BECOMING A BICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER IN THE UNITED STATES:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF A LATINA EDUCATOR

By

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ABSTRACT

This research was guided by two autoethnographic questions, namely: How does autoethnography enable understanding of the needs of emergent bilinguals in the sociopolitical context of local and federal language policies in the United States? As well as extended by the following ancillary questions: a. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from journal entries crafted by the author of this study? And b. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from state and national news pieces between the years 2015 and 2020?

This narrative serves not only to present the challenges encountered within the field of multicultural education as a Latina educator, but also to critique and question the status quo, advocating for meaningful change.

Ultimately, this work stands as a testament to the power of autoethnography as a methodological tool for Social Science research, demonstrating its capacity to not only generate knowledge but also to inspire transformation among researchers and educators alike. This work emphasizes the significance of introspective inquiry as a determinant for broader social understanding and progress in the field of multilingual education in the United States.

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The day I decided to pursue a Ph.D. was the day I got divorced. Everything that once made me happy was changing, whether I had planned for it or not, because The Universe knew back then that I needed new spaces to acquire new learnings to achieve new levels of personal, professional, and spiritual growth. After 14 years I not only became a single woman, but also a single mother of a soon-to-be middle schooler. I have been an immigrant my entire life, both as a child and as an adult.

In this new journey, my son has been my *hilo conector* -- the human who witnessed my growth, always reminding me not to leave behind my past learnings. It is Richard, my now 18-year-old young man, who deserves the loudest "*GRACIAS*." He spent his middle-school years putting himself on the school bus in the morning so I could go to my high school to teach our immigrant students, and putting himself to bed at the end of the day so I could go to my evening graduate classes at UNLV.

To my students throughout the years who sacrificed days without me so I could enjoy my space as a graduate student. They understood that our bilingual brains do not necessarily work on command when we get tired or stressed, and that mornings are the best time to focus and write in our second language.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Language Politics in the U.S.: A Country Built on Anti-Bilingual Sentiments

The benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism are not only cognitive – from working memory (Abutalebi, et al., 2015; Cummins, Baker, & Hornberger, 2001), benefiting academic writing (Hsin & Snow, 2017), and to the extent of protecting against cognitive decline (Blom, Küntay, Messer, Verhagen, & Leseman, 2014)-, but also emotional and societal (Baker & Wright, 2017; Cummins, Baker & Hornberger, 2001; García, 2009). In terms of schooling, it is not a new finding that there is no need to completely eradicate students' native language and replace it with English to teach non-English native speakers in an effective manner (Crawford, 1998). In fact, Cummins et al. (2001) explain the dangers of bilingual programs that are based on a transitory model (school classroom in which multilingualism is used until the student is capable to be mainstreamed into English-only classes) as the students could benefit of a longer bilingual program, both from an academic and emotional perspectives. From a historical perspective, the various waves of immigrants to the United States from across the globe have created a space that it is difficult to find in any other part of the world; a location where languages and cultures come together becoming, for most witnesses who see it from the distance, one of the most enviable spots in the world due to its cultural richness. Nevertheless, it is not until individuals are located within the geographic boundaries of this country when a true realization of the existence of racism and discrimination comes to light, as explained by Victor Ray et al. (2017), it is a reality that has been engraved in the cultural makeup of the United States since its inception (as cited in R. Reece, 2019).

Racism and racial inequality are a constant in American society. It took becoming a U.S. History public school teacher to pop the bubble I was raised in and break apart the "awesome"

rose-colored glasses that Gen-Xers wore while looking towards the U.S. and the possibilities that the country offered; my own version of the so-called "American Dream," perhaps? A "dream" in which my mother tongue (Spanish) has been steadily seen throughout American history through a deficit perspective, yet my background grants me a certain hierarchy among Spanish speakers in this country, a European heritage that allows for me not be labeled as a *deslenguada* (Anzaldúa, 1987). Should I be considered myself "lucky," or is it precisely this Eurocentric standpoint that has brought upon the demise of bilingual (and multilingual) education in this country? The answer to the first question is "to a certain extent," as the mentioned deficit perspective stops differentiating Spanish dialects as soon as we cross the border, and yes to the second one as every facet of the sociopolitical aspect of American society has been permeated by a domination of White Europeans in general, and White males in particular (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Education is simply another playing field in which this Eurocentric power is implemented (Delgado Bernal, 2002). And bilingual education is not foreign to this attempt of dominance, in this case, through the control of language and, as an extension, culture.

Background: My Teaching Journey

At some point in our childhood, the proverbial question is always brought up to light: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The human obsession to adjudicate a label to children that would shape both a child's personality and inclinations throughout his or her formative years, planting a seed that might have probably not been chosen by that human, but rather guided by the expectations that their elders have for them in this lifetime, as well as society as whole, appears to know neither cultural nor geographical boundaries. At least, it is my experience. Perceived compliments such as "*defensora de las causas perdidas"* ("defender of lost causes"), as my teachers would say; "*todos mis pacientes que me cuestionan se sientan en esa silla… y son todos*

abogados" ("all my patients who ask me questions seat at that chair… and they are all lawyers"), as my dentist would claim; *"ya tenés el escritorio en mi despacho para cuando te recibas"* ("you already have your desk at my office waiting for you to graduate"), as my paternal grandfather, Roberto, who was a lawyer, would say; and to the extent of hearing *"menos mal que va a seguir derecho porque las matemáticas y la física no le gustan"* ("she does not really like Math and Physics, so I am glad she will study Law"), my Mom, Julia, would state. My fate was practically sealed from the day I showed some attitude, critical thinking skills, and a curiosity for justice: Silvina shall follow in her grandfather's footsteps and become a lawyer. No one ever asked me if I would like to be an astronaut or thought about the fact that my bilingualism (product of my schooling, not home) could open doors that my parents never imagined. Up to seven years ago, my entire family seemed to have forgotten that my grandfather, the lawyer, was once a History teacher. It was only after a series of life events - from an extended shut-down of public education in Uruguay to a decision of relocating from Uruguay to the United States and working in fields unrelated to education - that my intuition finally guided me to becoming an educator, and eventually I stumbled upon the space of English as a Second Language.

Finding My Calling for Teaching in the Deep South

My journey as an educator started in 2013 in the Deep South of the United States, first in North Florida and then the state of Mississippi. Upon arriving to this country and spending more than a decade understanding the value of my bilingualism and my understanding of the so-called American culture and how to create bridges between it and the Latinx community in the United States through language, I was surprisingly ignorant about the value of my potential contributions to the American education system. I applied to my first teaching job: Spanish. My background was not in education, and I did not know other educators that could guide me, so I

figured I would attempt an entry from the most obvious starting point. I turned around almost immediately. I remember being confused and in disbelief of what I thought to be the "magnanimous" American education system – I only needed a few weeks to get an overview of the injustices, inequalities, and overall social issues that we see in our schools. Two more years had to pass for me to make another attempt into the field; the fact that it ended up being in Mississippi did not entirely help the cause as this state is among the lowest performing in the nation (Department of Education, 2011).

My first assignment was as a substitute teacher at the local high school in a small coastal town where half of the young White males in that first classroom I entered simply "ganged up" on me to request my so-called Green Card. I was at that school almost every day until I was offered a permanent assignment at the bigger town next door, as one of the three "English Learner Tutors," positions subsidized through a state grant that the school had secured for the second half of that school year. The purpose of the EL Tutors was to support the school's English as a Second Language (ESL). Shortly after these hirings, the mentioned ESL teacher left her position, and I would lead the class as I was fully licensed to teach. The following year, this experience opened space for me to teach Social Studies through the creation of a bilingual curriculum and implementation of a pedagogy based on a dual language model.

Teaching in Las Vegas, Nevada

Two years in the state of Mississippi then led me to five years (and counting) in the state of Nevada as a bilingual Social Studies teacher working in the fifth largest school district in the nation and the third largest in terms of emergent bilinguals (Clark County School District: Overview, n.d.). One would think that a state with such demographics would already have in place a bilingual education model, but the history of these types of programs in the state is

complex and controversial. My critical reflection of these experiences allowed not only to acquire a deep understanding of the history of the United States, a story founded on inequalities that are perpetuated until the present time, but also comprehending the potential spaces that exist to improve the teaching of English as a Second language in this country. Moreover, the use of funds of knowledge that students bring into the classrooms allows for the creation of multicultural and multilingual spaces that reflect students' "real" lives. I realized that even though we live in a country rich in diversity, both culturally and linguistically, it does not necessarily mean that our teacher workforce in public schools emulates this diversity.

The shortage of teachers of color in the K-12 education system is now well registered in the literature (Lac, 2019; Marrun, Plachowski, and Clark, 2019; TeKolste, 2018), a fact that entails a challenge to implement the recommendation of pursuing bilingual education programs under dual language models. Moreover, my experiences in the school system not only showed me the challenges in terms of educating our diverse population and our immigrant students, but I also learn about myself… about my own identity. My immersion in the public school system in the United States, in conjunction with my decision of pursuing a Ph. D. in Multicultural Education on my eleventh the eleventh year as a U.S. resident/citizen, placed me on a path of unlearning, learning, and unpacking of the so-called truths shown to me while growing up in "European" countries located in the Latin American continent – Argentina and Uruguay, especially their capital cities, are known as *"el París de Sudamérica"* ("the Paris of South America") and *"la Suiza de América"* ("the Swiss of South America"), respectively. I showed up to the U.S. as a White person and eventually learned that I was also a Latina. White based on the legacies of both my countries, not necessarily as I am perceived in this country. Historically, the U.S. has had an overall poor understanding of the homogeneity of people of Hispanic and Latinx

heritage (Gonzalez Burchard et al., 2005; Meier and Melton, 2012), and the exhausting fact of having to explain, justify, and explain myself on a daily basis, as well as witnessing my own diverse students of Hispanic and Latinx heritage having to face similar challenges in terms of their cultural and linguistic positionalities in this country, and as far as creating an identity crisis of neither being enough for their heritage side nor their U.S. side.

It is almost impossible for me to imagine an existence that would constrain me to act and experience life from only one dimension. My positionality between worlds, sometimes more than just two of them – because language does not constitute the only determinant of culture -, opened doors that would have otherwise would still be closed for both my professional and emotional advancement. I do not need to go far to "experience" life as seen from one single point of view, as this is my parents' reality. Although having to adapt to some of the challenges brought upon by the phenomenon of globalization, having to migrate from and to Argentina, Uruguay, Portugal, and at times to Angola and the United States, their truths remain somewhat static, and only being able to certain degrees of flexibility when shown and explained through their children's eyes… eyes that observe the world through a multilingual lens. Access to other languages and cultures, and all situations and experiences that are attached to these, was their gift to us.

Sociopolitical Context

Laws, regulations, policies, practices, traditions, and ideologies conform to the sociopolitical context of society; and this applies to the field of education, in general, and the space that language and its use occupies in education. Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode (2017) establish the sociopolitical context of multicultural education, language being one of its dimensions, by defining the goals and explaining the terminology that guides the field.

Concerning its goals, tackling inequality, and promoting access to an equal education; raising achievement of all students; and providing apprenticeships as critical and productive members of a democratic society, these are specific outcomes of the societal and educational aims set forth by the creation and implementation of strong (additive) bilingual education programs.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, current population statistics project an unprecedented growth from 2000 to 2050, from 282.1 million to 419.9 million, responding to the following breakdown: The White population will increase 7% and people of color are expected to become the majority in 2043. Subsequently, the latter group of people's growth is explained as follows: The African American population is expected to increase from 13.1% in 2012 to 14.7% in 2060; the Latina/o/x population will see an increase of more than double (from 15% of the total population to 30%), making 1 in 3 U.S. residents of Hispanic or Latina/o/x heritage; Asians are projected to grow from 5.1% to 8.2%; and American Indians and Alaska Natives are expected to grow from 1.2% to 1.5%; and finally, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population is expected to double from a total of 706,000 individuals (as cited in S. Nieto & P. Bode, 2017). Nieto & Bode (2017) add that the growing diversity in the U.S. "is the current number of foreign-born or first-generation U.S. residents (p. 17), reaching its highest level in the year 2000, and explain that more than half of the new immigrants are from Latin America. It is implicit in sociological circumstances that the growth in immigration is paired with an increase in linguistic diversity.

