classroom, and through code-switching in transnational telecollaboration projects, pathways may be created for ELLs and all students to demonstrate agency and negotiate identity in and out of the classroom. Challenges to accessing these resources can come from traditional institutional roles of power at school, traditional monolingual perspectives regarding education in the U.S., and a lack of intercultural competence among teachers that may specifically cause a misunderstanding of ELLs’ semiotic resources.

A greater understanding of social semiotics can allow us to observe how gestures, gazes, silence, and utterances, among other modes all aid to fulfill the metafunctions of creating and exchanging knowledge, creating and maintaining relationships, and organizing and channeling these interactions in textual and verbal flows of multimodal discourse. In accessing multiple modes of discourse, ELLs can have more resources for preserving their stance and identities as competent users, rather than marginalized learners.

Through full understanding and access to the semiotic resources available at school ELLs can go beyond mere preservation of current identities to creating their imagined identities in and outside of schools. Below, participant voices from all three studies are shared in order to illustrate how the three innovative educational approaches within this dissertation facilitated youth demonstration of knowledge and identity formation.

Voices from All Three Studies
The ELL Ambassadors program, described in Chapter 2, provides culturally and linguistically diverse youth concrete opportunities to begin the process of repositioning themselves in their school environments through participation in interest-based communities of practice. Voluntary participation in school groups and clubs that match these students’ interests and prior experiences, affords them chances to challenge ascribed identities such as immigrants and language learners, and claim avowed identities as teammates and adolescents. In an interview with King A, a former participant in the ELL Ambassadors program, King A attributed his English language learning and feelings of acceptance at school to this chance to participate with other youth in school groups. “Being around kids, playing with them…I was able to hear and learn how they talk, and make friends”. King A excelled in school track and cross-country groups, exited English as a Second Language (ESL) services, graduated from high school, and attended college in the U.S.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation describes what happens when youth are given the chance to challenge monolingual paradigms of bilingual education and use Spanish and English together in hybrid language practices in the content classroom. This freedom to translanguaging at school was especially appreciated and valued by Spanish Heritage Language youth who were allowed to learn content and express their knowledge in their Heritage language of Spanish; a language that is not often valued for such at school. The following comments, provided on the anonymous online surveys, express these students’ appreciation of this opportunity and their recognition that this class positioned them in a favorable light at school for being bilinguals.

Classes like this, I think there should be more of them. Because there’s more than just one language and…not a lot of students know about classes like this and I think that it’s cool that students can use an open mind and learn new things. I mean like even for me I learned new things and I thought it was pretty cool to be
in the class.

“I’m pretty positive that the English first speaking students view me in a different way now, knowing that I speak both English and Spanish.”

The first language English speaking students also recognized the benefits of learning content immersed in two languages. The following comment taps into the understanding that learning in this fashion goes beyond simply learning content and language, but also has positive cognitive effects.

Like I know what the 27 amendments are and that the first 10 are the Bill of Rights, but it was just the fact that we were learning them in two languages at the same time. And I don’t know if there’s anything scientific to it, but I just felt that my brain was being more activated and I felt more engaged at the same time.

These same students participated in the connected transnational learning community described in Chapter 4. These students from the bilingual American Government class in the U.S. exchanged opinions and perspectives regarding media representations of their culture, controversial laws, and educational systems with students in an English as a Foreign Language classroom in Mexico. The focus of this study was to measure the impact of taking into consideration how discourse styles differ culturally and students in both classrooms were instructed to purposefully code-switch in every telecollaboration post as a means for sharing languages and building positive interactant relationships.

The student comments below, gathered during focus group interviews, both in the U.S. and Mexico, give insight into how the FACE pedagogical intervention of code-switching at the phatic-referential switches of each telecollaboration post (described above in Chapter 4) lowered students’ affective filters involved in communicating in their L2, opened-up spaces for critical inspection and reflection of each others’ cultures and
language use in their linguistic landscapes, and established relationships of shared respect. In the following comment, a student in Mexico shows how code-switching in every post creates a relationship where the partners are both linguistic experts and apprentices. “I was thinking, if he laughed, I would laugh too!”

