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SECOND GRADE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ANALYSIS OF RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE SKILLS ON THE NYSESLAT

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SECOND GRADE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
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ABSTRACT

SECOND GRADE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH

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Jasmin Varela

The future success of today's students and our nation depends on how well prepared our

students are to contribute to the globalized world of the 21st century. The population of

English Language Learners (ELLs) is exploding in the United States. If students are not

given the appropriate language scaffolds to learn English, ELLs will struggle

academically, finding themselves ill-prepared for success in the workplace and their roles

as active civic participants. This quantitative study focused on three cohorts ($n = 25$ each)

of randomly selected second grade students enrolled in Dual Language Program,

Transitional Bilingual Education Program, or English as a New Language programs in

New York City in the 2018-2019 school year. It explored the differences in academic

achievement across these three program types, as measured by the NYSESLAT. It also

explored the differences in English language skills—receptive skills (i.e., listening and

reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing). The study did not find

statistically significant differences across these three program types. It found more

differences within group that between groups. This raises interesting and important

questions for future research. Is it possible that the NYSESLAT does not capture subtle

differences between programs? What is the role of variation in the student population

across these program types? What is the role of variation in the teachers and teaching

styles across these program types?

DEDICATION

To all the culturally and linguistically diverse children of New York who embody the grit, resilience, and courage needed to be change agents of the world.

This research and dissertation on English language learners is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Hector Varela Quintero, who learned English during adulthood, and served as a powerful role model for my sisters and me. You sparked in me the leadership to learn, teach, and lead. I love you forever.

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To my husband, Marbi, thank you for your enduring love and patience. To Toby, thank you for bringing so much happiness into this world and for reminding me of how important it is to pause and appreciate the small moments in life.

A special thank you to my closest friends and extended family.

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CHAPTER 1

According to the Pew Research Center, the Hispanic population in the U.S. has grown 23.0% in the past decade, reaching 62.1 million people in 2020, or 18.8% of the total U.S. population (Passel et al., 2022). However, this growth has been uneven, with growth of 50.0% or more in a third of counties with 1,000 or more Hispanics, measured by the 2020 census (Passel et al., 2022). Furthermore, according to a Pew report to the U.S. Congress, only 62.0% of Hispanics speak English or are bilingual (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). Learning English for children being raised in 38.0% of Hispanic homes that speak only Spanish thus becomes imperative if these children are to reach productive adulthood and reach their full potential.

Passel et al. (2022) note that "the vast majority" of counties with large growth in their Hispanic population are smaller counties that are not in "what have historically been Hispanic population centers." This suggests that many counties and their school systems are grappling for the first time with an influx of Spanish speaking residents. Additionally, Passel et al. (2022) report that "20 counties with the largest numerical growth in population are home to more than a third of the nation's Hispanics (22.2 million)." While some of these counties may historically have had a significant Hispanic population (e.g., New York City and Los Angeles County), educational leaders must find ways to effectively educate a much greater and growing number of Spanish-speaking students.

Predictably, a higher percentage of public-school students in lower grades in Fall 2017 were labeled ELL compared to students in upper grades. The Condition of Education 2020 (NCES, 2020b) reported that 15.9% of kindergarteners were ELLs students, compared to 8.6% of 6th-graders, 7.0% of 8th-graders, and 4.6% of 12th-

graders (NCES, 2020b, p. 38). The report notes that "this pattern was driven, in part, by students who are identified as ELLs when they enter elementary school but obtain English language proficiency before reaching the upper grades" (NCES, 2020b, p. 38). Numerous studies show that early childhood literacy builds a critical foundation for later learning, educational attainment, and health and wellbeing (Kern & Friedman, 2009; Kim & Morrison, 2018). This highlights the importance of quality English language education for ELLs.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2022b) reports that in Fall 2019, 10.4%, or 5.1 million public school students, were English Language Learners (ELLs); percentages ranged from 0.8% in West Virginia to 19.6% in Texas. According to NCES (2020b), "Spanish was the home language of 3.7 million ELL students in 2014-15, representing 77.1 percent of all ELL students and 7.6 percent of all public K-12 students" (p. 108). And, yet there has not been major Federal legislation specifically addressing the needs of these students since the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1967, when the population of Hispanics in the U.S. was only 4.7% of the total U.S. population (Funk & Lopez, 2022).

The lack of attention to Hispanic ELLs is reflected in high school graduation rates; only 82.0% of Hispanic public high school students graduated compared to their Asian (93.0%) and White (89.0%) peers (NCES, 2021). Only 36.0% of Hispanic young adults, age 18 to 24, enrolled in college in 2018 compared to their Asian (59.0%) and White (42.0%) peers (NCES, 2022a). Education is key for reaching productive adulthood. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), educational attainment plays a significant role in both weekly wages and unemployment: no high

school degree ($626, 8.3%); high school degree ($809, 6.2%); Associate degree ($963, 4.6%); and bachelor's degree ($1334, 3.5%).

Additionally, students of color were disproportionately hurt by the global COVID-19 pandemic (Dorn et al., 2020; Mitchell, 2020; Reyes, 2020). Therefore, it has become more urgent than ever for elementary schools to focus on providing an effective education so that ELLs can succeed in school, work, and life. And nowhere is this truer than for New York City public schools.

School leaders in NYC and around the country working to better support ELLs may find this exceptionally challenging, especially if they work in one of the many counties experiencing rapidly changing demographic shifts that include a growing Hispanic population. Thus, it is essential to begin this research study with a brief exploration of language acquisition and the foundations of English language programs as well as clear definitions of said programs and ELLs.

Understanding English Language Learners and Instructional Models

In order to fully understand instructional models, it is critical to understand the nature of language acquisition and frameworks from which bilingualism is approached in public schools. Because this dissertation research is situated in New York City, it is important to understand the state policies, definitions, and testing that may be unique to New York State. Finally, models of English language instruction for ELLs are described.

Language Acquisition

Modalities refer to the components of learning a new language. These are reading, listening, speaking and writing. Proficiency in these modalities in New York State is measured by the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners

(NYSITELL) and/or the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

Language acquisition is both receptive and productive. Receptive language refers to the ability to understand and comprehend language that is heard or read. When language is received through listening and reading, it is necessary to decode it in order to understand what is being said or read. Productive Language includes speaking and writing skills. The speaker uses the language that they have acquired and produces a message through speech or written text that they want others to understand.

Dual Language Programs and Bilingualism

Dual Language programs seek to offer students from two different home language backgrounds and/or cultures opportunities to become bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural while improving their academic ability.

Dual language programs can be additive or subtractive. Additive bilingualism is a situation in which a second language is eventually added to a student's native language without replacing it. Subtractive bilingualism is a situation in which a second language eventually replaces a student's native language.

Dual language programs can be one-way or two-way, but both are designed to assist English-speaking students and ELLs to become bilingual (i.e., to gain the capacity to listen, read, speak and write fluently in two languages) and to obtain the same intercultural and academic competency as students who are English proficient. One-way dual language programs are primarily composed of students who come from the same home language and/or background. Instruction is provided in English and the new language simultaneously. Two-way dual language programs include both native English

speakers and ELLs. The teacher provides instruction in both languages. In the majority of

dual language programs, students receive half of their instruction in their home language

and the other half in English. Students learn by using all four communication skills, in

two languages, as they become linguistically and culturally diverse. English language

programs can also take place in a stand-alone classroom. In this model, ELLs receive

English language development instruction in a pull-out or push-in model in order to

acquire the English language proficiency needed to succeed in school. In New York

State, stand-alone classrooms are taught by a NYS certified ESL teacher or a certified

bilingual teacher in a bilingual program.

New York State Regulations for English Language Learners

English Language instruction and compliance in New York City operates under

the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Commissioner's Regulations Part

154 (CR Part 154), amended in 2014, govern services for ELLs, which districts and

schools, including New York City, must follow. CR Part 154 establishes norms for

school districts to ensure that ELLs are provided with educational opportunities to

achieve the same objectives that have been established for all students by the New York

State Board of Regents.

English as a New Language (ENL), also known as English as a Second Language

(ESL) as per CR Part 154, is a program model in which the language of instruction is

English; strategies to support language acquisition for ELLs are integrated across English

Language Arts (ELA) and content learning curriculum. ENL organizes language into

receptive (i.e., listening and reading) and productive (i.e., speaking and writing) language

functions.

English Language Learners (ELLs) under the amended CR Part 154 are defined as students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English. These students understand and speak little or no English; they score below the State designated level of proficiency on the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), which is administered at the time of a student's enrollment in the New York State public school system.

English language proficiency levels refer to the five levels of ELL performance in English: 1) Entering, 2) Emerging, 3) Transitioning, 4) Expanding, and 5) Commanding. These levels are determined by the results of the NYSITELL or the NYSESLAT. A student scoring at the Commanding level on the NYSITELL meets linguistic demands in English and is not identified as an ELL. A student scoring at the Commanding level on the NYSESLAT is no longer considered an ELL but must continue to receive support services for an additional two years.

The NYSESLAT is administered annually during the spring. It is designed to assess the English language proficiency of ELLs in grades K-12 and establishes their eligibility for ELL services for the following school year. The assessment is composed of 5 grade band levels, all of which assess the modalities of listening, reading, speaking and writing. In the elementary grades, the NYSESLAT is administered in the following bands; Kindergarten, Grade 1 and 2, and Grade 3 and 4. The test is aligned to the linguistic demands aligned to the grade-level Common Core instruction. The NYSESLAT serves as an exit assessment for ELLs.

English Language Learners in New York State

ELLs come from diverse family backgrounds. They may be considered an immigrant, a person who has migrated to the United States from another country, usually for permanent residency. Given U.S. immigration policy, these children and their families may be considered documented (i.e., they have legal standing to be in the U.S.) or undocumented (i.e., they do not have legal standing to be in the U.S.). A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another to find work; migrants may be U.S. citizens, documented immigrants, or undocumented immigrants.

ELLs themselves fall into diverse categories. In New York State, "newcomers" are students who have been in NYS schools for three years or less and have been identified as ELLs. "Developing ELLs" are students who have received ELL services for up to six years. "Long-term ELLs" are students who have received at least six years of ELL services but require additional ELL services and have not attained English proficiency; proficiency is measured by scoring at the "Commanding level" on the NYSESLAT.

There are two special categories of ELLs in New York State. Students with interrupted or inconsistent formal education enter school after second grade. They typically have had at least two years less schooling than their peers and they function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; they may be pre-literate in their first language.

Special Education ELLs are students who are working towards English language proficiency and also require an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP team

determines a student's eligibility for special education services and the language in which special education services are delivered.

Former ELLs are students who have successfully reached English language proficiency as measured by the NYSESLAT and exited out of ELL status. Although these students do not require ESL services, in New York State, schools must provide services to support language development and academic progress for two years after they exit ELL status.

Models for English Language Programs

Schools in NYC and across the United States offer English as a Second Language (ESL) also known as English as a New Language (ENL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Dual Language (DL) instructional models. Ovando and Combs (2018) argue that "what bilingual and ESL approaches have in common is the conviction that English language learners are most effectively taught when their home languages are used for instruction, or when the instruction they receive—even if provided in English only—incorporates strategies to aid language and academic acquisition" (p. 3). They suggest that bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs take slightly different forms based on the New York State regulations.

New York City public schools are home to 1.1 million students, many of whom are ELLs from around the world. The New York City public schools offer three models of education to support ELLs in language development and acquisition leading to master in English: two-way bilingual educational programs, transitional bilingual education programs, and dual language programs. When English Language Learners enter the public school system, parents and guardians receive an orientation regarding the language

programs offered in the various NYC public schools. Currently, all of the Dual Language

(DL) and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs in the district in this

randomized study were for Spanish-speaking students. While parent selection is part of

the orientation process, parents often opt-in to the program offered at their local school.