Specifically related to linguistically and culturally diverse students in the public school system, the federal report titled *Our Nation's English Learners* states that 10% of the total K-12 student population are emergent bilinguals ("ELs," as per the U.S. government narrative), accounting for more than 4,800,000 students (about twice the population of Mississippi) across

the country by 2014-2015 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Baker & Wright (2017) most recent numbers account for a growth of the EL population of 40.44% between 1994 and 2011. According to the abovementioned report, English Learners are students (whether foreign-born or U.S.-born) who are placed in English language instruction educational programs. The greatest number of schoolchildren who speak languages other than English at home are located in the following states: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Texas (García, 2009). Zehler et al. (2003), inform that the majority emergent bilinguals come from low socio-economic backgrounds, establishing that more than 75% of these families are classified under the poverty line, which is determined by the families who receive free or reduced-price school lunches within the community of emergent bilinguals (as cited in O. García, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The problem presented in this study refers to the challenges of bilingual education in the United States as social and political factors within the education field are delaying and, in many cases, creating impossible scenarios for the creation and implementation of these types of programs as the overarching model for language teaching and development. Ultimately, bilingual and multilingual educational spaces serve to foster a true multilingual and multicultural society in the United States. In turn, serving to challenge the vast and many inequality patterns that we see daily in our public schools (García, 2009). Moreover, authors Collier and Thomas (2009, 2014) state that bilingual education programs serve to close the achievement gap observed among emergent bilingual students.

The power of language to exhort dominion over different communities, particularly when these groups of people are classified as “minorities,” constitutes a fact reflected in the history of bilingual education in the United States. The imposition of English as the language of instruction from the early history of the country, as well as English-only policies as a language of instruction across various states are well-documented and the implications of these philosophies are widely known; and our bilingual and multilingual students and families have been suffering the effects of these decisions for the past several decades. Furthermore, the American society is currently understanding the consequences of monolingualism in an increasingly culturally diverse country and an ever-expanding globalized world.

In terms of our non-English dominant students, the absence of effective instruction of English as a foreign language paired with poor academic support in their native languages precludes students from demonstrating their full range of knowledge, to the extent of, in some instances, not being able to graduate from high school or not being up to the English language standards for college classes. Consecutively, in most of the cases, the families of emergent bilinguals and multilinguals tend to not understand English enough to participate and collaborate with educators and schools in the academic efforts of their children, if at all. This reality impedes the success of family engagement attempts by teachers, schools, and districts. Repeatedly, non-English dominant families are accused of “not caring” about the education of their children because they “do not participate” in it. The counter-story to this inaccurate allegation is two-fold: first, the system (from teachers to district offices) does not accurately close the gap pertaining to the language barrier that many families experience; and second, the system lacks enough cultural understanding to effectively communicate with families and invite them into the schools. The latter includes the psychological and emotional intricacies that are related to immigration status;

many families simply do not approach school buildings and/or educators because they are afraid due to their undocumented situations.

As a country, our communities are missing an opportunity to leverage the funds of knowledge brought into our public schools by our non-English dominant students and families. This translates into a greater matter that can even extend from economic losses to poor understanding of cultural richness and diversity in our communities. The economic disadvantages that arise from a lack of multilingualism in our schools range from the little appreciation for inherently bilingual individuals, as seen of the lack of additional remuneration in the labor market, to increase challenges to compete in a global market as it is rather common for people outside the United States to be fluent in an additional language, usually English as it is traditionally considered the lingua franca of business.

Purpose, Rationale and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this autoethnography is to contribute to the current academic literature promoting bilingual education and the academic advancement of our historically marginalized populations, particularly our students of Hispanic and Latinx heritage, through sharing a profound reflection of my seven-year experience as a secondary school teacher in the United States. This narration served to provide other educators with insights into the intricacies of language education, language policy, bilingual education, and an overall idea of the challenges that students, their families, and educators face in terms of ethnic discrimination based on the perception that student of Hispanic and Latinx heritage possess learning abilities below their counterparts from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Lumbreras et al., 2019; Orelus, 2012) and obstacles pertaining to academic courses and programs, as well as access to higher education (Morita et al., 2020). As a bilingual educator with almost a decade of experience I

learnt that sharing experiences with other educators is one of the most powerful ways of understanding all aspects of our educational environments. The niche of bilingual education, particularly teaching content area subjects, is limited and not extensively researched.

The rationale for my proposal to proceed with the current study was the research-based suggestions, as well as my own experience, that argue the value and efficiency of bilingual education in the teaching of the English language (Abello-Contesse, 2013; Baker et al., 2013; Baker and Wright, 2017; De Jong, 2002; García, 2009), as well as the improvement of cultural knowledge within any given community (García, 2009; Irizarry, 2016; Jackson and Malone, 2009; Nieto and Bode, 2017), potentially leading to a greater success of students further from their secondary education careers.

The importance of the proposed study is grounded on the power of autoethnographies to share an insider's perspective which, in turn, provides access to equity and achievement. Authors Allen, Hancock, and Lewis (2015) argue that, throughout history, ethnographies have been narrated by researchers who are usually disconnected from the core of the matter; "[a]utoethnography as a research methodology intermingles with personal narrative, dialogical moments, and the rebirth of memories in real-time spaces gives voice to the voiceless and access to the storied life and experience (p. 178)." This personal narration of my experiences and its corresponding reflections about bilingual education, the positionality and importance of teachers of color, and the understanding of how language has been historically used as a tool to discriminate and hinder access for Latinx students can be useful for other teachers who are embarking in the education field, as well as advocating for the abovementioned programs as a mean to improve language and multicultural education.

Brief Overview of Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology: Autoethnography

Autoethnography as a methodology is classified under the qualitative grouping of research studies (Boylorn & Orbe, 2013; Butz & Besio, 2009; Chawla & Atay, 2018; Graddol, 2016). As a subgenre of ethnography, it is defined as a tool that is designed and implemented by researchers who belong to the culture under observation and the tool itself includes the researcher as a participant (Hancock et al., 2015). Authors Boylorn and Orbe (2013) explain that this methodology "allows for both personal and cultural critique" (p. 17) grounding this statement on the intersectionality of individuals in the understanding that we are a product of all our cultures and relational experiences. The effect of this deep introspection and exercise of self-reflection, the researcher acknowledges, discovers, and changes the self (Merriweather, 2012). Upon utilizing a set of tenets that guide autoethnographic work as a theoretical framework and autoethnography on itself as a research methodology, allows to ground the narratives of people of color and position these in the center of the discourse. It is in the richness of the descriptions provided by the researcher that the significance of the contributions of any given autoethnographic work can be found to fill in the gaps in the various research bodies regarding that matter of study. In this case pertaining to the experience of a Latinx educator, the use of autoethnographic work as a methodology provides the following: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding. These tenants are used as a theoretical framework to inform this study.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The researcher created all data. The content of the data originated from two sources: 1. My own *narrativa* of past experiences; and 2. A collection of journal entries. These writings focused on my practice and showed and reflected an introspection process regarding my own practice, as well as the system. Sharing the story of my upbringing, my immigration to the United States, and ultimately my pursue of bilingual teaching first as an English As A Second language teacher and later as a bilingual Social Studies teacher setting bilingual environments for emergent bilinguals and other students more advanced in their English language acquisition allowed me to explain future educators how to teach critically through a multicultural education lens (García, 2009; Irizarry, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto, 2012) while, at the same time, advocating and empowering students by teach them how to think critically and tearing down linguistic barriers through programs that have proven to be effective, such as those under the umbrella of bilingual education (Baker and Wright, 2017; De Jong, 2002; García, 2009; Krashen, 2004; Palmer and Henderson, 2016).

Research Questions

The following questions framed my proposed study to connect my experiences as an educator of color to the current state of education for our emergent bilinguals, including bilingual education programs and language policies.

A. How does autoethnography enable understanding of the needs of emergent bilinguals in the sociopolitical context of local and federal language policies in the United States?

    a. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from journal entries crafted by the author of this study?

b. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from state and national news pieces between the years 2015 and 2020?

Operational Definitions

In regards to terminology, a quick note moving forward: Although both the majority of the literature and the U.S. government narrative refer to students who are learning English as a foreign language (foreign to the students), as their second or third language, as "English Learners" (ELs), I subsequently referred to this group of language students either as *linguistically and culturally diverse* or, for the most part, due to the nature of this paper which focuses on the field of bilingual education, as *emergent bilinguals*. The rationale for this terminology is based on a desire to reject the deficit narrative and attitude regarding language and, as an extension, cultural background, race, ethnicity, and nationality. The "need" to learn English does not entail neither an intellectual deficiency nor a lesser place within American society (España & Herrera, 2020). On the contrary, as we shall see, being bilingual (and multilingual) benefits the human brain and in relation to the opportunities that individuals can enjoy within their own communities and on a global scale.

The term *Latinx* is hereinafter used to refer to this specific demographic, encompassing not only non-binary folks, but also males and females. The term Latinx is, therefore, used as a gender-neutral vocab (Salinas & Lozano, 2017) to refer to all members of the mentioned community. To maintain and respect the language associated to this group, Spanish, I used the term *Latina* and *Latino*, but to refer to individuals in accordance with the correct Spanish grammar, namely a female of Latin descent and a male of Latin descent. The denomination is controversial as it does not entail the same meaning as the sometimes used Hispanic/Hispano/a/Hispanx (the question here would be if it is possible -or even needed- to

apply the same rational to this term). The fact that people outside the U.S. do not identify themselves as such, but they rather create an identity based on their country of origin, isolates, and complicates the differentiation regarding this terminology. For all intends and purposes of the current narrative, and correspondingly to the nomenclature established by the United States Census Bureau (2017), which does not distinguish between the terms, the Latina/o/x is used to refer as stated by the mentioned government office in order to avoid confusion during the collection of the literature regarding the topic in hand:

> "Hispanic or Latino" [sic] as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. People who identify with the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" [sic] are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino [sic] categories listed on the decennial census questionnaire and various Census Bureau survey questionnaires.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The goal of this literature review was to examine, analyze, and synthesize the literature with the objective of better understanding the situation of Latinx high school students across public schools in the United States in terms of their English language acquisition, as well as the development of their bilingual and bicultural skills and, in some cases, multilingual and multicultural competences. In order to understand this positionality of Latinx high school students who are emergent bilinguals, there needs to be an understanding not only of the evolution of language teaching and learning in the United States, but more specifically the history of bilingual education, including the politics behind this educational modality. Furthermore, in the case of Latinx students, the Spanish language (or any other language besides English) in the public-school environment has historically been deemed as something to be "fixed," "remediated" for students to be able to be successful in their academic careers in the United States.

The literature review is grouped under the following topics: a) Methodological Literature, b) Latinx students in the United States, c) Bilingual education, and d) Language programs and policies in American public schools. Upon reviewing this literature in a collective manner, the research demonstrates a need to restructure language education for our emergent bilinguals in public schools across the United States in order for them to succeed in both their language acquisition and their lives beyond high school, as well as the need to move from a deficit perspective into an asset-based standpoint in order to witness a cultural change beyond the school classrooms. While the historical portions of the review do not fall under time constraints in terms of the antiquity selection of the research, the literature provided specifically about both

methodology and bilingual education programs respect a set 10 to 15-year period. The research on bilingual education has changed, and the recommendation is to allow for a full cycle (K-12) to run to better understand the challenges and successes of any given program.