In the following comment, a different student from the Mexican class questions why signs in the U.S. use both English and Spanish to say different things and how he views this as an example of racism.

They send me, in the linguistic landscapes, a photo of…un cartel (a sign), in English it said that the government is not responsible of anything with gangs and in Spanish it was like a warning, “we’re watching you!” and the next one was about the Mexicans are fine and another one was in the Hispanic zone of Tucson it said that there were many warnings and in the English zone it was diferente, ejemplos de racismo de una zona a otra. Era raro (examples of racism from one place to another. It was strange).

During the focus group interview the above comment was followed by the next comment which illustrates how much these students learned not only about the culture of their U.S. counterparts, but about their own culture as well.

“Es como todo con los inmigrantes de centro America, hay gente (It’s like with the immigrants from Central America, there are people), they help them. There are some persons on the border with Guatemala, they make some bread and they give it to them, but there are some people that kidnap them y hay racismo en todos lados (there is racism everywhere).

Finally, students in the U.S. demonstrated their own growth in intercultural competency and the following comment summarizes this well. “We are a place that looks at the beauty of people from other places and learns to incorporate them into our very young country to make it better as a whole. This class is a shining example of that
very statement”

**Implications: Conversations in the Field that this Work Speaks to and Can Contribute to**

The concept of shifting how educators talk about and view youth at schools, from language learners to language users, has gained some attention in recent decades (Duff, 2002, 2011, 2012; Duff & Talmy, 2011; Palumbo, 2015). Many more scholars have written about the importance of recognizing individuals’ full linguistic and cultural repertoires and validating their desired and imagined identities (Eckert, 2006; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Kramsch, 2002, 2009; Norton, 2000, 2013; Wenger, 1998). Chapter two of this dissertation adds to these conversations by detailing the structure and implementation of the ELL Ambassadors program and this program’s potential for acting as an exemplar for educators and policy makers at schools who wish to develop voluntary peer language socialization programs. The ELL Ambassador program stands as a concrete example of how educators can create trajectories for linguistically and culturally diverse youth at schools to use prior experiences, background knowledge, and interests to reposition themselves with their desired identities.

In the field of bilingual education, specifically revolving around dual-language instruction, researchers have written for many years about the monolingual paradigm prevalent in the United States’ educational system and how this paradigm acts to create monolingual islands of classrooms where languages and the speakers of those languages are starkly separated by content, time, and teachers (Christian et al., 2000; Cummins, 2005, 2008, 2014; de Jong & Bearse, 2011; Howard et al., 2003; Kibler et al., 2013; Montone & Loeb, 2000). This traditional view of separating languages in bilingual education both acts to privilege and promote monolingual instruction practices within bilingual programs and creates debilitating challenges for continuing dual-language
instruction programs into secondary level schooling, where scheduling and finding content certified, bilingual teachers becomes more difficult. Still more scholars have called for the creation of “third spaces” within bilingual classrooms, where youth can experiment with hybrid language practices and tap into their full linguistic and cultural knowledge by translanguaging in these third spaces (De Jong & Bearse, 2011; García & Wei, 2013; Hadi-Tabassum, 2006; Kbler et al., 2013; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012). The 2-1-L2 model, described in Chapter 3, contributes to this discussion by providing a concrete pedagogical model for creating third spaces in dual-language classrooms. The structure of the 2-1-L2 model facilitates cross-lingual transfer of content knowledge through two sections of language immersion, much like traditional dual-language program models, but includes these sections of immersion within every lesson. This addresses the concerns, raised specifically by Cummins (2005, 2008, 2014), that content instruction in bilingual programs, when separated by languages and teachers, is often delivered with too much time in between distinct classes for optimal cross-lingual transfer. The last section of the 2-1-L2 model builds in a third section for hybrid language practices and translanguaging at the end of each lesson. Building this into every lesson plan ensures that students will have the chance to experiment with their use of both languages for learning content every day.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation speaks to the vibrant discussion in the literature regarding ‘unsuccessful’, ‘failed’, or ‘missed’ communication in educational telecollaboration projects (Belz, 2002, 2005; O’Dowd, 2003, 2005; O’Dowd & Eberbach, 2004; O’Dowd & Ritter, 2013; Przymus, 2014; Ware, 2005; Ware & Kramsch, 2005). A diverse group of scholars have investigated how code-switching has been used online as a strategy that individuals employ in order to establish a desired identity as competent bilingual users, but to date have not specifically linked this communicative strategy to educational online communication, such as school-based telecollaboration projects.
Student voices represented in Chapter 4 and data from archived online posts indicate that a pedagogical intervention of purposeful code-switching in educational telecollaboration projects can provide students with an online linguistic strategy for positioning themselves as competent users of their second language while at the same time creating a structure of online exchanges that values the sharing of both first languages represented by the participants. These results indicate that the Functional Approach to Code-switching Electronically (FACE) framework for online intercultural communication, detailed in Chapter 4, can contribute to the literature on how to address the ‘unsuccessful’ or ‘failed’ communication rooted in not equitably sharing languages and the resulting practice of students positioning each other as more or less proficient users of their second language.