New York State requires all schools to offer English as a New Language (ENL) services.

These models are described below.

Transitional Bilingual Education Model

The objective of transitional bilingual education is to ensure students become

proficient English speakers. It has often been labeled as a deficit or subtractive model,

compared to the other language model.

In this one-way model, 90.0% of the school day in the initial immersion

experience is in the minority language (i.e., Spanish) in kindergarten and first grade;

teachers introduce literacy and mathematics (i.e., core content areas) in the minority

language and specific units of instruction in English as a Second Language. By second

and third grade, the majority language (i.e., English) is introduced into the curriculum for

a greater amount of time in accordance with the students' proficiency levels. A gradual

increase in the time spent using the majority language begins; by third grade and fourth

grade, the instructional curriculum is taught equally through both languages. This gradual

transition from Spanish to an all-English model of instruction ensures students reach and

access grade-level content as they gain English language proficiency.

There are several benefits to this model. First, this model is beneficial for the

English language minority students as a bilingual maintenance model. It emphasizes and

honors the students' primary language, towards literacy and academic development. For

the native English speaker, it offers a bilingual immersion program. Second, both groups of students are together throughout the instructional day and may, therefore, help each other as tutors. Third, research also shows a high achievement level for all groups of students participating in this program type, compared to only English programs (Ovando & Combs, 2018, p. 34).

However, this model also has pitfalls. The model is considered to be segregated; the priority of the model is for students to learn English so they can transition and be mainstreamed into grade-level classes. "Some researchers and vocal minority groups criticize transitional bilingual instruction as another means of perpetuating the status quo of the society, keeping language minority students in separate groups that are perceived as having low ability, thus maintaining their lower-class status" (Ovando & Combs, 2018, p. 36).

Dual Language Model

Dual language programs are most sought after by parents and families because ELLs preserve their native language (i.e., Spanish) while learning a non-native language. This model is considered an additive or enrichment bilingual model.

In the 50-50 Dual Language Model, half of the instructional time is in English, and the other half of the instructional day is in the minority language. Lessons are not repeated or translated in the second language, but concepts taught in one language are reinforced. "Two-way bilingual programs integrate language minority and language majority students in a school setting that promotes full bilingual proficiency and high academic achievement for both groups of students" (NYSED, 2023).

As noted in research on vocabulary development and real-time lexical comprehension, over the second year, monolingual Spanish and English learning toddlers identify referents of familiar words faster as they are presented in continuous speech. While theories that offer connections between first language (L_1) and second language (L_2) development vary, evidence supports the multiple ways in which narrative or L_1 maintenance can support L_2 development (Myers-Scotton, 2006). In fact, research demonstrates the academic advantage for students with two fully developed languages (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Lindhom-Leary & Block, 2010; Rojas & Reagan, 2003). When students who are native Spanish speakers have strong command of their native language (L_1), the L_1 aids in the transference that occurs from the Spanish language to the English language (L_2).

An example is the use of cognates, words that have a common etymological origin. Cognates are often inherited from a parent language but may also have been borrowed from other languages. In this case, cognates are English words which are easily identifiable by Spanish-speakers. For instance, "*especial*" and "*importante*," are easily identifiable by Spanish-speakers as "special" and "important" in English.

Purpose of Study

> *Each of us is here because, in one way or another, we share a commitment to language and to the power of language, and to the reclaiming of that language which has been made to work against us. In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation, and to recognize her role is vital within that transformation.* Audre Lorde, feminist and civil rights activist

Taking Audre Lorde's words to heart, our students' future success and the success of our nation depends on how well prepared our students are to contribute to our 21st

century globalized world. If students are not given the appropriate language scaffolds to learn the English language in context, ELLs will struggle academically, in the workplace, and in civic participation. Students need to be afforded multiple opportunities to recognize the power of language.

This quantitative dissertation research study focuses on second grade students who attended a Dual Language Program, Transitional Bilingual Education Program, or English as a New Language (ENL) program in New York City in the 2018-2019 school year.

The target population for this quantitative study was a cross-section of ELLs in second grade in a New York City public school in a large school district with 48 schools located on the western edge of the South Bronx, extending through the neighborhoods of Grand Concourse, Morrisania and Tremont, and Crotona Park and Yankee Stadium. This district has approximately 33,505 students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 8; at the time, English Language Learners represented 23.1% of the student population and 20.9% of students with disabilities. The district included 28 elementary schools, one PreK to Grade 8 and one K-8; the study sample thus included a total of 3 schools, with Grade 2. To participate in the study, schools had to have implemented either a Dual Language or Transitional Bilingual Education program in the 2018-2019 school year. The schools were randomly selected from 10 schools that offered a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program and 9 schools that offered a Dual Language (DL) program. All the elementary schools offered English as a New Language (ENL).

This study was generated primarily through quantitative data obtained from the 2018-2019 NYSESLAT (NYSED, 2019b). In this research, the focus was on a sample of

25 students per school. The first group represented twenty-five students from a school that offers Dual Language instruction, the second group represented twenty-five students from a school that offers a Transitional Bilingual Education program, and the third group represented twenty-five students from a school that only offers English as a New Language (ENL). While the study recognizes English as a New Language (ENL) programs, many other states refer to this program as English as a Second Language (ESL).

Significance of the Study

Like many large, diverse school districts, in NYC and especially in the Bronx, there has been a significant recent influx of Spanish speaking migrants and immigrants from Latin American countries such as Honduras, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic; their children enroll in and attend this school district. With 1.1 million public school students, NYC is not only a melting pot and the largest school district in the United States, but an incubator for testing educational innovations, especially as they pertain to closing the achievement gap. This school system was selected because many programs developed and tested in NYC public schools are disseminated and replicated across the country and around the world.

This specific population was selected because research indicates that improving academic success for second graders is paramount for narrowing the racial and ethnic achievement gap (Foster & Miller, 2007; Halvorsen et al., 2012). For the past five years, NYC public schools have offered Universal Literacy Coaches (i.e., additional instructional support) assigned to elementary schools to work with kindergarten through second-grade teachers. Universal Literacy Coaches implemented best practices to support

academic instruction in the Early Childhood grades. Furthermore, NYC has invested in a "pre-kindergarten for all" initiative, ensuring every three-year-old and four-year-old receives a full day of instruction. Previously most of the PreK programs were half days of instruction at select schools. As of the 2019-2020 school year, the program for three-year-old children was also rolled out across public schools in New York City.

A quantitative research study situated in one of the nation's largest, most innovative school systems (i.e., the New York City Department of Education), targeting a key grade level (i.e., second grade) for Spanish-speaking ELLs has tremendous potential to contribute to evidence-based research, practice, and policy.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical frameworks of Lev Vygotsky, Albert Bandura, and Paulo Freire guide this research. All three theorists position learning in a social environment; however, each views this social environment through a different lens. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development posits learning through support from more capable others. Albert Bandura's Self -Efficacy Theory and Social Cognitive Theory position learning as taking place not just through support but also through observation and vicarious experience. Freire stresses the importance of learning through relationship and dialogue, a two-way process. Each of these theoretical frameworks provides an important avenue for insight in exploring different instructional models for ELLs.

Lev Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development

The Social Constructivist Lev Vygotsky (1962) places emphasis on the social environment as a facilitator of development and learning. He contends that, unlike animals that only react to the environment, humans have the adaptive capacity to alter the

environment for their own purpose. Vygotsky's most controversial contention is that all higher mental functions for humans originate in the social environment. Vygotsky's theory supports the way ELLs learn— in social settings with peers and through hands-on activities, such as station teaching and nature walks, aligned to content areas and focused on the modalities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These types of activities foster the learning of new academic content and science vocabulary.

The key concept in Vygotsky's theory is the "Zone of Proximal Development," the space between what a learner can do independently (i.e., without assistance) and what they can do with guidance from an adult or in collaboration with more skilled peers. Vygotsky first introduced the ZPD as an approach to intelligence testing. He argued that if the tester looked not only at what the child could do independently, but also what the child could do with assistance, this would give more accurate information about what the child might be able to achieve in the future. Later, Vygotsky applied this idea to contexts of school and play, sometimes "specifying the necessary participation of more capable others" (e.g., parents, teachers) to support learning, but sometimes "allowing natural social interaction to take place" (Walqui & Lier, 2010, p. 16).

The language acquisition concept of scaffolding is an example of an entry point that allows the learner to access new learnings aligned to language and content. "The original contexts of scaffolding were mother-infant interactions and tutor-child problem-solving, and the most often quoted definitions of the ZPD refer to guidance from an adult or a more competent peer (Walqui & Lier, 2010, p. 28).

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

One of the major challenges to Vygotsky's behaviorism came from studies on observational learning conducted by Albert Bandura. A central finding of Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) was that people could learn new actions by observing others perform them (i.e., vicarious experience). Observers did not have to perform the actions at the time of learning and reinforcement was not necessary for learning to occur. By observing others, people acquire knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes (Schunk, 2016). Put another way, by observing others, ELLs can acquire knowledge, rules, skills, and strategies relevant to mastering English.

The reciprocal interactions among behaviors, environmental variables, and personal factors such as cognition apply to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura's early work shows that through observational learning or imitation and modeling, a person may be inclined to adapt this behavior as their own. The process of having a teacher or a peer model is an important instructional practice for ELLs, who rely heavily on visual and auditory cues as they learn a new language. The opportunity to understand "what the word sounds like" or "looks like" constitutes a student's initial attempt at learning the language.

Paulo Freire and Dialogue

Educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970) postulates a careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside of school, revealing its fundamentally narrative character. Whereas Vygotsky and Bandura argue for the influence of one-way vicarious learning, Freire (1970) argues that learning encompasses a co-constructive (i.e., two way) relationship between teacher and student. He postulates

that problem-solving education, as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as a fundamental that education must be "revolutionary" or dialogical (i.e., two way). "If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings" (Freire, 1970).

The connection between Freire's theory and this research centers on two fundamentals. The first is the banking metaphor for the relationship between the teacher, who is charged with "filling" the student with the narrating subject. Many Spanish-speaking ELLs enter the American school system with limited language development and proficiency; therefore, they struggle with the use of language to communicate effectively in academic settings. Often their use of social language in English is evident, yet their academic vocabulary is limited; this is reflected in their use of "Spanglish," a hybrid language that combines words and phrases in both Spanish and English. The teacher "fills" the student with English vocabulary, creating independent mastery experiences.

Second is Freire's emphasis on the power of words. Freire (1970) postulates that the teacher-student relationship must be co-intentional. "Teachers and students, co-intent on reality, are both subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of recreating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators" (p. 69). In other words, if ELLs are to leverage the power of words (i.e., build self-efficacy), they must learn to co-create the reality that brings them success (i.e., attain mastery).

Language as Social Justice

St. John's University (2022) operates in the Vincentian tradition of St. Vincent de Paul. Faculty, staff and students "seek to foster a world view and to further efforts toward global harmony and development by creating an atmosphere in which all may imbibe and embody the spirit of compassionate concern for others so characteristic of Vincent." Therefore, this dissertation research is grounded in a deep commitment to creating a world where all people thrive.

This researcher also unapologetically positions language as social justice. Language access is a civil right fundamental to academic, workplace, and life success as well as the opportunity to participate in the civic community. As a country of immigrants, we often neglect the contributions made in the United States by immigrant and migrant families and children. English Language Learners are under-represented in the United States, which has led many of these students to fall short of their full human potential. Districts and schools are increasingly placing a stronger emphasis on reversing academic trends of failure and disproportionality for these and other disadvantaged students; this is especially true for English Language Learners, who represent a rapidly expanding demographic.

This research contributes to teaching and learning best practices for the development and acquisition of the English language. This research also works to dismantle cultural and linguistic barriers that have been reinforced by systems and structures aligned to standard-based assessment practices. While assessments are leveraged in gauging how students are performing, research-based strategies and

interventions to support language modalities of listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, as powerful tools.