Latinx Students in the United States

Jason Irizarry (2016) writes about the *Latinization* of U.S. schools to convey the reality that the increase of the Latinx presence in this country throughout the past 20 years have influenced every single aspect of the fabric of the "American" culture and communities. The Latinx community currently amounts to 14% of the U.S. population, but not all Latinos and Latinas are the same. Within the Latinx community, for example, those individuals who come from a Mexican heritage do not share the same cultural traits as those from Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, etc.; to the extent that, even though they share a "common" language, namely Spanish, the dialects and regionalisms of the language are as vast as the Central and South American continents, and the Caribbean region. Glazer & Moynihan (1963) claim that this so-called Latinization happens due to the "unassimilable" nature of Latinx people (as cited in J. Irizarry, 2016). Nevertheless, a desire to maintain one's language and culture does not necessarily entail a lack of capacity to learn the elements and characteristics of the new culture, but rather what we have been observing for more than a decade here in the U.S. is a *fusión* of cultures that give space to a new type of Latinx known as *fusionistas* in the field of multicultural advertising, those youngsters who, by now, merged their two -or more- cultures to give space to a sub-culture rich in shared traditions (Insúa, 2012; Rodríguez, 2018).

The legislation in terms of the inclusion of Latinx students in the field of education has been, historically, particularly used to impose an assimilation process of the immigrant population into the "American" culture, to the extent of being used as a tool to discriminate

members of this community (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009; Irizarry, 2016; Nieto & Bode, 2017). The Jim Crow Era assisted this endeavor through English-only laws as the ones implemented and enforced in the state of California during the 1960s with the purpose of reducing the space in society that *Chicanas/os/x* had been occupying since the beginning of this country's history, albeit its growth, as portrayed by the education of the children of Mexican migrants (Baker & Wright, 2017; González, 2000).

Today, Latinx students are either U.S.-born or foreign-born (needs source). Among these students, there exists a distinction among some between their home language and their predominant language. Some U.S.-born students consider English their mother tongue, even though the language spoken at home is Spanish. Others, consider Spanish their primary language as it is the one that they have learned and used until the time of entering into the education system; and see a shift from Spanish to English in terms of their primary language due, precisely, to the format in which public schools in the U.S. are structured in regards to all those who "speak a language other than English at home" -as stated in the home language surveys that families have to complete at the time of registering for school- (García, 2009).

The English level of foreign-born Latinx students varies, and since traditionally the language of instruction in U.S. school has been English, several laws at the federal level protect the rights of those students who cannot fully access their education due to a language barrier. From the 1974 landmark case of *Lau v. Nichols* to the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the U.S. government provides guidelines through *The Lau Remedies* to assure families that school systems throughout the country follow the *Lau* decision in relation to accurately servicing students who do not comprehend the language of instruction. In the same year, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 was created to also protect the language rights of

students who do not have English as their native language. Bilingual education happened to materialize through both the *Lau* case and EEOA as the model of choice for teaching emergent bilingual students in the decades of 1970 and 1980 (Nieto & Bode, 2017). Notwithstanding the importance of the abovementioned pieces of legislation, the status of bilingual education in the U.S. is not even in the vicinity of fulfilling its full potential for the betterment of our students, particularly our immigrant families (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009). Currently, it is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law by President Obama in 2015, that supersedes its predecessor and grants states more flexibility at the time of making decisions regarding low performing schools. Furthermore, among other stipulations, states are required to take into consideration other factors and realities besides tests scores at the time of evaluating schools which, as Baker & Wright (2017) argue, could signify the creation and implementation of innovative programs and models for students to learn the English language. If states can seize the moment and there is enough human capital and knowledge within school districts, the understanding of the social and academic benefits of bilingual programs could transform these into a hard-to-refuse educational choice for Latinx and native English speakers in the United States.

The Impact of School Tracking on Latinx Students: Racial and Socioeconomic Segregation

Nunn (2011) studied classroom dynamics in order to demonstrate that school context plays an integral role in academic success. This study categorized Latinx students based on the types of courses they completed, namely: High-level (such as AP and Honors classes), General Curriculum, and Alternative High-level courses. The first space was recognized as a White space while the second one was concluded to be a Latino space. In either space, the overall school context contributed to exacerbating racial and ethnic tensions among students. The researcher

also observed that the ethnic and racial background of the individual classroom teachers further contributed to the tension both inside and outside the classroom. Nunn concludes that these tensions and school environment perpetuates the poor numbers of Latinx students in college campuses because these tensions increase the difficulty for Latinx students not necessarily to in terms of fulfilling their graduation requirements, but to continue into their tertiary studies. Other authors further support this statement by allowing Latinos in high school "speak for themselves," explaining that the overarching theme of their study focuses on the disconnect in terms of understanding what being an "educated individual" means, and collectively attributing their failures to a disconnect in terms of work ethics and future goals (Halx & Ortiz, 2011). Tae Jang (2019) also argues that there exists a relationship between the experiences of Latinx secondary school students and the "intersections of multiple social constructs," explaining these students' general educational outcomes through a critical quantitative intersectionality lens variable such as math achievement score, experience of school suspensions, exposure to high-quality teachers, and attention to the overall demographic composition of schools that the Latinx students attend. Interestingly, the author further analyzes and explains that there is also a correlation between school experiences and academic success based on the specific ethnic backgrounds of the various Latinx students. Thus, the experience and success of a Mexican student is different from students of Caribbean origins or from the South American region.

Research also shows that not all Latinx students perceive the abovementioned challenges in the same manner. Banner and Graham (2011) observe that reports related to discrimination presented by Latinx students are greater during their first two years of high school. Moreover, their study found that Latinx students who are language brokers for their parents are more likely to note discriminatory situations in the school context. These authors further explain that it is

those students who tend to recognize themselves as heavily leaning towards the U.S. culture the ones who suffer the most in this linguistic role that tries to bridge their two cultures and establish a relationship between their home and school lives.

Correspondingly, the reality of the existence of subtractive schooling contributes and perpetuates the students' desires to be more "American," at least in the way that is widely understood both inside and outside the United States' borders. Valenzuela (1999) argues that this type of approach responds to an attempt to force a cultural assimilation through which institutional structures established by state mandates and regulations entail a "de-identification" or "de-Mexicanization" of students who are of Hispanic or Latino descent. Therefore, contributing with the process of being more "American" not necessarily because it is a discussion that might be happening at home as a form of "adapting," but because Latinx students are "following instructions"; Latinx students are being observed by the "language police" (Irizarry, 2011) that is set up to explain to our students that if English is the language of instruction as determined by the U.S. Government, then the practice should be to use it in every space possible.

Linguistic Segregation

This use of language as a tool to segregate and discriminate leads, then, to the following question: How much power does language have? The degree of this power is based on whose interests are served using language in a certain way or attempting to accomplish a particular purpose. Ultimately, it is about the beneficiaries. The purpose of understanding the relationship between language and power is to recognize the fact that language lacks neutrality as a communication tool, and its role in every way we express ourselves (through writing, speaking, etc.) builds the ideas of what we think about ourselves and others (Janks, 1995). Reid & Ng

(1999) argue that there are four main characteristics in terms of the relationship between language and power, namely: 1. Language reflects power; 2. Language creates power; 3. Language depoliticizes power; and 4. Language routinizes power (p. 121). The first and second themes address how the stylistic part of language (e.g., low and high-status speakers, using powerless and less powerless forms of language) shows up in society, which shall be a matter for another study. On the other hand, depoliticization of power through language is important in order to understand the processes of social maintenance and change, as this approach has at its core the formation of stereotypes. It is through the understanding and use of routinization that the perpetuation of the stereotype created has the capacity to "stick"; it is a linguistic routinization of dominance that allows the imposition of one group over another. Reid & Ng (1999) use military conquest or colonization to illustrate the dynamic between depoliticization and routinization, thus explaining the relationship between language and power.

English as a colonizing language occupies an unequal space within the "American" people, a dominant one, reflecting the "asymmetrical, master-subject power relation" (Reid & Ng, 1999) as regards to the languages of immigrants and Indigenous peoples to this territory. Linguistic imperialism was and still is the reality of all those groups considered as [linguistic] "minorities" in the U.S. Baker & Wright (2017) argue that is not necessarily the language that is dominating, but rather the individuals who take part in its use; it is the individuals the ones who are oppressors and dominators. Moreover, the use and abuse of this tool, language, by those in a position of power and influence only becomes dangerous when it [English] "is made the symbolic scapegoat for political and economic domination" (p. 82). According to Graddol (2006), English appears to have reached its peak and predictions show the trend of its global use going down, giving space to other languages such as Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese Mandarin as

languages of trade, commerce and technology (as cited in Baker & Wright, 2017). [English] Monolingualism has already started to be considered as being lacking in knowledge both from a linguistic and a cultural perspective. The world is increasing its demand for languages other than English in every field, from trade to technology. This is not only the socio-political context that our Latinx students must face on their everyday lives, but more specifically within every single one of their school classrooms. Taking away their language contributes to the progressive elimination of their own heritage cultures.

As briefly mentioned, another indicator of the space that Latinx high school students are able to occupy in our high schools is their college access based on the offerings that they have available in terms of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Honors classes, and even the encouragement to enter into programs such as the International Baccalaureate (IB). Authors Walker & Pearsall (2012) explain that policy factors that affect the participation of Latinx students in the abovementioned programs are secondary to causes guided by socio-cultural experiences and positionality of these students. These authors found the that the following reasons were the most predominant: college non-accessibility contributes to loss of hope and loss of success motivation; cost of the high school programs, as well as a lack of understanding about college financing; issues related to peer relations and peer pressure; students are afraid of not doing well in AP course; and students feel like they don't fit into AP classes. This study also quotes the following socio-cultural factors as the prevalent ones at the time of explaining the achievement of Latinx students: peer teasing in school; conditions for different groups are not equal in regards to college access; Latinx underachieve to be accepted and avoid teasing "school Mexican" or "turning White"; racial labeling via ethnic check boxes on forms linked to perceived racial bias and course misplacement; exclusionary dress codes or judgment linked to

style and/or clothing brand name; lack of support and/or information access for non-English-speaking parents; and finally, living on the "wrong" side of town.

Moreover, research also shows that it is not uncommon for Latinx students to have difficulties at the time of wanting to meet with their respective counselors with the purpose of both address their current high school academics, as well as to get informed regarding college opportunities (Chlup et al., 2019). From an educator's perspective, it is quite alarming to have research prove the poor perception that students have regarding the role of high school counselors. The qualitative study presented by Martínez, Vega & Márquez (2019), even though it focuses on charter schools, indicates that there is "little attention [given] to those needing the most help: the millions of English language learners…" (p. 29), and further arguing that the situation of this demographic in charter schools does not appear to be much different to that of Latinx students who are emergent bilinguals in public school environments.

Bilingual Education

Bilingual Education Defined

Upon defining bilingual education, García (2009) offers a definition that moves away from the more traditional American perception, stating that these types of programs should not be created with the idea that a bilingual individual is such due to the sum of two independent languages that he or she has acquired, but it must be considered as a mean to assist students to become "global and responsible citizens as they learn to function across cultures and worlds." The author continues by specifically addressing the situation of immigrants, refugees, Indigenous peoples, minorities that are original from that region of the world, and many African and Asian children, explaining the importance of a bilingual education program that focuses on the

mentioned cultural and integrational aspects of educating these students in their second (geographically dominant) language.

Although bilingual education does not entail neither a new field nor a new topic of discussion-bilingual schooling dates, at least, from 4,000 to 5,000 years ago; and Roman aristocratic families chose for their boys to be educated bilingually in the Greek and Latin languages as it was considered to be a rich addition to their academics and daily lives (García, 2009)-, defining the actual term is a complex matter that envelops geopolitical, sociopolitical, and even economic factors not necessarily due to the education field in itself, but the controversy is the result of how to manage one of its components: language.