Finally, an overarching goal of this dissertation is to adumbrate how increased educator understanding of social semiotics can enrich the educational realities of linguistically and culturally diverse youth. Each study, in specific ways, provides an exemplar of how educators can look beyond English language proficiency as the sole means of demonstrating knowledge and identity at schools, to recognizing and encouraging multimodal representations of knowledge and identity in and beyond the classroom. Recently, researchers in the fields of social semiotics and multimodal critical discourse analysis have called for less of a focus on abstract structures of language use and more of a focus on the meaning making of concrete multimodal events in the classroom (Fairclough, 2011; Kress, 2011; Rogers, 2011). In order to accomplish this and make this practice accessible for classroom teachers, however, requires practical examples of recognizing daily multimodal meaning-making youth actions. The multimodal systemic functional linguistics (SFL) model described in Chapter 3 and included in Appendix C, has the potential for contributing to educators’ concrete...
understanding of how to recognize and validate multimodal representations of knowledge and identity at school. This model shows how students’ semiotic resources are aligned through textual metafunctions, such as code-switching, that fuse the ideational metafunction of co-constructing knowledge with the interpersonal metafunction of creating the bilingual and intercultural relationships that youth desire.

By extending the idea of discourse beyond language and incorporating all texts and semiotic modes, educators can better understand the power that social semiotics holds for accepting and extending invitations of agency; an agency for constructing the identities that our students and we desire. Through researching social semiotics in the three educational arenas represented in this dissertation, I have begun to explore how a multimodal model of SFL may have positive implications for teachers, who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, to begin to recognize and encourage student produced representations and how this could create trajectories at school for these youth to reposition themselves as competent language users.
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## APPENDIX A: A SAMPLE 2-1-L2 LESSON PLAN