This research moves educational systems towards ensuring that all students achieve at the highest levels, while placing emphasis on this group of students, who require high levels of support in English language development and acquisition. This research will impact the lives of current and future students, and have implications for schools, districts, workplaces and communities across our nation.

Research Questions

Three research questions will guide this quantitative study on Early Childhood English Language Learners:

1. How does the Dual Language program and the Transitional Bilingual Education program support the language and literacy development and acquisition of second grade, Spanish-speaking, English Language Learners in the L_1 and L_2?

2. What instructional strategies help Early Childhood English Language Learners develop language and literacy proficiency, specifically, in receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing)?

3. What interventions support the academic success of Early Childhood English Language Learners?

Organization of the Study

The literature review in Chapter 2 examines how early childhood English Language Learners in pre-kindergarten through second grade develop vocabulary; it

explored the impact on oracy and literacy development for native speakers of Spanish in their development of English language proficiency. Chapter 2 also provides a thorough explanation of language programs: the Dual Language program and the Transitional Bilingual Education program.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology in detail. Chapter 4 presents the findings. Chapter 5 discusses the findings and makes recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

CHAPTER 2

The literature review centers on early childhood English Language Learners (ELLs) and their development of language and literacy in the primary language (L_1, Spanish) and the secondary language (L_2, English). It examines instructional strategies and interventions aligned to receptive skills (i.e., listening, reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking, writing). Chapter 2 also provides a thorough review of the instructional English language programs leveraged in New York State schools: 1) Dual Language, 2) Transitional Bilingual Education, and 3) English as a New Language. It explored the theoretical frameworks that guide English language development and acquisition.

Dual Language (DL) Programs

Dual Language (DL) programs can be either one-way or two-way depending on the student population. Two-way programs include approximately equal numbers of 1) students who are monolingual or dominant in English at the time of enrollment and 2) students who are monolingual or dominant in the L_2 language at the time of enrollment. There may also be students who have proficiency in both languages at the time of enrollment. Generally, to be considered a two-way program, no less than one third and no more than two thirds of the student population should be monolingual or dominant in either English or the L_2 at the time of enrollment.

One-way programs serve more linguistically homogeneous groups of students. One-way dual language programs are those in which all students are proficient in the L_2 but not in English at the time of enrollment; these are typically called developmental bilingual programs. They use both languages to teach content, helping students develop proficiency in English while maintaining and continuing to develop their skills in their L_1

language. One-way dual language programs whose students are all monolingual or dominant in English at the time of enrollment are generally known as foreign or world language immersion (Center, 2007, p. 3).

Research studies of bilingual and immersion students, supported by opinions of experts in the field of DL education, agree that a minimum of 50.0% of L_2 instruction is necessary to promote high levels of L_2 proficiency and academic achievement (Faulkner-Bond et al., 2012). Although studies have not specifically addressed the minimum level of English necessary, it appears that a minimum of 10.0% initial English instruction may be important to promote English language development for the non-native speakers of English in two-way programs. To develop a high level of academic English language proficiency among ELLs, content instruction in English should increase to about 50.0% by the late elementary school years (i.e., Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6). However, there is limited research that has determined the best ratio of English to the L_2 language in instruction. Thus, this decision should be made with respect to student outcomes, family and community needs, and in connection with the resources (teacher language proficiency and materials) available for providing instruction through the L_2 (Center, 2007, pp. 15-16).

DL programs offer students the opportunity to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural while improving their academic abilities. In the majority of DL programs, students receive half their instruction in their L_1 or home language, and the remainder of their instruction in the L_2 or target language, the language that they are learning. However, other time configurations exist. For example, in a 90.0% to 10.0% model, a greater

percentage of the instruction is in the L_1 decreasing over time until reaching 50-50 balance. They are offered both one-way and two-way.

In the one-way DL program model, students who come from the same L_1 or background have the opportunity to become bilingual or multilingual. The teacher or teachers provide instruction in both English and the L_1 simultaneously. The two-way DL program includes both native English speakers and ELLs. The teacher or teachers provide instruction in both English and the L_1. In the majority of DL Programs, the students receive half of their instruction in their L_1 and the remainder of their instruction in the L_2. Depending upon the model, the percentages of English to home language instruction will vary. For example, in a 90%-10% model, a greater percentage of the instruction is in the L_2, increasing over time until reaching a 50-50 balance. The goal of these programs is for students to develop literacy and proficiency in English and in the L_1.

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Programs

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs offer students with the same L_1 the opportunity to learn to speak, understand, read, and write in English while continuing to learn academic content in their home language. The students' home language is used to help them progress academically in all content areas while they acquire English. The goal of a TBE Program is to provide students with the opportunity to transition to a monolingual English classroom setting without additional supports once they reach proficiency. Even though the amount of English instruction students receive will increase over time, in a TBE program there will always be L_1 instruction and supports allowing students the opportunity to develop bilingually (NYSED, 2023).

English as a New Language (ENL)

Instruction in English as a New Language (ENL), formerly known as English as a Second Language (ESL), emphasizes English language acquisition. In an ENL program, language arts and content-area instruction are taught in English using specific ENL instructional strategies. Some content area classes are Integrated ENL classes where students receive core content area and English language development instruction, including the use of the L_1 and appropriate ELL instructional supports to enrich comprehension.

Integrated ENL classes are taught by a teacher with dual certification in the content area and ENL or co-taught by a certified content area teacher and a certified ENL teacher. In a stand-alone ENL class, students receive English language development instruction taught by a NYS-certified teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in order to acquire the English language needed for success in core content areas. This program typically serves ELL students from many different L_1 backgrounds whose only common language is English;   therefore, this is not considered a bilingual education program (NYSED, 2023).

Faulkner-Bond et al. (2012) describe ESL as a system of instruction is a critical part of U.S. bilingual education programs for ELLs; it supports ELLs in acquiring proficiency in spoken and written academic English. ESL classes are typically taught using academic content, which is crucial for ELLs when home language academic instruction isn't available or feasible; this often occurs for language groups with too few speakers for bilingual education. ESL content may be self-contained in sheltered classes or put into ESL content-area classes; in the latter model, ELLs attend these content-area

classes part of their school day and "mainstream" grade-level monolingual English instruction in classes the rest of their day.

However, it is not always feasible to implement a bilingual program. For example, the number of ELLs from the same L_1 may be insufficient. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) recommends monolingual instruction incorporating an ESL component in such cases; TESOL does not consider monolingual instruction without such an ESL component adequate for language minority students to receive the specialized instruction they need to acquire robust English language skills (Ovando & Combs, 2018, p. 4).

Four Language Skills

There are four basic language domains, abilities, or skills in language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. As Figure 1 illustrates, these fours domains are organized into two dimensions: receptive or productive skills, and oracy or literacy skills (Baker & Wright, 2017).

Figure 1

The Four Basic Language Skills
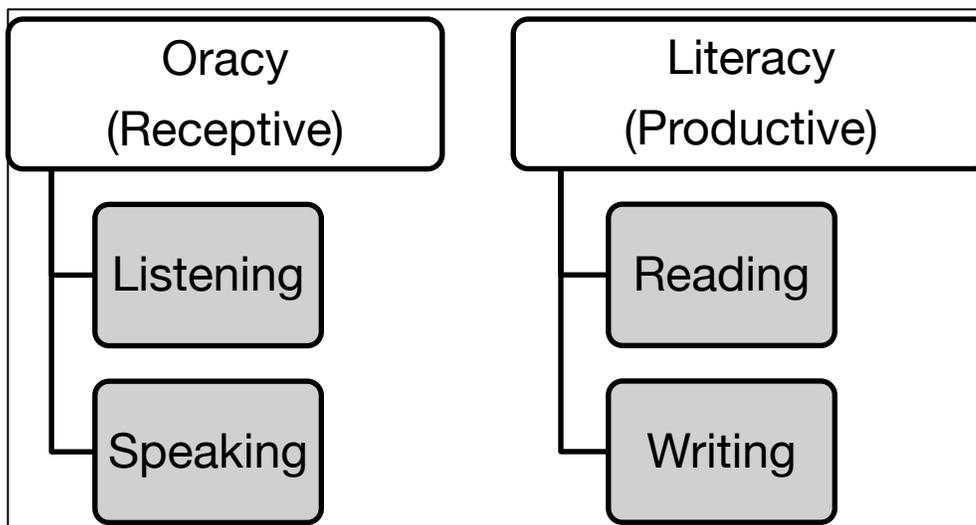
Listening and Speaking

Children learn "very early on which speech sounds to ignore and which to attend to as they interact with caregivers. All children with normal abilities acquire the set of sounds that make up their native language, and will learn to use them, so long as they are exposed to speakers of the language and have opportunities to interact with them" (Lems et al., 2017, p. 56). However, oracy develops differently for ELLs than it does for children acquiring a native or home language. It begins with "the nature of listening comprehension, how it develops in ELLs, and its role in reading. . . [then] how speaking skills develop in ELLs, and its role in reading. . . [and then] how speaking skills develop in ELLs and how they interact with reading development" (Lems et al., 2017, p. 56). Current views of literacy "encompass oracy, which is sometimes referred to as 'oral language proficiency'. . . [because] listening skills are too easily overlooked" (p. 55). Phonological awareness supports the learning needs of ELLs in three distinct ways (p. 57):

1. They imitate the sounds and thereby learn to pronounce and say the word.

2. They recognize the word when they hear it because the sequence of sounds is stored in their long-term memory and becomes part of their listening vocabulary.

3. Once they begin to read and write, their phonological awareness, and in particular their ability to do phoneme segmentation, will greatly assist ELLs with decoding, writing, and spelling new, unknown words in English.

4. Bandura (1977) argues that the organization of "behavioral components" into new and different patterns results from experience that are "part of natural

endowment" (p. 17). He posits that children are "born with a set of rudimentary sounds" that they learn to combine into a words and sentences, adding that "these basic phonetic elements may appear trivial compared to the complicated patterns learned later on, but they are nevertheless essential" (p. 17). Oracy is an aspect of oral language that includes a more specific subset of skills and strategies within oral language that more closely relates to literacy; there are three types of oracy components: language structures, vocabulary, and dialogue (Escamilla et al., 2013).

Reading

Word recognition refers to accessing and recognizing individual words; decoding is accessing the recognized words as they connect in a text. There are two categories of words and "the primary word-attack skills" for English words. Decodable words have "easy-to-match phonemes and graphemes;" sight words "have to be learned as whole words" (p. 82).

Lems et al. (2017) asserts that to read English words, students need to "learn to match their phonemes, or sounds, with their graphemes, or letters" (p. 82). They argue that this happens in several rapid steps. First, students identify the first letter(s) of a word and look for a matching phoneme, reading left to right, students "sample" the remaining phonemes and graphemes. Because we hold sounds in working memory, students "recombine them to form a mental representation" and then attempt to match a word from the "listening vocabulary" (p. 82).

Teaching students to read "means teaching students how to comprehend text" and literacy instruction "includes reading and writing" (Beeman & Urow, 2012, p. 88).

Unfortunately, teachers can over-emphasize the elements of reading (i.e., discrete word-level skills) such that those narrow skills become the goal of reading. "Because Spanish is a phonetic language and students can learn quickly to decode, it is easy to focus on the success students are having in decoding without really looking at whether they are comprehending; students who appear to be proficient at decoding may not really understand what they are reading" (p. 88). This is an important caveat in the teaching of reading.