From an academic perspective, Abello-Contesse (2013) explains that the notion of bilingual education constitutes a broad term, an umbrella concept seen first in the literature within the United States during the 1970s, utilized to identify the use of two or more languages for teaching and learning based on the objectives of that curriculum, namely: bilingualism and biliteracy as long-term goals. Baker and Wright (2017) claim that the concept of bilingual education in this country dates from the previous decade, in 1963. The definition provided by these two authors does not focus on the existence of two different languages, but rather on the major types of bilingual education. The rationale for this definition relies on the explanation that, when the concept is used as an “umbrella term,” the praxis of this type of education deprives it from accomplishing its main objective. The general idea of bilingual education claims that a classroom where instruction encourages and supports bilingualism and a classroom where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not taken into consideration as part of the curriculum are both considered as environments where bilingual education is happening, thus the necessity to establish the term based on its types and denote goals in order to determine how and

with what purpose a bilingual education is present in any given environment. Following this train of thought, Baker and Wright (2017) differentiate between *transitional bilingual education* (compensatory), *maintenance bilingual education*, and *enrichment bilingual education* (two-way programs). The purpose of the first type is to "shift the child from the home, minority language to the dominant, majority language" (p. 197); the second type aims to "foster the minority language in the child, and the associated culture and identity" (p. 197); finally, the goal of the enrichment type is to "extend the individual and group use of minority languages, leading to cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity" (p. 197). This trifold classification is seen in relation to immigrants, students who need to acquire the majority language in order to "function" in an effective manner both at school and within society.

García (2009) contributes to the abovementioned typification of bilingual education, but explains it more in depth by taking into consideration the types of children that are candidates for the programs, and argues that, in practice, the models constitute foundational guidelines for schools and educators as these should adapt the programs to the sociolinguistic environment in which they will be put in practice, as well as considering the needs and wishes of the community and parents, without forgetting the reality of the teaching force and educational material (how many teachers are prepared and qualified to teach in bilingual education programs?) Therefore, bilingual education programs are created based on the status of bilingualism, which can be classified as follows: 1. As a problem (when powerless language minorities are educated in isolation); 2. As a privilege for enrichment (when educating the elite); 3. As a right (when educating students who belong to a language minority but they have gained a certain degree of agency through having obtained power and rights); and 4. As a resource (a. integrated and mixed

classrooms with language majority and language minority students are educated together, and b. teaching and learning bilingually all students in a specific region or state).

Since bilingual education is not merely constrained to standards or curriculum, but it is a topic that is highly politically charged, the term itself varies throughout different geographic regions and based on historically related issues. Abello-Contesse (2013) clarifies this matter explaining that in Canada the terminology used is "immersion education," while in the educational context of the United States bilingual education is currently referred as "dual language/two-way programs," and finally, within the European context, the contemporary terminology for bilingual education is known as "content and language (L2) integrated learning (CLIL)." In terms of the latter, even though it is widely used solely in Europe, as explained above, García (2009) argues that, approximately as of the year 2000, "whole countries, and even supranational bodies, have begun to support bilingual education for all its citizens in the form of teaching one to two subjects in an additional language" (p. 130). Consequently, plurilingualism within the children themselves should be expected, a reality that is determined by geographical and sociopolitical factors.

Types of Bilingual Education

All models of bilingual education need to be mindful of the facts explained through the sociocultural theory of learning, in terms of creating a model that is founded on the idea that no classroom should rely only on the use of a second language. The level of comfort of each and every student at the time of communicating their ideas and/or questions needs to be determined by whichever language the student feels capable of better expressing under that particular circumstance (Baker, Jones, & Lewis, 2013). This language phenomenon is known as *translanguaging*. Swain & Lapkin (2005) explain that approach allows students to improve their

learning and the development of their second or third language (as cited in C. Baker et al., 2013). Other advantages of translanguaging include helping students develop their oral communication and literacy skills in the language that they are less proficient; allows a greater cooperation between the school and parents as the latter can assist their children with homework and other related school activities; and finally, facilitates integration of fluent L1 speakers and L2 learners of various language levels (Baker et al., 2013). Although it might appear to be a strategy solely reserved to bilingual or multilingual educators, translanguaging is a natural occurrence during the language acquisition process and it is also observed beyond the process (Choi et al., 2018). In the more common jargon, this process is known as Spanglish (the hybrid language combination of words and idioms of the Spanish and English languages), Chinglish (the hybrid language combination of words and idioms of the Chinese Mandarin and English languages), Portuñol (the hybrid language combination of words and idioms of the Portuguese and Spanish languages), etc. Monolingual teachers are capable of supporting instances of translanguaging by becoming well-versed in the language acquisition process, as well as understanding their own unconscious biases and become more culturally aware to enhance their practice.

Baker & Wright (2017) provide the following tables to illustrate the typology of program models for bilingual students. These foundational models constitute a fusion with García's statements regarding the sociopolitical realities of the students that are chosen to be in these programs. These models also consider a more holistic view of the students' lives as the goals set forth understand that school is not the only dimension of their lives, determining whether the program assists students to maintain their own cultural values. The second aim of these models is guided by the language outcome, namely, whether the model attempts to maintain, encourage, and improve the students' heritage language.

Table 1: Typology of program models for bilingual students

Type of Program	Type of Child	Language of Classroom	Societal & Educational Aim	Language Outcome
Monolingual Forms of Education				
Mainstreaming/Submersion	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Mainstreaming/Submersion with Pull Out Majority Language Instruction Support	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Sheltered (Structured) Immersion	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Segregationist	Language minority	Minority language (forced)	Apartheid	Monolingualism
Weak Forms of Bilingual Education (Subtractive)				
Transitional	Language minority	Moves from minority to majority lang.	Assimilation/ Subtractive	Relative monolingualism
Mainstreaming with World (Foreign) Language Teaching	Language majority	Majority lang. with L2/FL lessons	Limited enrichment	Limited bilingualism
Separatist	Language minority	Minority lang. (out of choice)	Detachment/A utonomy	Limited bilingualism
Strong Forms of Bilingual Education (Additive)				
Immersion	Language majority	Bilingual with initial emphasis on L2	Pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy

Maintenance/Heritage Language	Language minority	Bilingual with emphasis on L1	Maintenance, pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Two-way/Dual Language	Mixed language minority and majority	Minority and majority	Maintenance, pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Mainstream Bilingual	Language majority	Two majority languages	Maintenance, and biliteracy and enrichment	Bilingualism

(Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 199; García, 2009).

In addition to the consideration of program models for bilingual students based on both subtractive and additive, the remaining piece of the puzzle to create non-monolingual programs takes into consideration the amount of time that needs to be allocated to each language. Subtractive dual language programs are either relatively monolingual or are created with a mindset of having a classroom where bilingualism is limited. Additive dual language programs promote not only bilingualism, but also biliteracy. In this context, it is important to determine the model to be followed in terms of the amount of use of each language in the classroom, and the rationale behind this use. The California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) (n.d.) states that, in the United States, the most common models based on the time factor are the 90:10 and the 50:50, referring to the percentage of instructional time in each language. The first one, entails using the target language during 90% of the instructional time and English during 10% of instructional time. Likewise, the second most common model entails using both the target language and English half of the time during instruction. The current practice is for the 90:10 model to start in kindergarten and increase the amount of instruction in English from year to year

of schooling, namely: In kindergarten the model will follow a 90:10 format; in first grade the model will follow an 80:10 format; in second grade the model will follow a 70:10 format, and so on and so forth until reaching a 50:50 model in fourth grade and beyond. CABE (n.d.) explains that many of the programs see a reduction in terms of instruction in the target language at the secondary level, often observing a format of 30%-40% or a minimum of 2 courses or classes. The justification for this model is not a lack of interest in bilingual education -the program already exists, which entails that the state/district/school culture has accepted its existence-, but rather driven by the lack of highly qualified bilingual/biliterate teachers with a secondary credential in that specific subject area.

Common Approaches to Bilingual Education and its Effectiveness

Most dual language programs are created and implemented in schools as a strand (De Jong & Bearse, 2014). In terms of practice and implementation, as stated earlier, the most common dual language models in the United States are the 90:10 (progressive) and the 50:50, which take into consideration the percentage of instruction in the target language and in English. This reality is observed in K-8 environment and, upon advancing grade levels, dual language programs become more difficult to find throughout the nation (De Jong, 2002). Additionally, the format of dual language programs is usually on a one-way or two-way basis, in accordance with the type of students participating in the program. The first one is formed by students who have one of the languages used in the model (e.g., immigrant student from Spanish-speaking countries, thus Spanish is one of the two languages). The goal of this model is for students to become bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate. Both languages are used during instruction. The second model sets forth the participation of two language groups of students with the same objective as the first model (e.g., group of students encompassed by Spanish-speakers and

English-speakers who learn in both languages). The district or school choice between one or the other depends on human capital, both in terms of teachers (educators who are trained and specialize in bilingual education) and students (grade level, number of students who belong to the same language group, etc.). Unless it is designated as a newcomers' class (English language courses specifically designed for students who do not speak English, where all language groups other than English are placed together in the same environment), schools in the U.S. tend to opt for the two-way bilingual education model (immersion) as it is the "safest." Education is a politically charged environment (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009), and accusations of segregating students are in the forefront of many administrators' thought processes, particularly at the secondary school level.

At the time of evaluating the effectiveness of dual language education, Krashen (2004) argues that these types of programs tend to be successful but criticize the different studies explaining that they tend to have small sample sizes, are short-term instead of being set forth as longitudinal studies, they possess inadequate control variables such as social class and initial language differences and are prone to ignore variations in design and program. Nevertheless, this is only in reference to the acquisition of the English language. The success of dual language programs needs to be determined by establishing the degree of achievement of all goals of these types of programs (e.g., Spanish literacy, English literacy, cultural mindfulness and awareness, etc.). Due to matter that, for the most part, students that enter dual language programs are not randomly select, but rather chosen with specific goals in mind, further explains that when these programs thrive, it is not easy to compartmentalize the nature of its success (as cited in Baker & Wright, 2017). Is it based on the program design, the characteristics of the students, maybe both, and might it be due to the quality of the teachers?

Baker & Wright (2017) explain that the studies of Lindholm-Leary are "the most rigorous and comprehensive evaluations" (p. 252) of dual language schools, having had evaluated programs that included transitional bilingual education, English-only, 90:10 models, and 50:50 models. In summary, Lindholm-Leary (2001) establishes that the success of dual language programs is evidenced in the students' elevated level of language proficiency, achievement of academic goals, and even students' attitudes towards the program and the way that teaching and learning is implemented through its various models (as cited in Baker & Wright, 2017). Furthermore, upon comparison, emergent bilinguals who receive "English language education" in mainstream classes lack the academic knowledge and vocabulary that they need to be successful in understanding content well, "even after 10 years of English instruction" (Baker & Wright, 2017).

An interesting finding of this current research of the field of bilingual education in terms of the effectiveness of the various models is the widespread approach on focusing on the elementary school level. As previously stated, most of the programs in dual language education are found at the elementary school level. There is a gap in the literature and the research in terms of evaluating bilingual education programs at the secondary school level, and a greater gap at the time of having enough information and data to compare the success of these programs to the lower levels, as well as the impact that the latter ones might have on emergent bilinguals and their careers during their secondary school years. Baker & Wright (2017) argue that the importance of eradicating the mentioned gap relies on the fact, as mentioned, education is a political issue, and specifically bilingual education. One of the most prominent research limitations constitutes its impossibility to provide evidence-based policy and can only grant evidence-informed policy which might put in jeopardy the creation and implementation of

bilingual education programs based on the political ideology *de turno* (depending on who is in office at that particular moment in time).

Historically, bilingual education programs (and other English language acquisition models such as the ESL one), or the lack thereof, have been utilized as a tool to discriminate and even segregate. Furthermore, even though bilingual programs across the country can be traced back to the early 2000s, and even after the ban on bilingual education has been lifted on states such as California (only as recent as the year 2016), the gap in the literature is significant. This current ethnographic study aims to contribute to closing the mentioned gap by narrating and evaluating a first-hand experience that is now in its eighth year of implementation.