Travesando Borders: Las influencias sobre los legisladores of Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30 minutes</th>
<th>45 minutos</th>
<th>30 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Un repaso de la primera parte</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Review of the 2nd part</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Key Vocabulary: veto, line item veto, sign, signature, lobbyist, lobbying</td>
<td>· Palabras clave: La Cámara, vetar (veto), veto punto por punto, firmar, firma, cabildero, cabildo</td>
<td>The influences of the legislative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build Background Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Presentación de contenido nuevo</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guided Practice/La Práctica Guiada</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Did you hear anything after our class yesterday about the Supreme Court case?</td>
<td><em>Conocimiento al fondo: p. 77</em></td>
<td>· Debate? Cabildo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Amigos, padres, maestros, los famosos, extranjeros, etc.</td>
<td>· Pueden practicar para la live chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Finish the legislative process:</td>
<td>1. Influencias en los legisladores</td>
<td>· For this Project grade: Show me something you have done to either write this bill, amend it, debate it, influence it, and pass it (other than just tu voto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Conference Committee sends an approved bill back to each house for final congressional approval</td>
<td>· Sus personalidades</td>
<td><strong>Metalinguistic Processing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Send to President</td>
<td>· Los asuntos mismos</td>
<td>· What did you do to understand the section in your L2 (English/Spanish) today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Sign it into law</td>
<td>· Miembros del personal del Congreso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Not do anything</td>
<td>2. Influencia de los votantes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Veto it</td>
<td>· Viajes a sus estados</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Indirect veto</td>
<td>· Revisar los mensajes de sus distritos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Work</strong></td>
<td>· Enviar cuestionarios</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· What parts of C.B. 1501 do you think Mr. Przymus might veto? What can you do?</td>
<td>· Usar encuestas de opinión</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Presentation:</strong></td>
<td>· Poner más atención a los empleados</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Share some examples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: PRE AND POST SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE TRANSCRIPTS LINKED REPORTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD MEASURES</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSCRIPT LENGTH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Utterances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Analysis Set (C&amp;I Verbal Utts)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Completed Words</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elapsed Time (minutes)</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYNTAX/MORPHOLOGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MLU in Words</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MLU in Morphemes</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEMANTICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Number Different Words</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Number Total Words</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Type Token Ratio</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBORDINATION INDEX</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[SI-0]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SI-1]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI Score</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Multimodal Systemic Functional Linguistics Framework Example

**Knowledge**
- Bilingual content
- Background knowledge
- Schemata/beliefs
- Shared goals/purposes
- Imagined goals, knowledge
- CMC intercultural competence
- Focus of communication
- Context of communication
- Interests, ideas

**Ideational "Field"**

**Interpersonal "Tenor"**
- Resources

**Textual "Mode"**

**Identity**
- Anonymous/Concrete/Imagined identities
- Relationships, friends
- Bilingualism/multilingualism
- Peer linguistic & content tutors
- Sensitivity, mood

**Use**
- identity texts
- Dual-Language Instruction
- Code-switching in CMC
- Word choice, Errors, strategies
- Third space creation, safe-houses
- Multimodalities (icons, space, gestures,
  Synchronous/Asynchronous
  Negotiation of meaning
  Interaction with mass media

APPENDIX D: AMERICAN STUDENTS’ ONLINE ANONYMOUS SURVEY
(QUESTIONS 1-5 PERTAINED TO NON-TELECOLLABORATION CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES)

6. How would you rate the overall success of the transnational CMC project thus far for language practice and intercultural learning?
   - Very successful
   - Somewhat successful
   - Neither successful nor unsuccessful
   - Somewhat unsuccessful
   - Very unsuccessful

7. What aspects of the CMC project make you rate its success this way?

8. To what extent do you feel that code-switching at the phatic-referential switch has positioned you as a competent L2 user? Please explain your answer.

9. How would you rate the relationship that you have with your Mexican CMC partner/s?
   - Very positive and respectful
   - Somewhat positive and respectful
   - Neither a positive nor negative
   - Somewhat negative and disrespectful
   - Very negative and disrespectful

10. Has your Mexican CMC partner code-switched in his/her original posts or replies? Why do you think this is so?

11. To what extent do you feel you have learned about the Mexican culture and had the opportunity to practice and learn new Spanish? Give example of each if possible.
APPENDIX E: MEXICAN STUDENTS’ ONLINE ANONYMOUS SURVEY

Cómo calificaría el éxito de este proyecto?
- Muy exitoso
- Mas o menos un éxito
- Ni un éxito ni un fracaso
- Un fracaso
- Una verdadera pesadilla

Favor de dar una explicación para tu respuesta a la primera pregunta.