Similarities Between the Listening and Reading Processes

Beeman and Urow (2012) identify markers of similarity for listening and reading. First, both domains "require active construction of meaning, with interaction between the text (oral or written) and the person" (p. 65). Second, the text in both domains is remembers for meaning, not exact word choice. Third, both require phonological awareness and benefit from students mastering larger vocabularies. Fourth, comprehension for both necessitates having a concept of the word "as a unit of meaning that can be manipulated" (p. 65). Fifth, automaticity, which can be developed for both, "facilitates the ability to construct meaning. (p. 65). Sixth, learners must "become familiar with different genres and what can be expected from the structure of the genres" (p. 65). Seventh, they must understand that both domains have tasks that vary "according to different purposes, different text, and different contexts" (p. 65). Eighth, both domains require "intensive and extensive practice" for improvement and mastery. Finally, both domains require knowledge of "English syntax patterns in order to make good guesses about what is coming next" (p. 65).

Beeman and Urow (2012) point to what makes language acquisition more difficult. First, English has many "similar-looking and similar-sounding words" which can cause confusion. Second, "longer words are harder to store, retain, and retrieve from memory" (p. 65). Third, comprehension is much more difficulty when context is stripped away.

Writing

Writing is a complex act that involves applying knowledge of register, conventions, and style. It is impossible to assemble everything one needs to know to be a good writer; he advises that "we learn to write without knowing we are learning or what we learn" (Espinosa & Ascenzi-Moreno, 2021, p. 183). Students working towards biliteracy "draw on all of their linguistic resources when they write… The earliest print produced by emergent writers is naturally reflective of their oral language. . . reflective of all their linguistic resources, at both the word and at the discourse levels" (Beeman & Urow, 2012, pp. 100-101).

The Roles of Theories

Walqui (2021) argues that pedagogical theories in education provide rationales (i.e., why we do what we do) and values (i.e., what we can expect to happen if we do something). Examining the theory behind practice can shift education from merely following routines without understanding them to selecting and enacting opportunities for students to deliberately participate in learning activities. This "deliberateness" comes from more intense thinking and exploration of what students need to develop, honoring their individual uniqueness (i.e., experiences, knowledge, interests, strengths, needs). Theories help us understand, adapt, or reframe challenges and failures. This study used

aspects of several frameworks to guide the research: psychologist Albert Bandura, educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, and psychologist Lev Vygotsky.

Albert Bandura

Bandura's early work on Social Learning Theory shows that through observation learning and modeling, learners may be inclined to adopt behaviors as their own. A central finding of Bandura's research is that individuals can learn new actions by observing others perform them. They do not have to perform the actions at the time of learning. By observing others, people acquire knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes (Schunk, 2016). This teaches children to observe others' contributions and gradually become involved and participate.

Through the lens of Bandura's four-stage Observational Learning Theory, academic English and social English are different (see Table 1, below). Academic English is much more demanding and complex for new language learners to acquire and access in comparison to the language used in social settings. It is, therefore, important for teachers to have a heightened awareness of this distinction to better facilitate academic language development. Teachers of ELLs will often focus on oral language development around themes like plants, animals, shapes, and colors in early elementary school; teachers may enhance learning by including objects from everyday life, arts and crafts, manipulatives, and dramatic play.

Table 1

Albert Bandura's Four Stages of Observational Learning Theory

Stage	Description
Attention	The observer must pay attention to the model, as a condition for learning
Retention	The observer must remember or retain what the model did as a condition for imitating the model's behavior
Initiation	The observer must have the capacity and skills to initiate and reproduce the behavior
Motivation	The observer must be motivated to recreate the behavior

Teaching focus is based on grade band (see Table 2, below). In first grade, teachers incorporate reading and writing strategies with a focus on developmentally appropriate thematic units as well as literacy genres such as storybooks, poems, songs, and "all about" books. By second grade, teachers focus on higher-order literacy skills such as thematic curricula and the use of novels, anthologies, and trade books. Teachers begin explicitly teaching academic vocabulary in content areas, which requires a combination of receptive and productive skills.

Reading requires "the mastery, integration and application of numerous skills and knowledge" (Brown, 2014, p. 35). There are five critical areas for effective instruction in reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. "Reading or learning how to read is a combination of all these skills. . . They are interconnected and interdependent on one another, which makes it difficult to teach them in isolation" (p. 35).

Table 2

Teaching Foci Based on Grade Bands

Grade	Foci	Researcher's Examples
Kindergarten	Oral language development	Themes like plants and animals. Shapes and colors. Use of realia.
First Grade	Reading and Writing Skills (including thematic units and literacy genres)	Developmentally appropriate strategies, such as picture books, poems, and songs. All About… books.
Second Grade	Higher order skills (oracy and literacy skills with fluency)	Thematic curricula; including novels, anthologies, and trade books. Explicitly teaching and learning academic vocabulary and language.

Paulo Freire

There is an important cultural component of English language learning that is important to point out, although it is not the focus of this dissertation research. Students learn to speak, read, and write in two languages; they also learn about other cultures while developing strong self-esteem and diverse language skills. Dual-language learners are exposed to language teaching that reflects two sets of cultural norms, often used simultaneously. Many teachers describe their students as speaking Spanish "using a linear discourse pattern that reflects norms of interaction from American culture or writing in English using a circular pattern that reflects oral discourse in Spanish. Students use their knowledge of English when learning in Spanish and vice versa" (Beeman & Urow, 2012, p. 13). Given the close interconnection between language and culture, it is possible that this may have a mediating or moderating influence on language acquisition. This

constitutes an important area of research which is currently lacking. This speaks to the work of Freire.

Freire's educational theories and research are centered on his fundamental beliefs around dialogical experiences and the power of words (see Table 3). Freire encourages educators to cultivate learning communities focused on a call to action. Such learning environments foster learning as a critical act, where jointly the teachers and students learn, question, reflect and participate in meaning-making of the word and in the world.

Freire (1970) cautions that if education is managed using "the banking concept of education," it negates the teacher-student relationship that re-creates knowledge for both the teacher and the student. "In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry" (p. 72).

Table 3

Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Teacher ⟵┄⟶ Students				
Students ⟵┄⟶ Teacher				
Reflection	Action	Dialogue	Question	Learn
"I cannot think for others or without others, nor can others think for me (p. 108)"				"Producing and acting upon their own ideas -not consuming those of others -must constitute that process" (p. 108).

Freire (1970) describes the banking model as one in which teachers, who know everything, teach and students, who know nothing, are taught. Teachers do the thinking,

talking, and acting; students are thought about, live an illusion of acting, and listen

meekly. The teacher disciplines and enforces; students are expected to be compliant and

disciplined if they are not. Teachers chose the content and pedagogy as the "subject of the

learning process;" students are expected to adapt as necessary, as the objects of the

learning process (p. 73). The teacher "confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her

own professional authority." which they set "in opposition to the freedom of the

students." (p. 73).

Freire (1970) proposes a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and student

in a democratic environment, one that allows everyone to learn from each other. This

critical pedagogy allows for a horizontal rather than a vertical relationship between

teachers and students. This horizontal relationship by entail building the cultural and

linguistic experiences of our students, acknowledging that no child is an empty vessel. If

we make interdisciplinary connections in the curriculum and, for instance, encourage our

students who may not be able to verbalize their learning to sketch and draw, they begin to

gradually internalize skills and concepts in English vocabulary acquisition.

In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire (2013) positions culture as the

systemic acquisition of knowledge, the democratization of culture within general

knowledge, and the democratization of culture within the general context of fundamental

democracy. Freire argues that the democratization of culture has to start from what we

are and what we do as a people, not from what some people think and want for us. In a

"Culture Circle in action" culture and its democratization are discussed, with participants

analyzing "the functioning of a Culture Circle, its dynamic significance, the creative

power of dialogue and the clarification of consciousness" (p. 77).

Freire (2013) proposed five phases for literacy programs. The first phase entails researching the vocabulary of the students you work with, often in the context of informal encounters. This research focuses on words with the most "existential meaning" and the "greatest emotional content" as well as typical sayings and words or phrases linked to lived experiences (p. 46). In phase two, the researcher selects generative words using three selection criteria: 1) phonemic richness; 2) phonetic difficulty, ordered sequentially; and 3) pragmatic tone, which "implies a greater engagement of a word in a given social, cultural and political reality" (p. 47). The third phase involves the creation of the "codifications" or representations of typical situations for students. These "codifications" may entail challenges or problems that must be decoded by students in collaboration with the teacher. This leads students to "a more critical consciousness" as they begin to learn to read and write (p. 47). The fourth phase entails the use of more detailed agendas, or lesson plans, which help teachers but should never be seen as rigid schedules that must be obeyed. The fifth and final phase is the preparation of "cards" which break down phonemic families that "correspond to the generative words" (p. 48).

Lev Vygotsky

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is perhaps one of the most commonly used terms in the field of education. Yet, as often happens, we use terminology with a limited understanding of the concepts involved. Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as

determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

The ZPD relates to what Walqui refers to as a learning scaffold and entry point, for all the learners to actively participate in varying learning opportunities where instructional tasks are intentionally planned across the three moments:

First, preparing learners for the learning embodied in the lesson; second, scaffolding students' interactions with the text; and, third, extending their understanding of the ideas in a text. Within each moment, activity structures we call tasks are designed to address the varying purposes in a lesson. All tasks are activities in which students use language to share, or compare, with each other the ideas and information that the different participants have.

Two critical elements of ZPD are the notions of potential development of the learner and the role collaboration plays in the learning process. A student's potential refers to the gap between a learner's existing capabilities and understandings and what they are capable of but have not yet achieved. In the case of ELLs and Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in New York State:

The immense potential that they bring to our classrooms is comprised of their intellectual, linguistic, and creative strengths that are waiting to be built upon. Our responsibility as educators is to provide students with appropriate learning experiences and support to help them realize their potential development. The goal of instruction is to foster our ELLs' and MLs' autonomy and their ability to engage in activities that enable them to apply and modify what they have learned to new situations (Billings & Walqui, 2023).

Billings and Walqui (2023) detail how a "pedagogical balance of high challenge and high support" in the context of a "future-oriented perspective of learning" and "deliberate pedagogical supports" causes learning to take place in service of learning goals and student development. This approach builds on student background and strengths as a part of scaffolding and developing capacity. Given that the ZPD is the space in which learning occurs, this must also be where teaching is situated. The implication for ELLs and MLs is that teachers do not have to wait until students master English to engage them in "intellectually stimulating and demanding tasks;" in fact, they argue that learning can only occur "when it is constructed in advance of development in the ZPD."

Billings and Walqui (2023) ask how such learning occurs in advance of development. Collaboration is a key component in the ZPD, given that Vygotsky viewed learning as a social process grounded in dialogic interaction with others" and independent of student skills or knowledge. It assumes students need the "guidance, modeling, and assistance" that occurs when collaborating with peers or teachers. They suggest teachers must intentionally construct collaborative structures that facilitate student participation in "conceptual and analytical practice" as they develop English language mastery. Scaffolding takes into account student skills, abilities, and interests along simultaneously with their future potential for development.

The Development of Reading for English Language Learners

Many ELLs struggle because we "don't offer them sufficient opportunities in the classroom to develop the cognitive skills and habits of mind that would prepare them to take on more advanced academic tasks" (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 14). These

struggles are often rooted in the mental models of educators, who unintentionally might think these students are not ready to tackle rigorous curricula and content. Consequently, ELLs become "dependent learners" who rely on the teacher for their own growth (p. 14), resulting in fixed mindsets and an overreliance on scaffolds and prompts.

As a response, New York State's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (CRSE Framework) offers four high-leverage strategies to foster a more culturally responsive and sustaining environment in schools and classrooms:

1. Cultivate a Welcoming and Affirming Environment: school staff and students find themselves and their identities represented, affirmed, and leveraged for learning.

2. Set High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction: school communities leverage a growth mindset and ensure that instruction is rigorous and intellectually challenging. Instruction
also considers the different ways students learn while also stressing risk-taking and the use of critical reasoning.

3. Provide Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment: allows the school community and students to be privy to multiple perspectives and allows students to question the inequities and ideologies around them.