Language Programs and Policies in U.S. Public Schools

Classification of Students Who Speak English as a Second Language

In terms of U.S. federal legislation regarding non-native English speakers, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the first major law specifically addressing the protection of this demographic. The law does not explicitly refer to language minority groups in the United States, but rather refers to the consideration of "national origin," and its interpretation has been accepted across the board to include immigrants and non-immigrants who are emergent bilinguals or multilinguals (Baker & Wright, 2017; Gándara & Orfield, 2012; García, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2017).

The Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) within the United States Department of Education (USDOE) (2017) does not necessarily provide a definition of an individual who speaks English as a second language for the purposes of classroom instruction, but the most recent federal law in regard to emergent bilinguals, the Every Student Succeeds Act

(ESSA) signed by President Obama in 2015, refers to them as English Learners (ELs) officially defining these students as those who are

> ages 3-21, enrolled in elementary or secondary education, born outside the United States or speaking a language other than English in their homes, and not having sufficient mastery of English to meet state standards and excel in an English-language classroom (as cited in García & Kleifgen, 2018, p. 16).

OELA explains how to determine and assess students who need to learn English. The *"English Learner" Toolkit*, following the guidelines established in ESSA, establishes a Home Language Survey (HLS) as a focal document to determine the linguistic background of students. By definition, it is a questionnaire given by the districts to the parents or guardians which purpose is to inform schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) about the potential classification of a student as an emergent bilingual, thus instituting the need for that student to be formally assessed through an English proficiency test in order to determine the level of English language services that the student will need at the school. The creation of the HLS is the states' prerogative, but the report explains that it "typically includes questions about what language(s) the student first learned, understands, uses, and hears, and in what contexts" (p. 1). The reality of this home language survey is both the frequent under-representation and over-representation of emergent bilinguals. Many students are placed in English acquisition educational programs due to both a poorly worded tool and schools failing to fully education families about this cultural and linguistic background evaluation tool. For example, some students who are English native speakers, and whose parents did not indicate in the HLS that there are other languages spoken at home besides English, ultimately do not receive English language support (Bailey & Kelly, 2013; Dulay & Burt, 1980; Goldenberg & Rutherford Quach, 2010).

The HLS is the first step of many in the process of classifying a student as an emergent bilingual and indicating the need for English language services. Upon determining a potential emergent bilingual student through the HLS, the student's English level is assessed through a language proficiency test, for example the screener created by WIDA Consortium which, according to its website, the group is encompassed by 40 U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies whose goals are to design and implement support systems that will assist emergent bilinguals in elementary and secondary schools. The expectation is for these structures to be of high quality and mindful of the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students that need this educational foundation. The WIDA Consortium claims that their systems are based on research and feedback from educators, as well as created in accordance with standards, assessments, and professional learnings (WIDA Consortium, n.d.).

States who are not part of the consortium tend to develop their own language proficiency examinations, such as the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). The California Department of Education (n.d.) establishes that this battery of tests follows the language development standards established by the state, involving one test to identify students as emergent bilinguals and a second one to track their language learning process. The state of Texas constitutes another example outside the WIDA Consortium. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) -which appears to have a strong deficit perspective of emergent bilinguals as reflected by the state's denomination of this group of students as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students-, designed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) to evaluate the progress of emergent bilinguals in terms of their English language acquisition. The TELPAS, as well as state-mandated tests -State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)- and the TELPAS Alternate (administered to emergent bilinguals who are in a special education

program) are overseen by Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPACs), instructed of servicing the needs of emergent bilingual students. Notwithstanding this structure, the state of Texas also establishes home language surveys as the starting point to determine whether a student needs to be classified as an emergent bilingual and be provided with pertinent language services as mandated by federal regulation (Texas Education Agency, 2019). The states of California and Texas are used to illustrate the model for emergent bilinguals outside the WIDA Consortium states based on having a high concentration of these types of students in some of their districts, understood as districts where linguistically and culturally diverse students classified as such represent at least 20% of the student population. According to the USDOE's report *Our Nation's English Learners* (n.d.), among the ten school districts with the greatest number of emergent bilinguals, three of these are in California and five can be found in the state of Texas. Number four and number eight in the list are Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia and Denver County School District 1 in Colorado, respectively.

The last note relevant to the classification of students who have English as a second (or third) language is regarding the length of time that any given of these students has been distinguished as such. Kim, Shernaz, & García (2014) explain the merits of the challenges surrounding *long-term "English learners."* These bilingual students are considered as "long-term" because they have attended public schools in the United States for, at least, 7 years; they have received English language services during their entire career in this schools and are still considered to need special considerations regarding their language "barrier" in accordance with the English proficiency as determined by state and federal guidelines. Kim et al. argue that most of the time, the English language programs that are in place in schools neither reflect nor address the educational and emotional necessities that these students show up with to their classrooms.

The format of these English language programs is usually designed to teach newcomers, students who have recently arrived in the United States and need English language support. Furthermore, on many instances, these programs, at least at the secondary school level, are conducted as remedial environments to attempt to provide emergent bilinguals with the "survival" skills necessary to navigate the school environment or their classes which function entirely in a language that they do not comprehend -English. Moreover, many schools and districts lack effective communication strategies to reach both students and families (García & Kleifgen, 2018) which, in turn, translates into a poor relationship between educators, students, and families. These deficient interpersonal relationships, paired with a precarious knowledge with respect to the assessments of emergent bilinguals (e.g., English placement, WIDA testing, etc.) perpetuates the stay of students in the English language program. In other words, students' participation in the annual WIDA assessment or similar is mandatory and the window provided by the state is usually short (approximately, 3 weeks); students are chased and raided into a test which purpose is not entirely clear to them, or students do not understand the impact and importance of the assessment and perform poorly on it. Consequently, districts that heavily rely on these types of assessments to determine the continuation of students in an English language program might find themselves with a higher among of emergent bilinguals than what reality would dictate. These circumstances appear to be quite difficult to find illustrated in the existing literature.

Emergent Bilingual Students

Historically, the lingo utilized in the United States to refer to K-12 students (as well as at tertiary educational level) whose native tongue is not English and/or who speak other language(s) at home besides English has responded to the negative viewpoint of linguistic

understanding. The terminology is still used across legislation, as well as the common vocabulary educators, districts, and states. The most widely used are English Language Learners (ELLs), English Learners (ELs), Limited English Learners (LEPs), along with the expression students of English as A Second Language (ESL), and students of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The last two uses are not considered to convey a negative connotation as these are also common terms outside the United States. On the other hand, ELLs/ELs/LEPs denote from the very first instance a deficit that the student has in terms of communication capabilities, in this case a linguistic one.

Sonia Nieto and Patti Bode (2017) establish that the term *emergent bilingual* has been "popularized by Ofelia García and her colleagues" (p. 185), and it is an expression that embodies the reality of the cultural richness that these students bring into their classrooms through their experiences and home languages (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2018; Nieto & Bode, 2017; Palmer & Henderson, 2016). The expression *linguistically and culturally diverse* students also transmits the funds of knowledge that characterize these students and that educators could embrace and incorporate into classroom lessons and interactions with these students' families. Nevertheless, due to the strong positionality that Ofelia García occupies within the group of scholars that specialize in bilingual and multicultural education, the term *emergent bilinguals* appears to have extended throughout the literature. Notwithstanding this fact, this choice of words also entails a deficit perspective in the sense that assumes that English will be the one and only additional language that the students will be acquiring. Although it is statistically undeniable that most of the students in the United States who are in an English language program are of Latinx descent (U.S. Department of Education, Our Nation's English Learners, n.d.), and thus their home and, for the most part, only language tends to be Spanish,

this is not true in all cases. Additionally, when considering the Latinx population, it is possible for an indigenous language to be the student's main language in conjunction with Spanish. In relation to students who come to the U.S. from countries where Spanish is not the native tongue, the phenomenon of globalization has allowed for multilingualism to be more of a commonality rather than an exception. According to the Pew Research Center, the majority of the immigrants who come to this country were born in Mexico, and the second, third, and forth countries of origin of immigrants to the U.S. are China, India, and Philippines, respectively (Radford, 2019), a fact that corresponds to the number of linguistically and culturally diverse students in U.S. public schools –10.7 % of emergent bilinguals are of Asian descent (U.S. Department of Education, Our Nation's English Learners, n.d.). The Central Intelligence Agency (2018) reports in its *Factbook* that there are seven languages spoken in China, as well as several dialects and other minority languages; India has thirteen languages and a little less than six percent of its population (5.6) speaks "other languages" outside the main ones and English "enjoys the status of subsidiary official language," and there are "twenty-two other officially recognized languages"; and finally, Philippines, where English is an official language together with Tagalog and eight major dialects.

It is not possible for one single term to encompass all circumstances and situations (Nieto & Bode, 2017). If we genuinely want to recognize and embrace our students' cultural backgrounds and attend to all their challenges, there is a necessity to demand for our educational jargon to reflect this understanding; the abovementioned realities slightly exemplify the need to move from the idea of *emergent bilinguals* to *emergent bilinguals and/or multilinguals*.

An Overview of the History of Language Policies

In the beginning, the United States not only supported the existence of other languages besides that one of the colonizers, English, but the need not to abandon other languages was implicit in everyday life. European groups that had established in what is now the United States territory created schools in order for their children to learn in their home languages. The first census of 1790 showed that 25% of settlers spoke languages other than English, and the Native American and African languages need to be added to that percentage as these peoples were not included in that first population count. Whether it was the need for German or the need for French to fulfill commercial transactions, teaching, or even religious purposes, the United States never had a policy of complete promotion of other languages besides English (García, 2009). Yakushko (2009) argues that a variety of factors that negatively impact the economic and social fabric of a country find their origins in an immigration-related phenomenon; from a declining economy to the detriment of cultural values and even pollution, "criminal, poor, violent, and uneducated" (p. 37) foreign-born individuals are to blame. Cowan, Martínez, & Mendiola (1997), Espanshade & Calhoun (1993), Muller & Espanshade (1985), and Munro (2006) all show through their work that this is a contemporary narrative heard through all types of media (as cited in O. Yakushko, 2009), and it is a reality that mirrors the xenophobic circumstances from the late nineteenth century which, in turn, brought restrictive language policy into the field of education in the U.S. (García, 2009). Similarly, this "fear" was reflected onto the Indigenous people to this country, and it was during the period of 1880s-1920s that Indian policy was represented by legislative approaches of allotment, Americanization, and assimilation (Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016). Language is about power; language is about politics.

Language Policies in the Twentieth Century

The twentieth century in the U.S. started with its president, Teddy Roosevelt, pursuing unity across the states, particularly due to the newly acquired states and territories (Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico). According to the Roosevelt, a harmonious country would only be achieved through "one flag" and "one language," and "this language should be the language of the Declaration of Independence, of Washington's Farewell address, of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech (…)" (as cited in O. García, 2009, p. 165). This standpoint and the various armed conflicts that permeated the World during the first half of the twentieth century -driven by and enhancing xenophobia, nativism, and nationalism ideologies- guided the United States from that moment forward until the 1960s.

Similarly to the way the sociopolitical and economic contexts set the stage for a restrictive time in terms of language policy pre-1960s. The post-World War II era created a space in which the United States entered into an ideological and technological competition with Russia. The advent of Russia's success efforts obliged the U.S. to re-evaluate its policies regarding education in general, and language teaching and learning in particular. This global reality paired with the internal circumstances that propelled the country into the Jim Crow Era, would eventually push the its society into a time of fighting for the civil rights of people from all walks of life as many minoritarian communities jumped on the bandwagon that was mobilized to put an end to segregationist times; a battle that is said to have been won, but it can be argued that it is still an ongoing one (Alexander, 2012). In the field of education, it was the U.S. Supreme Court ruling through *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 the decision that led to the first stage of failure for segregated schools. Subsequently, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 continue to pave the way for educational policy changes, promoting foreign language and, in

turn, instilling the desire to think -or re-think- the place of language education at all levels within the K-12 system, and brought to the forefront the contemporary societal attitude towards languages other than English (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009).