Cómo calificaría tu relación/amistad con tu compañero de proyecto de los EEUU?
- Una muy buena relación/amistad
- Una relación/amistad positiva
- Ni una buena ni mala relación/amistad
- No tengo una relación/amistad con mi compañero
- Una relación negativa

Favor de proveer detalles o ejemplos para explicar tu respuesta arriba.

¿Qué pareció de la manera en que compartieron el uso de los dos idiomas durante el proyecto?

Cuáles estrategias usaste para compartir idiomas?

¿Qué sugerencias tienes para mejor este proyecto?
APPENDIX F: AMERICAN STUDENTS’ SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

L1 ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENTS FOCUS GROUP
1. Can you tell a story about a time when the freedom to code-switch or write and talk in two languages made an activity or task easier?
2. Do you feel like you assume a different identity when you use your second language or when you interact bilingually?
3. Can you share an experience where felt that writing your posts in two languages made it easier to communicate with the students from Mexico?
4. Do you feel that always sharing languages in your posts made you come off as a more proficient Spanish user?
5. Can you remember a time when a student in Mexico responded to one of your posts by using both languages? How did this make you feel?
6. Would you say that you use more Spanish or can use Spanish better than the Mexican students that you interacted with can use English? Or had you never thought about this before?
7. Do you think that you maintained a respectful relationship with your partner in Mexico? If so, do you think that sharing languages and using phatic communication helped this?
8. Can you recall a time when you improved your Spanish abilities and/or learned about the Mexican students’ culture as a result of this project?
9. What do you think was the best way for interacting with the Mexican students? Exchanging emails (not live), the live chat, or the Skype session? Please explain your answers?

SPANISH HL LEARNERS FOCUS GROUP
1. How many of you feel that your Spanish language abilities, prior to this class, were fading away? Can you recall a moment during this quarter when you felt like you were improving your speaking, writing, listening, or reading abilities in Spanish?
2. What do you think the impact of interacting with students in Mexico has been on your identity as a bilingual? Do you feel like you assume a different identity when you use your second language or when you interact bilingually?
3. Do you think that you maintained a respectful relationship with your partner in Mexico? If so, do you think that sharing languages and using phatic communication helped this?
4. How much new information did you learn about the Mexican students’ culture as a result of this project?
5. What do you think was the best way for interacting with the Mexican students? Exchanging emails (not live), the live chat, or the Skype session? Please explain your answers?
APPENDIX G: MEXICAN STUDENTS’ WHOLE CLASS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. What did you like the most between the 3 ways of communicating? What was your favorite between the Skype, the live chat, and the interchange of emails and why?

2. That’s a good point. Did anyone like writing the emails for the ability to think a lot about what you were going to write, make revisions, corrections, research, and then send it off as a semi-perfect message?

3. What were your favorite things, topics to talk about?

4. Speaking of languages, and using both languages, what did you think about that? What did you think about, well, how many of you, just a raise of hands, how many of you used both Spanish and English when you wrote in the project?

5. Did you partner in use both languages?

6. What did you think about that use of both languages? What were your impressions or opinions about that interaction?

7. So, um, I guess it’s good to make mistakes and laugh about it, but did any of you feel like your partner made fun of your mistakes?

8. P: So, what did you think of your partner’s language?

9. Do you think your partner used too much English or too much Spanish?

10. Did you use Google Translate?

11. Were any of you offended by anything that your partner wrote? Surprised?

12. Do you think you learned English?

13. Was the English that my students used different in any way, new phrases you hadn’t seen before, that you were able to kind of copy and are you using those phrases now?

14. Was the Spanish different?

15. Do you feel like this project was successful? How?

16. Do you feel like you kept a good relationship with the person that you communicated with? Why?