4. Establish Ongoing Professional Learning: professional learning allows for leaders and teachers to partake in iterative cycles of learning to enhance and adapt instruction based upon the cultural and linguistic needs of students (NYSED, 2019a).

NYSED advises that code-based skills (e.g., phonological awareness, decoding, and fluency) and meaning-based skills (e.g., vocabulary, oral and written language, and reading comprehension) "should not be taught in isolation nor without consideration of the unique strengths and needs of MLs/ELLs." They suggest "implementing a strong core curriculum that focuses on code-based competencies alongside strong meaning-based instruction in a culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining environment is important."

With regard to Tier I instruction, they recommend providing ample opportunities for oral language development in the home language of instruction because it can improve text and listening comprehension skills. Many ELLs are simultaneously learning a new language and literacy skills, which must be taken into account. Code-based skills are a factor in ELL's reading and writing development (Lesaux & Harris, 2015); they are a part of core instruction for grades K–3. Code-based skills—which include subcomponents like phonemic awareness, phonics, sight words, and fluency—allow students to unlock the message of a text and communicate it through writing. It is important to note that code-based skills are exhaustive: students normally learn all their foundational, code- based skills by third grade; this makes early elementary school a critical time frame (NYSED, 2019a).

The development of reading for ESL students engages with key two processes. The first is the pattern of reading development. The second is translanguaging and the creation of space for the whole self. Both are discussed below in the context of two important studies. Also discussed in this section are reading interventions.

Patterns of Reading Development

In a quantitative longitudinal study (i.e., kindergarten through Grade 2), Lesaux and Siegel (2003) examined patterns of reading development in native English-speaking (i.e., L_1) children and ELLs for 978 students in Grade 2 (i.e., 790 L_1 learners and 188 L_2 learners). The students were from 30 schools in a single Canadian school district. The ESL children came from a variety of linguistic backgrounds and spoke 33 different home languages; the primary L_2 languages were Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Spanish, Persian, Polish, and Farsi. The focus was ESL students immersed in mainstream English classrooms in kindergarten. Kindergarten students typically entered school with little or no proficiency in the L_2. They argued that for this group of students "it is critical to examine the development of reading and to examine those skills that are predictors for reading development in kindergarten" (p. 1005).

The study examined how ESL speakers' reading abilities compared to those of L_1 speakers. Students completed standardized and experimental measures in reading, spelling, phonological processing, and memory. Students were tested in the fall term of their kindergarten year and, based on test scores, rated as "at risk for reading failure" or not at risk; at risk was defined as a score at or below the 25th percentile (see Table 4, below). The students were tested again in the spring of second grade; they were classified as "average readers" or "reading disabled" based on test scores; reading disabled was defined as at or below the 25th percentile. The ESL speakers outperformed L_1 speakers on several measures.

Overall, the ESL average readers performed significantly better than the ESL disabled readers. Clearly, these findings demonstrate that an early model of identification and intervention for children is beneficial, especially for at-risk children, including but

not limited to ELLs. This study also suggests that the effects of bilingualism on the acquisition of early reading skills are positive.

Table 4

Patterns of Reading Development

Testing Period and Rating	L_1 Learners	L_2 Learners
Fall of Kindergarten		
At Risk	236 (23.6%)	60 (37.5%)
Not At Risk	766 (76.4%)	100 (62.5%)
Total ($N = 1162$)	1002 (86.2%)	160 (13.8%)
Spring of Second Grade		
Reading Disabled	33 (4.2%)	7 (3.7%)
Average Reader	757 (95.8%)	181 (96.3%)
Total ($N = 978$)	790 (80.8%)	188 (19.2%)

Spaces for Their Whole Selves: Translanguaging Practices in Writing

Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa (2018) examined translanguaging pedagogy at the intersection of writing. Their qualitative case study focused on teachers' emerging insights about writing instruction in the context of student work. The study group was comprised of university professors of bilingual education and ENL teachers in a large suburban high school serving a significant number (24.0%) of recently arrived emergent bilingual students. Most of the students came from Central and South America, with a smaller number from Haiti. More than half of students (56.0%) qualified for free and reduced-price lunch.

A year prior to the study, researchers offered two ENL teachers and teachers from other disciplines professional development with the goal of introducing the concept of bilingualism as a resource through translanguaging strategies and creating a "multilingual ecology" at the school. Following the year of professional development, a study group

formed to deepen the translanguaging practices. The study group was structured around two questions. First, "What is the role of translanguaging in writing instruction?" And second, "How can teachers create writing spaces for newly arrived emergent bilinguals that capitalize on their strengths?"

In the study, students who were classified as ELL were grouped by language proficiency based on test scores into two groups: 1) those who scored at beginning levels of English language proficiency were grouped into a stand-alone ENL program and 2) those who scored as emergent bilinguals at more advanced levels of English language proficiency were placed with "push-in ENL teachers."

Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa (2018) identified three important findings. First was examining the writing life. They found that "in sharing our stories, we faced the tension between our larger definitions of how we envisioned writing instruction to be–as a process in crafting meaning and voice–alongside our reductive experiences as students and teachers of writing" (p. 16). Second was the importance of inserting translanguaging into the curriculum; this engaged students in drafting their ideas in Spanish and then writing the final product in English. Third was opening up spaces for students "whole selves" by creating room for emergent bilingual writers to bring their identities and lived experiences into the classroom, often through autobiography.

The Role of Education in a Democracy

In the United States from the time of its founding, education has been a requisite for sustaining our democracy by preparing our future citizens "for an active, participatory, responsible, and fulfilling present and future life" (Walqui, 2021). Thomas Jefferson argued for the notion that the purpose of education was "not only to serve the

needs and interests of individuals but also to enable citizens to develop the competencies

they needed to take responsibility for society. Walqui (2021) advocates that in a true

democracy, "these dual individuals and societal purposes of education apply equally to

all—and benefit all, precisely when the education provided capitalizes on the rich,

multiple, and varied backgrounds and assets that all students bring with them to school."

It is through the "equalization of access" and "building on the unique backgrounds and

potentials" of individual students that the purpose of education in the democracy is

fulfilled. This means "providing equitable opportunity for all individuals to develop to

their full potential" and "ensuring the enhancement of society and the public good."

CHAPTER 3

Schools across the United States use several programs to help emergent bilingual students learn English: Dl (DL); Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE); and ENL(ENL), formerly known as English as a Second Language. This quantitative research project focused on three second grade cohorts of 25 students each from New York City schools in the 2018-2019 school year; a cohort was chosen for each of these program types. The study used data from NYSESLAT, which measures English Language Proficiency. Three research questions will guide this quantitative study on Early Childhood English Language Learners (ELLs):

1. Research Question 1: How do the Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education programs support the language and literacy development and acquisition of second grade, Spanish-speaking English Language Learners in the L_1 and L_2?

2. Research Question 2: What instructional strategies help Early Childhood English Language Learners develop language and literacy proficiency, specifically in receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing)?

3. Research Question 3: What interventions support Early Childhood English Language Learners?

Research Design

The study examined 2018-2019 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) scores administered to second grade students, all of whom participated in a DL, TBE, or ENL program. It used the test scores as indicators of

how students in a select school district in the Bronx, New York, were performing in the English language programs. The research identified students' dominant modality for English language skills based on receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing) to determine appropriate strategies to support their English language development and acquisition based on their proficiency level (i.e., entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, commanding). Additionally, the researcher examined research-based strategies that best support second grade students with academic and socio-emotional interventions to ensure they thrive in a more inclusive society that values multilingualism, multiliteracy, and multiculturalism.

This study hypothesized that the statistical data analysis would show stronger academic progress and achievement (i.e., more significant mastery of the English Language proficiency) for students in the DL and TBE programs compared to the ENL program. This was grounded in the fact that both the DL and TBE models recognize the value of the first language (L_1); they reinforce and strengthen both the L_1 and second language (L_2) in the English language learning of Spanish-speaking students. Two specific hypotheses were made:

- ELLs in the DL program will demonstrate dominance in the productive skills of speaking or writing.

- ELLs in the TBE program will demonstrate dominance in the receptive skills of listening or reading.

The sample consisted of second grade students all of whom were Spanish-speaking ELLs who had taken NYSESLAT. These students attended public NYC

elementary schools located within the same school district (i.e., the Bronx) with similar socio-economic levels as determined by the schools' Title I status.

Methods and Procedures

This research examines the effectiveness of three primary English Language instructional models (i.e., DL, TBE, ENL) implemented to support ELLs in a large urban school district located in the Bronx, New York. Three elementary schools and a total of 75 students were included in this study:

- School A, 25 students in a DL program

- School B, 25 students in a TBE program

- School C, 25 students in a ENL program

The researcher identified the schools from the New York City Public Schools public website. The 2018-2019 NYSESLAT data came from the New York State of Education Data website. Both sites are public for all users. Schools were purposefully chosen to meet the needs of the study. After the three schools were identified, students were randomly selected from among the second-grade students in the identified program.

The researcher wanted to determine the effect of each language modality (i.e., listening, reading, speaking, and writing) on the students' English language development and acquisition. Three-way ANOVAs were conducted to test the effects of the instructional program type (i.e., DL, TBE, ENL) on the four modalities. The measure of success for each instructional model was the students' proficiency performance level as determined by the NYSESLAT. The study will include an analysis of the four modalities of English language skills and needs as part of the modality analysis.

The NYSESLAT

The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) is an instrument designed to assess the English language proficiency of the ELLs enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade. All ELLs in Kindergarten through grade 12 take the assessment annually. The NYSESLAT complies with federal laws that mandate annually assessing and monitoring the English Language proficiency progress of all ELLs. In 2015, the test was revised to make it more culturally relevant.

The speaking section of the assessment is administered in a window between April and May; the other three modalities are assessed in May (i.e., listening, reading and writing). The speaking section is administered individually and asks students to respond to a word or statement read aloud or to a picture. The other sections can be administered to students in a group. The reading section asks students to answer questions about stories printed in their test books. The writing section asks students to write in response to questions and prompts in their test books. The listening section asks students to select the correct response to a picture and/or word or statement read aloud.

An ELL's performance on the NYSESLAT indicates their level of English language proficiency relative to linguistic demands by grade level. The proficiency levels indicate the type of English language support each student needs to participate productively in the classroom. Therefore, the primary goal of the NYSESLAT is to measure the student's English language proficiency relative to the linguistic demands of the grade-level classroom, which drives the provision of mandated supports and services, such as temporary scaffolds for learning the new language, instructional strategies, student grouping, and academic intervention services and /or response to intervention.

The NYSESLAT is comprised of six grade bands (see Table 5, below) and five

proficiency levels (see Table 6, below).

According to the New York State Education Department's Office of Assessment,

the NYSESLAT does not have a required testing time; however, for planning purposes,

estimated testing times are suggested (see Table 7, below). ELLs with disabilities receive

testing modifications, as noted on their individualized education plan (IEP). The

NYSESLAT provides information about English language development for ELLs; this

drives instruction that aligns with the New York State Common Core Learning

Standards. As of 2015, the instrument reflects a more global or interdisciplinary shift

aligned to core content area and thematic units of study.

Table 5

Grade Bands

Band	Grade
1	Kindergarten
2	Grade 1 and Grade 2
3	Grade 3 and Grade 4
4	Grade 5 and Grade 6
5	Grade 7 and Grade 8
6	Grade 9 through Grade 12

Table 6

Proficiency Levels

Level	Description
Entering	Students are at the beginning level in the four skill areas. These students' English skills are minimal.
Emerging	A student at the Emerging level needs some supports and structures to improve their academic language skills
Transitioning	Students have better English skills than students at the basic level. However, these

	students' skills are often not well developed and they make significant errors in the four skill areas	
Expanding	Students are able to use skills at a higher level than intermediate students. Although their knowledge and use of English is at a more advanced level, these students make mistakes usually involving more: subtle use of language, difficult levels of vocabulary and grammar.	
Commanding	Students function fluently in listening, reading, writing, and speaking Students' skills are equal to those of native English speakers at their appropriate grade level. These students have gained the skills necessary to participate in an English-speaking classroom	

NYSED (2023a).