Schmidt (2000) argues that there are three main issues controlling the controversial topic of the existence of other languages besides English within the borders of the United States, namely: 1. Education policy for language minority children; 2. Access to civil and political rights and government services by non-English speakers; and 3. The establishment of English as the sole official language of the United States and its political subdivisions (p. 11). Although these discussions explain the current state of language teaching and learning in the United States, similar issues were faced by legislators, educators, and member of the community during the second half of the twentieth century. In terms of bilingual education in the United States, Guadalupe San Miguel (2004) argues that the history of this language format can be organized in four periods of time, namely: 1. Origins of federal bilingual education policy (1965-1968); 2. Expansion of bilingual education (1968-1978); 3. Retrenchment and redefinition of bilingual education (1980-1988); and 4. The final push (1990s-2001).

Language Policy During the Civil Rights Era

The year 1963 is considered to be the one in which bilingual education was restored in the United States not by virtue of legislation, but rather by praxis: Coral Way Elementary School located in Dade County, Mami was the first English-Spanish (predominantly Cuban dialect) bilingual program after World War II. Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico successfully mimicked Coral Way's format (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Gaarder, 1967; García, 2009). In 1964 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act passed with a narrative that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, the latter being interpreted as including language diversity.

Subsequently, in 1968 the U.S. Congress passed Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known for its content as the Bilingual Education Act; nevertheless, this law did not establish a requirement for the creation and implementation of bilingual education programs in schools, but it rather provided an option to the schools by allocating federal monies to subsidy these types of formats. It was in 1974 that the Civil Rights Law in conjunction with the U.S. Constitution were utilized by a group of Chinese American parents in California to complain about the inequitable academic treatment of their children due to the practice of English-only instructional formats. Thus, *Lau vs. Nichols* becomes a reference case in the field of language policy, and the state of New York follows this decision by shining light into the educational rights of Puerto Rican students, entering into the agreement known as *Apsira of New York Board of Education* of 1975, granting Latinx students the possibility of testing in Spanish if English was found to be limited, and if the students scored high enough on the Spanish test, they would then be referred to a bilingual education program (as cited in O. García, 2009).

The effectiveness of the Title VII Bilingual Education Act was only witnessed in 1974 when the reauthorization of the ESEA Title VII created a more solid definition of bilingual education, as well as generated the requirement that school to which grants have been allocated needed to include teaching and learning in a student's home language. The purpose of this requisite was not necessarily allowing students to achieve bilingualism and/or biliteracy, but rather to assert the success of students through the education system. The 1978 version of the ESEA eliminated the restrictions on dual language programs under Title VII, but Baker & Wright (2017) argue that the political climate at the time precluded for these types of programs to be fully created and implemented, and instead schools were instructed to use the students' native language "only to the extent necessary for a child to achieve competence in the English

language" (p. 177). The subsequent reauthorizations of the ESA in 1984 and 1988 amended the lack of support for the development and maintenance of dual language programs in public schools, in conjunction with an increment of Title VII funds to be allocated and budgeted for educational models that attend to students whose first language is not English (Wiese & García, 2001 as cited in Baker & Wright, 2017). Once again, in the 1980s, the political agenda responded to a nativist ideology through the understanding that the preservation of native languages entailed neglecting the acquisition of the English language.

It is not until the 1990s that the United States experiences a renewed support of bilingual education. The ESEA was reauthorized in 1994 as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Although the expectation of this piece of legislation was for students who speak English as a second language to achieve high academic standards, the law still referred to these students as "limited English proficient students," conveying a deficit in regard to the type of knowledge that these individuals can bring into their classrooms. Crawford (2004) explains that what characterized this period in terms of bilingual education was not a direct support by the administration for these types of programs, but rather a concern about the quality of education that the language minority students were getting from the public system (as cited in Baker & Wright, 2017). The revisions made to the ESEA in 1994 illustrated the efforts of transforming proficient bilingualism into an educational goal based on the understanding that these sets of skills will result in economic benefits to individuals and the country.

The most radical change in terms of the treatment of emergent bilinguals in schools transpired with the signing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation 2002. This law reauthorized the ESEA, eliminated the Title VII Bilingual Education Act, and creating Title III "Language Instruction for Limited Proficient and Immigrant Students." Once again, the language

barrier experienced in schools by emergent bilinguals is considered a deficiency, shifting the educational approach into the idea that they are missing something (English) instead of focusing on the idea that these students need to learn English as a foreign language. Thus, NCLB focused on language development, leaving bilingual education in the backburner, encouraging English-only instruction. NCLB focused on accountability which the only mean to establish it, according to this law, is to create and implement an environment where high stakes testing becomes part of the educational culture. Solórzano (2008) argues that NCLB's fundamental issues were as follows: a. defining the purpose of the tests; b. alignment of the tests to the curriculum taught within each individual classroom; c. how to measure and use the data to guide future decisions based on the result of these tests in relation to student placement, promotion, and graduation; and finally, d. the use of data to evaluate programs, teachers, and administrators. Accountability through high states testing translated into a greater failure than in previous years for emergent bilinguals due to the fact that they would still need to spend a good percentage of their day in their English proficiency classes, without being accurately prepared to face these tests, let alone the fact that, for the most part, the policy was to administer these tests only in the English language. For most emergent bilinguals whose English was not yet at the needed level, failure was imminent. NCLB lasted eight years longer than it was initially planned after its last reauthorization; its revision only came as recent as 2015. Nevertheless, in 2011 the Obama Administration created a waiver known as ESEA Flexibility which revised the original NCLB policy, but this amendment stopped tracking the needs of emergent bilinguals on their own merit by considering their challenges under the umbrella of "at-risk" students which, in reality, diminishes the importance of their language barrier and the need to achieve an English

proficiency in order to be successful in an educational environment that prioritizes the English language.

Currently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the federal educational policy in force since 2015. Baker & Wright (2017) explain that this innovative approach grants states a greater flexibility at the time of designing their own accountability systems which, in turn, may allow for a better understanding of the challenges that emergent bilinguals face, as well as take into consideration the cultural and linguistic contributions that these students bring into their classrooms. Overall, ESSA appears to allow states to establish a more realistic structure to support emergent bilinguals in a more effective manner. Moreover, the ESSA clarifies the NCLB in terms of the relationship between language teaching and learning and content standards by stating the following:

Each State plan shall demonstrate that the State has adopted English language proficiency standards that—(i) are derived from the 4 recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing; (ii) address the different proficiency levels of English learners; and (iii) *are aligned with the challenging State academic standards* [italics added] (as cited in O. Lee, 2018, p. 317).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) constitutes a successful dual language teaching strategy used across many European countries (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Papaja & Świątek, 2016; Smala, 2013). The third item of the ESSA excerpt cited above generates the possibility to create educational environments for emergent bilinguals that respond to dual language formats as the most effective teaching strategy to respond to this requirement is the teaching of English through content. The main challenge at the time of implementing CLIL pedagogy in a dual language program is regarding the human capital, the teachers' workforce. Ultimately, as Baker & Wright (2017) argue, "it remains to be seen how ESSA will work in practice, and the degree to

which individual states will develop accountability programs that are fair and beneficial for ELLs and which value and promote bilingualism" (p. 187).

Language Programs and Practices

The predominant issue in the matter of learning English as a new language, particularly for this linguistic tool to be used in an educational environment, is the "How long does it take?" portion of the conundrum. Collier & Thomas (2017) argue that the question to ask should rather be the following one: "How long does it take for school-age English learners, just beginning acquisition of the English language, to achieve grade level (…) in their second language and stay at grade level (or above) throughout the remainder of their schooling?" (p. 203).

The most well-known effort to assist emergent bilinguals in K-12 schools across the United States, as well as the most supported in terms of funds, is the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, also denominated English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the latter being more common outside the United States. All three codifications refer to the actual content of the course, a language, and not whether the students assigned to it have a "deficit" that needs to be addressed. In some states this program is also referred as the language program for English Language Learners (ELL) alluding to the English skill "level" (or lack thereof) of the students who participate in the program. Fundamentally, this format has one exclusive goal: For students to learn English. Nieto & Bode (2017) explain that the ESL format is the prevalent model in the United States for students to achieve "mastery" of the English language, whether through pull-out methods (removing the student from their mainstream classes for an established amount of time per day or week to focus in English language acquisition), push-in programs that allow for the ESL teacher or tutor to work within the classroom environment with the student, in collaboration with the content area

teacher, or “newcomer” classes where students who are beginning their linguistic English journey are gathered together in one single class to receive instruction of the English language (García & Kleifgen, 2018). The question that immediately arises in terms of the “ESL or ELL” English classes is: How does the abovementioned format affect the integration of emergent bilinguals into the school culture and their participation in other content area subjects or elective courses?

Structured English Immersion (SEI) and Bilingual Education are the two remaining popular programs to support emergent bilinguals. Subsequently, the latter format can be implemented through different models, based on the program’s linguistic goal -transitional bilingual education; developmental or maintenance bilingual education; and two-way or dual-language education (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2018; Nieto & Bode, 2017).

The next questionable aspect of both ESL and bilingual education programs for emergent bilinguals is the quality of the curriculum and the teachers that are at the front of these classrooms. Who are they? What type of preparation have they received? What is the level of cultural knowledge and awareness of these teachers? These questions become particularly important regarding those teachers who are new to the teaching force, particularly in urban schools?

Bilingual Education in the United States

There appears to be no official data regarding how many dual language programs, of any type, are in our public schools in the United States. The best source constitutes the inventory curated by CABE, but that information is gathered through volunteer submissions by each school, program and/or state. Consecutively, the report titled *Dual Language Education*

Programs: Current State Policies and Practices (DLEP) from the year 2015 constitutes the only resource in the format of a study requested by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. The objective of the report is to collect information and analyze policies and practices related to dual language education programs in the U.S. at the state level (Boyle, August, Tabaku, Cole, & Simpson-Baird, 2015), but not necessarily account for each and every dual language program within each school district in the nation. Is this an indicator of the state of bilingual education in the U.S.? Is there a lack of oversight from the federal government in relation to dual language programs? Is this reality due to a shortfall from the federal government in terms of the importance and benefits of bilingual education? Being a state matter, what is the role of the federal government when taken into consideration the federal law in relation to providing language support and assistance to students (e.g. Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA)?

Although the furor among [rich] White Americans of speaking an additional language besides English (Williams, 2017) -a trend that might signify an advantage in the philosophical pursue of dual language programs in the U.S.-, the matter of bilingual education in the United States mirrors the complexity of this country's own challenges, many of these driven by its cultural richness based on its own history as told by the various waves of immigrants from all over the world. "A country of paradoxes" (Tedick, 2015), absurd inconsistencies that are often fueled by struggles between personal freedoms and the socially constructed norms clashing with the supervision of a government that variates legislation and support in accordance with the standpoints that guide the decisions of leaders and politicians who assumed the most recent governmental duties (García, 2009). Jackson & Malone (2009) argue that the United States' government has, at times, and for over 50 years, acknowledged the fact that it imperative to

create a society of U.S. citizens that is well-versed in languages other than English; and, contrarily, the same governmental institutions have consistently created and executed policies that diminish the importance of the cultural and linguistic capital brought into the classrooms by our heritage speakers/immigrant students (as cited in D. Tedick 2015).