Table 7

NYSESLAT Estimated Testing Times

Grade Band	Modality	Number of Items or Tasks	Estimated Testing Time (in Minutes)
Kindergarten	Listening	19	Listening, Reading, and Writing:
	Reading	18	30 to 35 minutes
	Writing	10	
	Speaking	13	Speaking: 15 minutes
	Total	60	
First and Second Grade	Listening	24	Listening, Reading, and Writing:
	Reading	27	35 to 55 minutes
	Writing	3	
	Speaking	13	Speaking: 15 minutes
	Total	67	

Students will continue to receive ENL or bilingual services until their scores on

the NYSESLAT show that they have learned English well enough to participate in

English-only classes. Educators also use student scores to help decide which instructional standards to focus on and to evaluate their programs (NYCDOE, 2023b).

A student who scores at the highest proficiency level has met the linguistic demands necessary to meet discipline-specific standards at a commanding language performance level. At that point, the student's classification changes to "Former ELL," the student remains entitled to language support and services for two years as part of the transitional plan. It is important to note that the NYSESLAT does not account for crucial variables like gender, age, socioeconomic level, ethnicity, native language, or the parent's highest educational level. Data obtained from the implementation of this instrument for the school year ending in 2019 was collected, and the variables of gender and the student's country of origin were further analyzed by the researcher.

The NYSESLAT has been validated for the extent to which test materials and items appropriately sample the knowledge, skills, and understandings in the construct or domain being assessed. The requisite knowledge, skills and understandings are grounded in the New Language Arts Progressions of the Bilingual Common Core initiative. This ensures that the linguistic demands central to the test are measured using Targets of Measurement, which have been synthesized and embodied in the instrument to meet the discipline specific New Language Arts Progressions of the Bilingual Common Core Initiative in the corresponding grade-band level.

Multiple validity steps were taken. Test development experts and ESL specialists developed a blueprint that includes items that measure all the Targets of Measurement across the spectrum of difficulty-levels. The assessment includes both multiple choice and constructed response items. NYS educators participated in the passage review and

items review were diverse across subject area, gender, race, and ethnicity. All participants received training on Targets of Measurement and Performance Level Descriptions.

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the consistency of the test. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.80 to 0.93, with an average of 0.87. The reliability coefficients range from 0.80 to 0.94, with an average of 0.88. These levels of internal consistency reliability are moderately high; therefore, the NYSESLAT may be considered a reliable test.

The test reliability values of listening, speaking, reading, and writing across the bands are between 0.80 and 0.93, which is a strong indication that the test forms are of good quality. The Standard Error of the Mean for the four modalities across the bands ranged from 0.01 to 0.04, which is small but within acceptable ranges for each grade.

Population and Sampling

All schools are located in the Bronx and serve grades PreK—5 (see Table 8, below). For the samples, we examined the NYSESLAT data to identify 25 students from each school. In this study we were not focused on specific variables such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, or home language. All three schools were Title 1 schools at the time of this study, meaning that a large number of students received free breakfast and lunch.

Table 8

The Three Schools

School	2020-2021 Enrollment	Type of Spanish Language Program	Special Education	Accessible
A	497	Dual Language	Yes	Partially
B	549	Transitional Bilingual Education	Yes	No
C	605	English as a New Language		No

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the comprehensive analysis of the

quantitative data from the 2018 New York State English as a Second Language

Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) exam given to second graders in three elementary

schools in the Bronx, a borough of New York City. This data includes a total of 75

participants, with an even distribution of 25 students in each cohort. The researcher used

IBM SPSS to run a statistical analysis of the data from three randomized samples—one

sample from each school, each representing one of three instructional models that support

English language learners (ELLs). This analysis was done in an attempt to answer three

research questions:

1. How does the Dual Language program and the Transitional Bilingual

   Education program support the language and literacy development and

   acquisition of second grade, Spanish-speaking, English Language Learners in

   the L_1 and L_2?

2. What instructional strategies help Early Childhood English Language

   Learners develop language and literacy proficiency, specifically, in receptive

   skills (i.e., listening and reading) and productive skills (i.e., speaking and

   writing)?

3. What interventions support the academic success of Early Childhood English

   Language Learners?

Data Analysis and Results

Table 9, below, presents the mean and the standard deviations of the three cohort

groups; 1) Dual Language (DL), 2) Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and 3)

English as a New Language (ENL). The researcher conducted an ANOVA test to examine the instructional program in relation to the language proficiency in English across the NYSESLAT. This was based on five performance levels: 1) Entering, 2) Emerging, 3) Transitioning, 4) Expanding, and 5) Commanding. The analysis also explored the intersection of the implementation of three instructional programs and the proficiency levels. The results indicate no statistical difference between the three instructional programs with respect to achievement on the NYSESLAT, possibly suggesting that the program type does not influence ELL achievement or that the test cannot measure these differences.

Table 9

Program Type and NYSESLAT Achievement

Program Type	N	M	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower	Upper		
DL	25	4.00	.00	.00	4.00	4.00	4	4
TBE	25	3.92	.40	.08	3.75	4.09	2	4
ENL	25	3.80	.58	.12	3.56	4.04	2	4
Total	75	3.91	.41	.05	3.81	4.00	2	4

Table 10, below, shows the mean square between the groups based on language instructional programs (between groups, .51; within groups, 11.84). The results do not indicate a statistically significant difference in variance within or between groups; however, the mean square within groups was higher, possibly suggesting more variance within programs (i.e., student-driven or teacher-driven) than by program type. In considering the language proficiency levels, this indicates that the language modalities levels are important variables leading to the linguistic demands assessed in the

NYSESLAT. It may suggest that the NYSESLAT on its own does not capture the impact of the three instructional models. This would be an important area for future research.

Table 10

ANOVA Results

Analysis Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.51	2	.25	1.54	.22
Within Groups	11.84	72	.16		
Total	12.35	74			

Table 11 reports the ANOVA effect sizes. Eta-squared shows the strength of an interaction, or the percentage of variance in the dependent variable (i.e., ELL proficiency) that is explained by the independent variables (i.e., program type); all the number are less than 0.06, indicating a small effect size. Similar results were found for Epsilon-squared and Omega-squared. Numbers were close to zero or negative; approaching "1" would indicate a high effect size.

Table 11

ANOVA Effect Sizes

Effect Size Analysis	Point Estimate	95% Conf. Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Eta-squared	.041	.000	.142
Epsilon-squared	.014	-.028	.119
Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.014	-.027	.117
Omega-squared Random-effect	.007	-.014	.062

Table 12, below, shows the Turnkey Ba data, which indicates the means for groups in homogeneous subsets; likewise, these numbers do not show significant differences between program type.

Table 12

Turnkey Ba

Program Group	n	α = .05
ENL	25	3.80
TBE	25	3.92
DL	25	4.00

A deeper data dive revealed some differences based on dominant modalities (see Table 13). The modality of strength for two of the three program types was speaking. Many of the students who are ELLs speak social language and not academic language; therefore, emphasis is placed on academic discourse (i.e., structured seminars, circles). Writing was the dominant modality of need for all three program types. The modalities of speaking and writing represent the need to focus on productive skills, which represent both opportunity and challenge for English Language Learners.

Table 13

Program Type and Dominant Modality

Program Type	Strength Modality	Need Modality
Dual Language	Reading (8)	Writing (25)
Transitional Bilingual Education	Speaking (10)	Writing (25)
English as a New Language	Speaking (11)	Writing (22)

There was noticeable variation in English language proficiency across the three program types (see Table 14, below). ENL showed more intermediate level proficiency; TBE showed more advanced proficiency. However, it is important to note that this could be a sampling error as this study did not use longitudinal data. As discussed in Chapter 5, this might be a rich area for future research.

Table 14

Program Type and Proficiency

	Program Group		
Proficiency Level	ENL	TBE	DL
Entering	8.0%	4.0%	0.0%
Emerging	16.0%	12.0%	12.0%
Transitioning	32.0%	12.0%	16.0%
Expanding	36.0%	60.0%	64.0%
Commanding	8.0%	12.0%	8.0%

Summary of the Findings

The data analysis indicated no significant differences for achievement across the three program types. There was somewhat more variation within groups than across groups. On the surface, these results were disappointing. However, upon further reflection and conversations with peers, these results in fact raise some important questions for future research. Is it possible that the NYSESLAT does not capture subtle differences between programs? What is the role of variation in the student population across these program types? What is the role of variation in the teachers and teaching styles across these program types?

CHAPTER 5

Bandura (1977) wrote that "to make progress in understanding human behavior, more stringent requirements would have to be used in evaluating the adequacy of explanatory systems" (p. 5). These systems must "accurately identify the determinants of human behavior as well as the intervening mechanisms responsible for the changes" (p. 5). This was the challenge in this dissertation research—to understand the systems of English language instruction and their impact on student behaviors. The overarching question was whether there were measurable differences in the quantifiable data for the three models of English language instruction explored here— English as a Second Language (ESL) also known as English as a New Language (ENL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Dual Language (DL) instructional models.

Using the NYSESLAT data as the foundation for this quantitative research, it was clear that the underlying mechanisms would not be revealed. Language is complex and nuanced; there are factors that cannot easily be measured by assessments. Bandura (1977) points out that complex behaviors, like language learning, entail detailed modeling, arguing that "novel forms of behavior can be conveyed effectively only by social cues" (p. 13). He positions modeling as "an indispensable aspect of learning. Even when it is possible to establish new behaviors through other means, the process of acquisition can be considerably shortened through modeling" (p. 13).

This study focused on the NYSESLAT as a language proficiency assessment to examine the difference in language acquisition across three program types (i.e., ENL, TBE, and DL). At first glance, it was surprising to find virtually no significant differences across these three program types. However, with greater reflection, and in

light of Bandura's social learning theory, this result is both important and unsurprising. In academic research, data that reveals no significance is meaningful because it guides future research into more productive paths. It also raises important questions. In this case, these unexpected findings suggest the deep influence of social learning, which cannot be measured by a quantitative instrument like the NYSESLAT. The research findings are explored in the context of these concepts and questions.

Understanding the Data in the Context of the Prior Literature

The data analysis indicated no significant differences for achievement between the three instructional programs with respect to achievement on the NYSESLAT, possibly suggesting that the program type does not influence ELL achievement or that the test cannot measure these differences. This directly speaks to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which is especially relevant for young learners. Much of learning, especially language learning, is grounded in social cues and group interactions. This also speaks to the work of Freire (1970) who argued that learning is a dialogic, co-constructive (i.e., two way) relationship between teacher and student. These concepts would apply equally to all three program types; differences in how these pedagogical techniques would be implemented differently by program type would not be measurable using quantitative student test scores.

The mean square between the groups did not indicate a statistically significant difference in variance within or between groups; however, the mean square within groups was higher, possibly suggesting more variance within programs. There is evidence from the data from this study that suggests that the differences within programs may in fact be attributable to different student populations. Across the three program types, there was

very little variation for three proficiency ratings: entering (range 0.0% to 8.0%); emerging (range 12.0% to 16.0%); and commanding (range 8.0% to 12.0%). However, there were significant differences for the proficiency ratings of transitioning (ENL, 32.0%; TBE, 12.0%; DL, 16.0%) and expanding (ENL, 36.0%; TBE, 60.0%; DL, 64.0%). As discussed in the recommendations for research, this would be a fruitful area for future research.

There was more noticeable variation between program types when looking at the dominant modality of strength and need. For the DL program, reading was the dominant strength modality; for TBE and ENL, the dominant strength modality was speaking. For all three programs, the dominant need modality was writing. This is perhaps an unsurprising finding given that productive modes are typically more difficult than receptive modes for language learners, with writing often being the most challenging. Thus, the finding that writing was the dominant need modality makes sense, especially for younger language learners.

It was somewhat unexpected that the dominant strength modality across these three programs was not listening. This may be understood in the context of Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the space between what a learner can do independently (i.e., without assistance) and what they can do with guidance from an adult or in collaboration with more skilled peers. Given that language learning is scaffolded, it is likely that even for young ELLs, they have mastered listening and therefore moved on to speaking as a dominant strength modality.

Accepting that listening was a mastered skill, it was unsurprising that the dominant strength modality for DL was reading, another receptive skill. However, it was

curious that dominant strength modality for TBE and ENL was speaking not reading.

There is no obvious explanation for this in the research literature. It may be explained by

the within group variation. And, it is a clear focus area for future research.

Limitations

This quantitative study reflects data from the NYSESLAT administered in the

spring of 2018. The data alone cannot provide a full picture of the students' language

proficiency, the mechanics of language acquisition, or how students were supported

across the three program modalities. Additionally, the small sample size may have

limited the ability to glean insights from the data ($N = 75$, $n = 25$ per program type).

The data was drawn from three schools of Spanish-speaking ELLs located within

the same large urban public school district (i.e., New York City Public Schools).

Therefore, this study is not reflective of the entire city or other boroughs encompassing a

large subpopulation of ELLs. It is not generalizable to other major urban areas, or school

systems in general. It is not generalizable to all within-category programs types (i.e.,

ENL, TBE, DL).

Furthermore, the study did not account for important instructional and factors.

These include teacher-driven factors like advanced degrees and certifications, years of

experience, and measures of teacher practice. It also includes student-driven factors like

age, time since arrival in the U.S., family influences, and previous experiences taking

standardized.

Implications for Practice

Lesaux et al. (2016) frame four "21st century realities and guiding principles."

First, the school-age students are linguistically diverse, with more than 400 native

languages spoken. Second, by 2030, 40.0% of the K-12 population will speak a language other than English at home. Third, in many classrooms, "the literacy strengths and needs of ELs and their English-only peers are more similar than they are different. Learning academic English, oral and written, should be an instructional priority for all (p. 50). And fourth, in many settings, the instructional core "needs to be updated and upgraded to match student needs and today's literacy demands. When large numbers of students are struggling, the core should first be adjusted as the primary line of defense and response" (p. 50).

Teaching with intentionality is crucial when teaching ELLs, especially when we consider the diversity within ELL subpopulations. This is alluded to in this study's data by the within-group variations. Furthermore, this study showed a clear finding across all three program types—writing was the dominant need modality. The implications for practice therefore focus on three themes: 1) teaching diverse learners, 2) metalanguage awareness, 3) translanguaging, and 3) writing instruction.

Teaching Diverse Learners

Evidence supports a model of early reading instruction that focuses on prevention and intervention for kindergarten children at risk for reading failure in the context of a balanced approach to literacy instruction for children whose first language is English (Torgesen, 20041, 2004b). However, little is known about effective instruction for ESL children and the long-term consequences of that instruction.

Lesaux and Siegel (2003) suggested that certain metalinguistic and cognitive concepts emerge differently in bilingual children than they do in monolingual children. They argued that "it is important to continue to examine the role of phonological

awareness as a predictor of reading development in ESL-speaking children given that it may be a stronger, better predictor of reading performance than is oral language proficiency" (p. 1006). They further argue that "explicit and intensive teaching are two elements of classroom instruction that have been identified as vital to a model of early reading designs to promote reading success for all children" (Lesaux & Siegel, p. 1006).

Lesaux and Siegel (2003) argued that ELLs "respond to balanced literacy instruction in a manner similar to that of L_1 speakers," adding that "a kindergarten model of early identification and intervention for children at risk for reading failure is effective for children who enter kindergarten with little or no experience with English" (p. 1018). ELLs who entered kindergarten with little or no English were "by Grade 2, able to attain a level of achievement in the areas of reading and spelling comparable to that of their native English-speaking peers" (p. 1018).

Within a trans-language framework, the varied language experiences of bilingual students are not separate but exist as one unified linguistic framework or repertoire (Escamilla et al., 2013). Language learning is dynamic; individuals use different language features in social interaction and to construct meaning.

Lesaux and Harris (2015) point out that academic language "represents a different way of using language than the way we use it in the everyday setting" (p. 21). Here "everyday" means social, conversational language where we speak in shorter sentences with more high-frequency words. We more often talk about the "here and the now" and we use greater repetition to ensure understanding. What this suggests is that for ELLs, educators must work harder to build the bridges between academic and social English. For native English speakers, they are scaffolding academic English on top of social

English; ELLs are learning both simultaneously, using academic English for schoolwork and social English with peers and friends.

Research suggests teachers support ELLs by 1) calling attention to text structure, 2) providing instructions on how to use metacognitive reading strategies, 3) focusing on linguistic features, and 4) providing scaffolding (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Kibler et al., 2015). This speaks to the common gap where ELLs may not be fully literate in their home language, particularly for early childhood ELLs. They need more signposting and scaffolding to close this gap and master English.

Metalanguage Awareness

Metalanguage is "thinking and talking about language" (Escamilla et al., 2013, p. 67). For biliteracy, it is an "understanding the relationship between and within languages. It is the language used to talk about language, and its mastery allows students to analyze how language can be leveraged to express meaning" (p. 67). The development of metalanguage awareness includes the ability "to identify, analyze, and manipulate language forms, and to analyze sounds, symbols, grammar, vocabulary, and language structures between and across languages" (p. 67). It has been identified as "one of three fundamental skills, along with the psycholinguistic abilities to decode and comprehend, required for a person to become literacy" (p. 67).

Escamilla et al. (2013) note that building metalinguistic awareness across languages is sometimes known as cross-language connections. It requires students to "work in groups or pairs to examine the similarities and differences in their languages" in tasks that are higher-order and bidirectional" (p. 68). They are bidirectional in that they move both ways—from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish (p. 68). They

note three benefits of metalinguistic awareness: 1) it affirms and amplifies language resources 2) it supports comprehension and language development and acquisition, and 3) it builds literacy and biliteracy. Examples of metalanguage awareness include cognates, false cognates, morphology (i.e., root word, prefix, suffix), and language conventions (English and Spanish)

Translanguaging

Translanguaging involves practices that facilitate ELLs in using all four basic language skills to empower them and help them realize their full academic potential. Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa (2018) postulated that "translanguaging is both a lens to view how individuals construct meaning by drawing upon their entire linguistic repertoire and a pedagogical approach." As a lens, translanguaging brings attention to the fluid, flexible, creative ways students find to use their language resources (García & Wei, 2014). Viewing translanguaging as a lens challenges the view held by some educators, including many bilingual and ENL teachers, that language is a process that can be achieved and possessed (Faltis, 2013). Translanguaging serves as pedagogical approach in which teachers create spaces for emergent bilinguals to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire in a learning event, rather than relying solely on English (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Espinoza et al, 2016).

Translanguaging begins with oracy. "Oral language is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings (Lesaux et al., 2016, p. 15). Developing oral language entails "developing the skills and knowledge that go into listening and speaking—all of which have strong relationships to reading comprehension

and to writing" (p. 15). They offer three categories of phonological skills that they argue

are precursors to early word reading, which is a precursor to writing (p. 18):

- Phonological Skills: Precursors to Early Word Reading
  - Enable a listener to differentiate the words in a stream of spoken language
  - Unlike the other components of oral language, these skills and discrete and typically mastered by first grade
  - Required limited instruction, pre-k through early elementary school

- Syntax, Morphological Skills, and Pragmatics: The Glue of Oral Language
  - Engage learners to make sense of what they hear and to communicate ideas in ways that make sense of others
  - Develop from infancy through adulthood
  - Required sustained instruction, pre-k-12
- Semantics/Vocabulary: A Cornerstone of Oral Language
  - Represents a learner's conceptual knowledge about the world. After all, you can't separate big ideas from the words that represent them!
  - Develops from infancy through adulthood
  - Requires sustained instruction, pre-k-12

Like oracy, reading creates a critical foundation for writing. When children

experience early reading difficulties (i.e., in kindergarten), this is best remediated through

a balanced early reading program that included small group phonological awareness

instruction for all children regardless of language status or ability as well as phonics

instruction in Grade 1 (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). This can be provided through varied

literacy activities such as activities with a specific emphasis on the sound-symbol

relationship. This reduces the incidence of reading failure in Grade 1 and Grade 2 for the

majority of children (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). This model of instruction is well

suited to ELLs.

Brown (2013) argues that "for all students, a high-quality early education is

critical to ensuring their long-term academic success" (p. 45). She suggests that early

learners "need to understand why people read and write in order to be motivated to excel

in their own literacy development" (p. 45). Through "active engagement in the reading process, children learn ways to use their growing knowledge and skills flexibly and in combination with all domains of development" (p. 45). In this way, they develop "a strong foundation for literacy and reading development" as they are given opportunities to engage in purposeful, meaningful language and early print activities" (p. 46).

Protocols are tools that provide procedures and routines for speaking/listening, reading, writing, and problem-solving in classrooms (McDonald et al., 2014). These protocols help students and teachers to engage in meaningful and efficient learning (Lesaux et al., 2016). Lesaux et al. (2016) argue that advanced literacies are "a constellation of competencies" that integrate the four basic skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and take time to develop. Advanced literacy entails "the ability to synthesize information or to evaluate texts" (p. 50). Students best develop these competencies

> When they have to use them for authentic purposes, like reading multiple texts to engage in a debate or to write a persuasive essay. Rather than target these skills through intervention, promoting advanced literacies must be in instructional goal shared by all teachers, who by adopting a common set of instructional practices— those documented to support linguistically diverse learners and to build advanced literacies from the 21st century—can achieve the coherence and cohesion that leads to a stronger core of instruction. (p. 52).

Writing Instruction

Lesaux et al. (2016) advocate for the need to explore "a common set of instructional practices and to identify when high quality advanced literacy skills are in

place" with the needs of linguistically diverse learners "at the nexus of meeting the standards and responding to the student's needs" (p. 15). They define five hallmarks of advanced literacies instruction, each of which informs the design of reading, speaking/listening, and writing as a crosscutting component:

1. Hallmark 1: Work with a variety of texts that feature big ideas and rich content.

2. Hallmark 2: Talk/discuss to build language and knowledge.

3. Hallmark 3: Use extended writing as a platform to build language and knowledge.

4. Hallmark 4: Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words needed to master language and content.

5. Hallmark 5: Use schoolwide protocols to support reading, writing, speaking, and listening. (p. 15)

These hallmarks are critical do evaluate, select, and implement high-impact writing practices that address writing as the dominant need modality across all three program types. Two such practices are recommended in the following section.

Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa (2018) argue that translanguaging in writing invites students to use their entire linguistic repertoire as a fundamental principle and resources important to the writing process. They proposed four core principles in designing writing instruction based on translanguaging:

- Writing is a tool for thinking. To fully construct meaning, the student needs to be invited to leverage his or her entire linguistic repertoire through all aspects of the writing process.

- Writing is writing regardless of the language. Although there are cultural- and language-specific conventions that mark writing, at the heart of writing is the construction of meaning.

- Writers need agency to draw from their entire linguistic repertoire to produce complex texts. To enact their own agency when accessing deeper and more complex thinking, writers need to make their own choices rather than relying solely on their teacher's permission.

- Writers need to capitalize on their entire linguistic repertoire throughout the writing process regardless of the language the final product will be in. Emergent bilinguals benefit from engaging in literacy practices in their home language, such as reading, taking notes, conferencing and sharing, and translating to reach the goals of the final product.