Historically, bilingual education in the United States constitutes a shared educational matter between the federal and states' governments. Baker & Wright (2017) argue that "there has been neither total centralization nor full devolution to states in bilingual education" (p. 173). The states tend to assume the responsibility of planning and policymaking, while the federal government's role is exercised through funding and legislation. Accordingly, the 2015 DLEP report classifies its key findings under the following five categories: 1. State Policies and Guidance on Dual Language Education; 2. Student Eligibility for and Placement Into Dual Language Programs; 3. Standards, Assessments, and Program Evaluation Practices; 4. Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development; and 5. State Support for Dual Language and Bilingual Programming. The report concludes that, as of 2015, the interest for bilingual education in the format of dual language programs is increasing based on a better understanding not only of the U.S. diverse population in terms of heritage speakers/immigrants and the benefits that these types of programs entail for the mentioned population, but also the enhanced awareness of the unfavorable position that English-only speakers have in the global arena even though the positionality and importance that the English language has in trade and technology. Nevertheless, the human community is not blind to the fact that suppression and oppression of languages and cultures led to some of the cruelest conflicts that we have seen throughout our entire history on this Earth (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2011).

Concerning the implementation and practice of dual language programs, the 2015 DLEP report determines several facts, namely: First, it is "challenging" to evaluate the programming and policies regarding these programs at the state level because the nomenclature of these programs chosen by each state is "considerably" different from each other. Second, the adversities and obstacles that states, districts, and schools face at the time of developing, implementing, and sustaining dual language programs are vast and, in many cases, the lack of experience of the United States makes it almost too difficult to justify the creation and deployment of these programs. Thirdly, it is the state providing support for dual language programs, with no federal government assistance. Lastly, due to the growth of dual language programs in various states, there is a need for research-based recommendations of high caliber that focus on guiding states, districts, schools, and families.

The Case of the State of Nevada

Authors Horsford et al. (2013) indicate that "ELL education" is critical in the state of Nevada primarily due to the fact that Clark County School District (CCSD) is the fifth largest district in the nation, as well as arguing that Nevada is in first place in terms of having the highest growth rate of Limited English Proficient (LEP). There has not been a similar study to Horsford's et al. since 2013, which does not permit to state whether the abovementioned rate has been maintained through the current year.

Notwithstanding the evident need to support emergent bilinguals and multilingual students in the state of Nevada, it was not until the year 2013 that the state legislature through its Nevada Senate Bill 504 allocated more than $50 million in funding, creating the "Zoom Schools" in the most populous districts, Clark and Washoe (Gonzales, 2014; Horsford et al.,

2013). According to the legislation, the objective of the program is to increase student achievement in schools with a high population of ELL students and low academic performance.

In 2019 the Guinn Center reported that an additional piece of legislation was passed by the Nevada legislature in 2015, Senate Bill 432, creating the Victory program. This endeavor grants additional funding to schools across the state that have a high number of students living in poverty and those same schools must be rated in the two lowest categories of school rankings under the Nevada School Performance Framework. Funds would be provided with the objective of improving student achievement. Historically, schools with a high ELL population have also fallen into the Victory Program category. The abovementioned report does not include an updated demographic study regarding the ELL population of the state of Nevada but does indicate that the change in funding allowed for an improvement of the achievement gap among the mentioned population.

In terms of bilingual education programs in the state of Nevada, authors Bengochea et al. (2021) argue that the state has "relatively few bilingual programs" and that the Nevada Department of Education offers "little guidance" on how to create and implement these types of programs (pp. 3). The authors continue stating that there only appears to be three bilingual schools in Nevada, all of them located in Washoe District.

Clark County School District (CCSD)

CCSD constitutes the largest school district in the state of Nevada and the fifth largest district in the United States and the third largest in terms of its ELL population of students. CCSD begins implementing a bilingual education program based on an English-Spanish dual language modality that spans across three levels - an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school -, that feed each other only in the 2022-2023 school year (Valley, 2021). Attempts of

bringing bilingual education into the District from the top down are known to have been only twice, once in 1980 as per indicated during the June 10, 2021 CCSD Board of Trustees Meeting by community member Fernando Romero, even though it has been impossible to corroborate the veracity of Mr. Romero's statement due to the lack of actual documentation; and a second time in 2008 as per the "CCSD Dual Language Handbook" published that same year (not a public-facing document). There is no historical information regarding the implementation, failure or success of the mentioned programs. Anecdotal data shows that, throughout the years,

The current section provided a historical overview of the language programs in the United States, including bilingual education programs. Similarly, to the previous section solely focusing on the latter type of programs, this study aims to addition to the existing scholarly literature by producing an organized first-hand narrative of the experiences and learnings of a Latina educator.

Chapter 2 offered a thorough review of the research-based literature covering autoethnography as the methodology for the proposed study, the origins and development of bilingual education in the United States, as well as its models and benefits, and a focus on the issue of teacher shortage across all disciplines, but more importantly within the bilingual education field. Moreover, in order to understand the deficit view towards emergent bilinguals, Chapter 2 provided a review of language policy in the United States. Additionally, in the mentioned chapter the reader can find a review of the situation of emergent bilingual, particularly Latinx students, within the K-12 education system in the United States. with a focus on the secondary school level and their challenges, driven by a systemic issue, to learn English as a foreign language.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

The general objective of this proposed research study is to narrate and analyze my own experiences as a bilingual education in the United States from my positionality as a White Latina and an immigrant to this country. Narrate the high school environment and determine to what extent the language assets of our students are used for their academic success, as well as these students' career and college readiness. These experiences explored through the theoretical framework of autoethnographic studies as a research methodology, which is categorized as a qualitative research approach.

Theoretical Framework

This research explored the findings through the lens of a framework rooted in a series of tenets that pertain to autoethnographic work, namely: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding; experiences vary from language to immigration, and everything in between that impacts this demographic in a unique and specific manner.

Author Janne Tienari (2019) explains that scholarly work in the field of autoethnography entails "studying the community through the author's personal experience" (p. 578). Throughout an examination of several autoethnographic works, Tienari notes the work of scholar Anjali Forber-Pratt, indicating throughout various elements that can be used as examples of the six tenets that guide this current study. Forber-Pratt's struggles and triumphs in advocating for their autoethnographic research resonate deeply with the notion of explaining identity. This author's journey reflects the intricate process of self-discovery and identity construction within the academic realm, where autoethnography becomes a tool to navigate and articulate personal and

scholarly identities. Furthermore, the act of documenting experiences takes center state in the work of this scholar. As such, the narrative depicts the challenges, victories, and transformative moments encountered during their research journey, showcasing the significance of documenting one's experiences as a crucial aspect of autoethnography. Additionally, Tienari argues that Forber-Pratt's conveys a relentless pursuit to validate their autoethnographic approach, a fact that sheds light on the tenet of addressing challenges. By engaging with resistance and skepticism from others, the author exemplifies the resilience required to navigate obstacles in research, advocating for the acceptance and recognition of autoethnography as a legitimate method of inquiry. The theme of advocating for change is a recurring one throughout Forber-Pratt's work, as explained by Tienari. The scholar's determination to carve out a space for autoethnography within academic discourse speaks to a broader call for methodological inclusivity and innovation, challenging existing research paradigms and advocating for a more diverse and reflective scholarly landscape. Through their journey, scholar Forber-Pratt embodies the notion of sharing best practices within autoethnography. Their account serves as a valuable resource for aspiring researchers, offering insights into the process, challenges, and rewards of utilizing autoethnography ass a methodological approach, thereby enriching the collective understanding of best practices in this field. Finally, the underlying current of building empathy and understanding permeates Forber-Pratt's narrative. By sharing their personal struggles, triumphs, and reflections, the author conveys to the readers their feelings and emotions of vulnerability and authenticity, fostering empathy and understanding not only towards their own experiences but also towards a greater significance of autoethnography as a method that illustrates diverse perspectives and voices. Forber-Pratt's example constitutes one of many presented by author Tienari to delineate the value of autoethnographies as a method to guide a study, concluding that

Forber-Pratt's journey encapsulates the essence of this tool as a method that goes beyond conventional research paradigms. Tienari expands by stating that this methodology invites researchers to dive into a transformative exploration of self, society, and scholarly inquiry. It is precisely in these aspects shared by Tienari that the six tenets used as a theoretical framework in this study reflect the potential of manifest as guiding principles that shape not only research practices, but also personal growth, advocacy, and the cultivation of empathy and understanding within academic scholarship.

Author Lisa Merriweather (2015) explains their process of "discovering 'I'" through an autoethnographic methodology presenting it as the emphasis on acknowledging self and exploring personal experiences, a definition that aligns with the foundational tenets of this research approach. Merriweather cites author Polkinghorne (1988) to convey the idea that the essence of social science research lies in unraveling knowledge and understanding of the human condition. Qualitative researchers, through methodologies like autoethnography, strive to achieve this comprehension by engaging in autobiographical explorations of culture. The author exemplifies the concept of subjectivities, underscoring how personal persuasions stemming from one's background, perceptions, and positionalities influence the research process. This self-awareness presented by Merriweather regarding autoethnographic work is crucial, as researchers need to navigate their biases and predispositions throughout their study. The progression from acknowledging self to discovering the impact of personal biases unfolds as a critical aspect of the autoethnographic process. The scholar argues that, in the context of autoethnography, researchers are urged to continually explore and understand their "I"s throughout the research journey. This introspective process entails a vigilant approach towards unpacking and confronting the biases that researchers bring to their studies. The evolution from mere acknowledgment to active

discovery of self is instrumental in attaining an insider perspective, essential for enriching the research findings. Furthermore, in alignment with this study's tenets that constitute its theoretical framework. Merriweather explains that, by detailing the process of developing probing questions, reflecting on personal experiences, and engaging in analysis, the work shares a best practice for conducting future research, autoethnographic or otherwise. Finally, the author argues that throughout the process of exploring personal experiences within mentorship (in their study), the researchers aim to gain an insider perspective and deeper understanding of the culture of mentorship, fostering empathy and understanding towards the unique dynamics involved.

Similarly to authors Del Rosal and Basaraba (2018), this autoethnography utilizes a foundation that allows the understanding and scrutiny of how my experiences in the educational field for almost a decade have shaped my current positionality as a bilingual educator. [Re]centering the stories in the lives and experiences of people of color opens spaces to counter the narratives of the dominant groups and allow for us to [re]member. That is the spirit of our work (Dillard, 2022).

Restatement of the Research Questions

The following question and secondary level questions framed my proposed study to connect my experiences as an educator of color to the current state of education for our emergent bilinguals, including bilingual education programs and language policies.

A. How does autoethnography enable understanding of the needs of emergent bilinguals in the sociopolitical context of local and federal language policies in the United States?
    a. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from journal entries crafted by the author of this study?

b. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from state and national news pieces between the years 2015 and 2020?

Autoethnography

The objective of the current section is to explain the methodology for the proposed study. The explanation was presented in a detailed manner, focusing on the following elements of the research: Setting understood as the researcher's personal experience and intention of the current study, as well as the main tool to be analyzed (researcher's journals within a 1-month timeline), a timeline delineating the entire project, and data collection and data analysis processes.

Denzin (2010) argues that autoethnographies constitute a strategic means to convey messages of dissent and criticism in the understanding that democratic spaces and processes require hope. Education is political and its cultural criticism performed through the current autoethnographic research study aims to contribute and fill in gaps in the literature regarding the spaces that Latina teachers occupy in the United States and, more specifically, as advocates of Latinx students, families, and even language policies. Author Ellis (2020) speaks of meta-autoethnographies as a research methodology to connect to her past life in present time, fast-forwarding her stories to the present. This research study employed a journaling strategy similar to and with identical objectives to those expressed by author Ellis.