Although in some instances translanguaging occurs naturally (i.e., without being encouraged by the teacher), they more typically reflect a teacher's intentional planning to ensure students' full engagement in learning through the use of their entire linguistic repertoire (García & Wei, 2014). Such translanguaging practices stand in contrast to a classroom instruction framed by English-only practices, where students are not encouraged to think, speak, or write in their home languages during the learning process (Lesaux et al, 2013). The core principles align with the high impact writing practices described in the following section.

The Dictado is a writing method that supports both Spanish and English language literacy (Escamilla et al., 2013). It develops Spanish and English language skills while integrating teaching of content, spelling, conventions, and grammar. It also supports

students in learning self-correction and metalanguage skills. Teachers dictate phrases or sentences; then, students and the teacher work together to refine a corrected version of the focus text. Students rewrite sentences using two colors to highlight errors. Phrases or sentences are repeated over days or a week, which gives students opportunities learn targeted content through practice as well as to hone in on conventions, grammar, and spelling. The method is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) theories around social learning where learning is enhanced when student can work in their zone of proximal development.

Escamilla et al. (2013) also recommend that, starting in second grade, students write a minimum of nine papers of 1.5 to three handwritten pages each school year directly related to something they have read. This could be a short, age-appropriate research papers with a few outside resources. Older students can write longer papers and type them. They also recommend students should do one or two oral presentations each school semester, or two to four each school year. This is another way "to connect writing to reading. . . [where] students have the opportunity to summarize, argue, or respond to a question about a book" (p. 52).

Implications for Policy

Heritage et al. (2015) argues that an important function in American education, for all students including ELLs, is college and career readiness, which ensures that "when students graduate from high school they will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills essential for future success. . . to be productive citizens and effective contributors to a vibrant economy" (p. 2). Thus, schools, districts, and federal policies

must work towards this goal, which begins with the quality assessments and curricula, which are typically chosen at the district, state, or national level.

Implications for Quality of Assessments and Curricula

Standardized tests measure academic achievement competencies (e.g., language arts, mathematics, or science): for ELLS, they measure English language proficiency. Standardized tests fall outside the direct control of teachers, and even principals. However, teachers must nevertheless be knowledgeable about standardized tests and how data usage can affect teaching and learning. Kelleghan et al. (2012) argue that there are both advantages and disadvantages of standardized testing. Standardized testing produces reliable, easily scored data because it uses uniform data collection and analyses procedures that are not confounded by individual teacher effects. It is easy to train teachers or other staff on procedures for administration. It can be used to provide compared districts and states, for a national perspective or ranking. However, standardized testing cannot account for student learning styles and test taking abilities, which can influence test results. It often measures shallow curricula, not broad or in-depth knowledge; it cannot account for student creativity or imagination. Testing often requires adherence to strict time limits, which can cause student stress that, in turn, can influence test results. The data can easily be misinterpreted or overgeneralized; and the data is often misused for purposes of gatekeeping. Thus, it is critical that quality assessments be used in appropriate, and limited, ways.

As assessment measures student learning, which is the direct result of curricula and instruction. Therefore, schools and districts must assess the quality of the curricula they purchase and implement. In evaluating curricula, teachers and administrators

consider how they review, assess, and evaluate the texts and curricula they are given to teach or are considering for purchase. Educators don't typically ask who wrote the curriculum and why. We often don't measure the curriculum against the unique needs of our students and community. We must ask if the texts and overall curriculum are connected to the students' lives and are relevant and responsive. Muhammad (2020) suggests asking, "How does each phase, chapter, or section in this curriculum (texts, passages, supporting documents, goals, assessment prompts, and guidance) explicitly address identities, skills, intellect, and criticality" (p. 150).

Implication for New York City and New York State

New York City is home to the largest and perhaps most complex public school system in the world, serving roughly one million students each year. Our city school system has 1,859 schools, including 271 charter schools (NYCDOE, 2023a). Our students are Black or Hispanic (65.5%), much higher than the national average of 43.0% (NCES, 2022c). They are predominantly economically disadvantaged (71.9%). A large and increasing population are ELLs (13.9%), higher than the national average of 10.4% (NCES, 2022b). Many students have disabilities (20.6%), higher than the national average of 15.0% (NCES, 2022d). Many of our ELLs arrive at the intersection of these categories—they are ELLs and/or minority students and/or economically disadvantaged and/or students with disabilities. Our four-year graduation rate is 81.2%, slightly lower than the national average of 86.0% (NCES, 2021). Our dropout rate is 4.8%, below the national average of 5.3% (NCES, 2020a). Our ELL population is at greater risk for dropout, which puts them at risk for not achieving productive adulthood or reaching their full potential.

The issues raised in this dissertation in the context of these metrics are of paramount importance because New York is a sanctuary state and New York City is a sanctuary city. New York has made a commitment to immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, and to refugees. In fact, in August 2022, the City of New York, in response to the refugee crisis, declared that "our city has always stood with those in need of refuge and shelter, and this administration will continue that proud legacy (City, 2022). Mayor Adams asserted that schools were "ready and excited to welcome our newest New Yorkers" and that he was committed to working "to set students up for success by addressing their academic, emotional, and social needs, and ensuring there is no disruption to their education.

Thus, the way that ELLs are educated in New York is critical, both as a place that offers hope to the world's most vulnerable citizens and a measure of alignment to the values expressed by this commitment. The social safety net in New York is strained (Newman & Vilchis, 2022); in the current school year, the number of newcomer students has increased six-fold (Amin, 2022). But New York must not become a sanctuary that fails to educate children for full productive adulthood and reaching their full human potential. Providing adequate bilingual education is a piece of the solution (Amin, 2022).

Furthermore, as the largest and most diverse school system in the country, we are leading educational innovation and providing a model for other states and countries. Our Spanish speaking children increase their metalinguistic awareness as they acquire English, and over time they often academically outperforming their English only peers. We can truly say that education in New York City offers hope and promise to other districts in New York State and around the country. It is essential that we "get this right."

Students who are learning English are entitled to traditional ENL instruction where their classes are in English, but they receive extra support and translation help during and outside of school. Their families can also choose from bilingual programs or dual language instruction, but most NYC schools lack such programming (Amin, 2022). However, there is a serious shortage of bilingual teachers as well as counselors and social workers who meet the wraparound needs of these newcomers and their families (Amin, 2022). New York City and New York State must create specific, measurable goals for the newcomer ELLs. They must invest in personnel and resources to make sure that these students thrive in their new homeland. This is what's best for newcomer ELLs, their families, communities in New York, and our society as a whole.

Implications for Future Research

The gift in the lack of significant results and ambiguous results in this study is the robust contribution to areas for future research. The first and most obvious implication is for this study to be replicated on a much larger scale using NYSESLAT data, and perhaps other data as well. This would enable us to see if the lack of significant results is merely an artifact of a very small sample size. It is possible that a more robust study would reveal differences between these programs as measured by test scores. It would also be interesting to replicate this study across grade levels.

This study looked at a single snapshot in time. A similar study extending over the course of an academic school year, comparing changes in test scores over time, would provide interesting data. Are there measurable differences in student learning across these three program types as measured by testing data? It could also track students as they

move through their programs until they no longer require services (i.e., they gain commanding proficiency).

There is evidence from the data from this study that suggests that the differences within programs may be attributable to different student populations. This would be another fruitful area for future research. We know that the home country from which students arrive can influence them in school; for example, students from Central America often come with significant trauma. Is there student variation in who enrolls in these different program models? How do students become enrolled in these different program types? Do parents choose programs for their children or is this a result of zip code? How do student demographics influence the implementation of program type?

It was curious that dominant strength modality for TBE and ENL was speaking not reading. There is no obvious explanation for this in the research literature. It may be explained by the within group variation. But are there other factors that may explain this? Is there something within TBE and ENL that supports speaking as a strength? Perhaps something that relates to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory? This is a clear focus area for future research.

This study focused on native Spanish speakers who were learning English. As logical extension to this research, and an area that requires further investigation, includes emergent bilinguals who speak other languages. How does English language acquisition vary by home language? For example, many languages like Arabic and Chines are not alphabetic, adding to the nuance of English language learning.

Additional research, such as a detailed examination of how children navigate the instructional school day and acquire language development and acquisition through the

use of the four modalities, is important. This would be ideal as a mixed methods study that uses testing data paired with qualitative methodologies to examine the implementation of academic and language instruction and the students' use of academic vocabulary inside and outside of the classroom setting.

Furthermore, while interventions were discussed, this research did not delve into the needs of bilingual students with special needs, students with interrupted formal education, or long-term ELLs. These students face a complex set of learning challenges; and, yet, they too are owed an excellent education.

Finally, it is important to note that the pandemic introduced new challenges as a result of school closures, remote learning, school re-openings, and hybrid learning from March 2020 through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The inconsistency in teaching and learning created disruption and isolation that negatively impacted all students, but especially ELLs. The learning of language is a social process and requires interactions and high levels of engagement that were stifled during this period. These students were disproportionately hurt by the pandemic, and they need extra attention now and in the coming years to close the widened achievement gap.

Conclusion

Freire (1970) argued that as educators and as a society we need to embrace our youngest English Language Learner through a culturally relevant pedagogical approach that provides a balance of learning opportunities tailored to meet their diverse language needs. As the research indicates, learning should be developmentally appropriate and must integrate strategies and methodologies that are collaborative, creative and embedded in "*consceintização*" (awareness).

The implications of this study for teaching English Language Learners are vast when we consider that ELLs need to be skilled in using strategies that strengthen academic language. This is especially true given that such a clear distinction is made between social language and academic language. The goal is ensuring that English Language Learners strengthen their academic language for increased success in school and life, whether they are in a dual language or transitional bilingual education class. Pedagogical approaches that foster the four basic skills as English Language Learners navigate a new language and unfamiliar content are paramount to the development of academic success in English as a second language. As productive and contributing citizens, as educators, we are charged with the ethical and moral responsibility to ensure that all of our children succeed.

As educators, parents, and community service providers, we care about students and we know that their futures are at stake. We have an innate desire to connect to one another, and communication defines how we function efficiently and effectively in society. At the core of communication, we find literacy, which makes communication possible. While this study focused on Spanish-speaking ELLs, we have a large number of ELLs from around the world arriving in the United States daily. All these newcomers depend on their mastery of English to fulfill their hopes and dreams in America.

Educators are charged with the responsibility to continuously explore the benefits of diversity in culture, language, and race—among other differences—and to foster and embrace a positive approach to learning for English Language Learners. It is necessary for students to develop a positive belief system, confidence, and a can do attitude. This can encourage perseverance and resilience coupled with the fundamental valuing of

formalized education. Lamont and Small (2010) argue we need a "different way to think of diversity. . . to think of its impact on innovation and creativity (p. 174). They suggest alleviating poverty requires "equalizing access to rights, institutions, and other resources" (p. 174). Education is, has always been, and will always be the access point.

America has always prided itself on being a melting pot. Muhammad (2020) provides a powerful call to action that frames and acknowledges how we position our ELLs, their families, and their way of knowing:

> We have long prescribed and written what others think is best for youth in schools, all while leaving out of the picture the easy communities of color that have historically acquired and used literacy. The culturally and historically responsive literacy framework I offer serves to reorientate literacy to our students' lives and asks educators to implement an equity framework that aligns with and accounts for our rich history and exalted literacy legacy. (p. 15)

This dissertation research study advocates just such a framework, using metacognitive awareness and translanguaging that honors a student's home language and English. The Hispanic population in the U.S. has grown significantly over the past decade and continues to be the highest growing demographic in America. Learning English for children in Hispanic homes where only Spanish is spoken has become an imperative. What is at state is millions of children achieving productive adulthood and reaching their full potential. This benefits our English language learners, their families, future generations of learners, and society as a whole.

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