The primary reason for choosing autoethnography as the methodological tool of my work is rooted in my nine years of experience in the field of education across two different states, Mississippi and Nevada. There is also a need to fill the gap in the literature pertaining Latinx educators across the board, particularly those working with our bilingual and multilingual student in a secondary school setting. In Mississippi, more precisely in the Gulf Coast (Long Beach and Biloxi), where I started first as a substitute teacher and later as an "EL Tutor" and,

even later, as a Social Studies teacher, I was the only Latina educator in cities of 14,000 and 40,000 inhabitants, respectively. Although both towns are small, the amount of Latinx students and other ethnicities, particularly Vietnamese, is powerfully disproportionate to the representation that there is in schools. My second city, Las Vegas in Clark County School District, is not stellar in its educators' diversity. According to CCSD's Human Resources Department, in the school year 2018-2019 there were a total of 2,103 educators of Hispanic/Latinx descent, which translates to 11.2% of the licensed personnel workforce. In the school year 2022-2023, this demographic of educators only grew to 13.4%. Taking into consideration that almost 50% of our student body is Hispanic/Latinx, there still is a lack of representation. There is no available research and/or literature, either informally written or published in peer-reviewed publications, authored by licensed educators within CCSD in an autoethnographic format or otherwise that approach the field of working with students who are emergent bilinguals or developing multilinguals. It is my intention to start filling the gap in the literature through this current autoethnographic study.

The type of autoethnographic research of this study is designed to follow a first-person approach to the inquiry. The work is self-affirming given the focus in my individual experiences as a Latina high school educator in the United States. Moreover, it will follow an analytical and interpretative format due to the plan of analyzing and interpreting the data collected with the objective of contributing to the current literature. The self-critical approach of this study will allow me to analyze the relationship between my practice and my cultural background, my experience as an immigrant in the United States, my "Latinaness" in the educational environments I gravitate, primarily those of bilingual/multilingual and dual-language nature.

Methodological Literature

Autoethnographies used as a tool to communicate qualitative research constitutes the narration of one's own individual experiences, seeing these through a lens that allows questions of justice to emerge. Authors Hughes and Pennington (2017) argue that self-narratives serve "as a form of critical reflexivity that is particularly useful in helping people see how they are complicit in systems of oppression" (n.p.). It is precisely due to its nature of attempting to dismantle the current structure, unlearning the "traditional" ways of understanding and sharing that understanding in academic that authors such as Chawla et al. (2018), Anzaldúa (1987), Dutta (2017), and Pathak (2013) speak of a need to decolonize research by holding in high value to the importance of people's own stories, own voices.

Authors Adams & Herrmann (2020) explain that an autoethnographic work engages in "memory work." This type of research effort entails thinking carefully about experiences and current situations through the analysis of "personal artifacts and experiences, prominent past events, shameful secrets, internal feelings, sense-making, future hopes, and difficult or formative life victories" (p. 2). The objective, precisely, is to understand our own learnings, growth, and approach to any given situation. The "ethno" element of this type of research requires the intentional understanding and questioning of cultural beliefs, practices, and identities. Through this depth of work, an individual can achieve the expected personal (and professional) prosperity.

In the field of education, even though autoethnographies are not specifically addressed by the most cited researchers, Ladson-Billings, Nieto, and even authors in the niche field of bilingual education such as Cummins and García subscribe to the concept of paying particular attention to the narratives of those who play a role in the scenarios that are observed through the research in hand, including when the research itself serves as its own primary source. In this

regard, author Judith Lapadat (2017) argues that utilizing autoethnography as an inquiry method allows for the "furthering of social justice aims" (pp. 549), supported by similar ideas in terms of the objective of this type of methodology by Denzin (2003), Holman Jones et al. (2013). Although author Holman Jones (2016) refers to autoethnographies as "living bodies of thought," some scholars attribute to this same characteristic a negative connotation as it is argued that the subjective nature of a self-reflexion is problematic and even unethical (Dauphinee, 2010; Ellis et al., 2011; Méndez, 2013), to the extent that academics such as Atkinson (1997) and Coffey (199) chastise this type of research, classifying it as "self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective and individualized (Méndez, 2013).

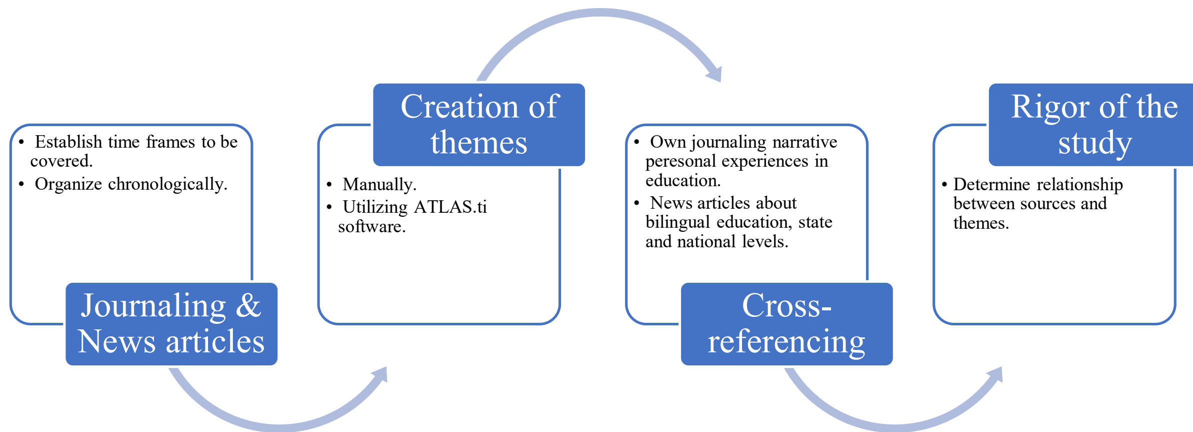
Research Design

My research design situates me as an insider in which I am the researcher and the topic of this research. My identity as a bilingual, bicultural Latina allows me to introspective look or rat my actions as a bilingual social studies teacher in the United States.

I organized the collection of my reflections chronologically. The rationale of this organization is rooted in the professional and personal growth experienced throughout the natural progression of my time as an educator.

Figure 1

Autoethnographic process of the present study – Silvina Jover



An autoethnography is a qualitative research method that combines autobiographical elements with ethnographic research to explore and understand firsthand experiences within a broader cultural or social context. Conducting research through autoethnography involves a unique and introspective process. I describe the autoethnographic process in general terms through a step-by-step description, as shown below:

1. Self-reflection and selection of a topic:

The process begins by reflecting on one's own life experiences and identifying a topic or issue that is considered personally significant and culturally relevant. The connection of the author to the topic will inform the depth of the study.

2. Data collection:

Collect data through various means, such as journaling, personal narratives, audio or video recordings, photographs, or any other method that allows to document experiences and thoughts related to the chosen topic. Autoethnographic work also allows for the collection of secondary data, such as historical documents, literature, or cultural artifacts that relate to the topic.

3. Immersion:

The expectation is that autoethnographers fully immerse themselves in the experience or context related to the research topic. This may involve actively participating in events, engaging with the community, or revisiting memories and experiences.

4. Reflexivity:

Reflexivity should be present throughout the research process. This involves critically examining one's own positionality, biases, and emotions as they relate to the research. The researcher needs to consider how their personal background and experiences influence the interpretation of the data.

5. Data analysis:

Analysis of the collected data by identifying themes, patterns, and key moments. Utilization of qualitative research methods like thematic analysis or narrative analysis to make sense of subjective experiences and observations.

6. Storytelling:

Crafting narratives or stories that blend individual experiences with cultural or social analysis. These narratives should provide insights into the larger cultural or societal context and how it has shaped the autoethnographer's experiences.

7. Contextualization:

Placing individual experiences within a broader cultural or social context. Discuss how societal norms, values, and historical factors have influenced experiences and perceptions.

8. Theoretical framework:

Grounding of autoethnographic research in relevant theories or concepts from sociology, anthropology, or other relevant disciplines. This helps provide a theoretical foundation for the subsequent analysis.

9. Ethical considerations:

Authors need to be mindful of ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent if the research involves interactions with others or using pseudonyms to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned in the narrative.

10. Iterative process:

Autoethnographic research is often an iterative process, involving multiple rounds of data collection, analysis, and reflection. It is important to revisit and refine narratives and analysis as deeper insights are accrued.

11. Peer review and feedback:

Sharing autoethnographic work with peers, mentors, or experts in the field for feedback and validation. Their perspectives can help refine the analysis and ensure the quality of the research.

Autoethnographic work can provide rich and nuanced insights into firsthand experiences while shedding light on broader cultural or social issues. It is a method that values subjectivity and the researcher's personal perspective as essential components of the research process.

Latinx bilingual teachers can use autoethnography with the following objectives:

1. Explore identity: Autoethnography allows teachers to examine their own cultural and linguistic identities, as well as how these identities intersect with their teaching practices. They can reflect on how their cultural background influences their teaching style, classroom management, and interactions with students and parents.

2. Document experiences: Teachers can use autoethnographies to document their experiences in the classroom, including both positive and challenging situations. This can provide a rich source of data for educational research and help to highlight the unique contributions of Latinx bilingual teachers.

3. Address challenges: Autoethnography can be a platform for Latinx bilingual teachers to discuss the challenges they face in the education system, such as navigating language barriers, addressing cultural biases, or advocating for bilingual education programs.

4. Advocate for change: Through their autoethnographies, teachers can advocate for policy changes or educational reforms that better support the needs of Latinx bilingual students and teachers. This can include advocating for more inclusive curricula, professional development opportunities, or resources for bilingual education.

5. Share best practices: Latinx bilingual teachers can use autoethnographies to share their successful teaching strategies and approaches with others in the field. This can help create a community of practice where educators can learn from each other's experiences.

6. Build empathy and understanding: Autoethnographies can also serve as a tool to build empathy and understanding among colleagues, administrators, and the broader community. By sharing personal stories and perspectives, teachers can help others appreciate the complexity of their roles and the importance of bilingual education.

Data Collection Sources. The main data source utilized for the proposed study was two-fold: personal reflective journals with thorough recollections of individual experiences of the years as an educator before the COVID-10 pandemic closure across three different states in the United States, namely Florida, Mississippi, and Nevada. These entries focused on my practice and growth as a classroom educator navigating not only the professional intricacies of our profession, but also the political elements that are very much present in the education system in the United States. During my writing sessions, my intention was to center my narrative around the following questions: 1. How does an educator's practice look like in spaces occupied by diverse students and adults? 2. What do my experiences outside the education field bring to the table? 3. How does my positionality as a Latina immigrant impact the way I approach my teaching and advocacy of my students? 4. How do the politics of the education environment affect my practice? The reflective journals included various artifacts to complement the narrative.

The balancing of narration with cultural interpretation, as well as balancing methodological rigor and creativity while engaging in deep self-reflection was rooted in the doctoral work of James Borland entitled "A demonstration of education craft: An outdoor educator's autoethnography" (2009). The author explains his research process starts with him,

the researcher as the “central informant” and compares his own experiences with published studies to elevate the rigor of his work. He argues that viewing existing literature as a “complementary source of secondary data to be tested against the living theories” (p. 36) he discovers through his practices allows for the mentioned rigor to be present. Borland continues explaining that he triangulated his journal entries in conjunction with narratives of three other outdoor educators to embed his own storytelling with academic rigor. In my Discussion section I present a research strategy with the purpose of, similarly, elevating the rigor of my own storytelling. The additional artifacts utilized in my study are sources from the written media that deal with the topic of bilingual education in the United States, between the years 2015 and 2020. The coding was presented in a table format in the corresponding section of this work. I created the table with the following elements to illustrate my findings: Theme, Core Category, Exemplar Codes, and Type of Source. This strategy was informed by the work of González et al. (2019).

The journal entries and artifacts are located in a Microsoft OneDrive folder located in UNLV’s server. This folder has sub-folders labeled “Journal Entries” and “Artifacts”. I compiled the content of these folders and sub-folders over a one-month period. The actual content of the journal entries contains contextual information and observations written by me. I described interaction with various stakeholders of my educational environment, as well as with my students. I included photographs to recall events and experiences. Upon the completion of the compilation, I performed a content analysis with the quantitative analytical software ATLAS.ti with the objective of generating various codes to organize the analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The stories presented through reflective journals constitute the analysis of the matter in hand. This study is academic “identity work.” As author Tienari (2019) states, that who we are,

our identity, evolves through our experiences and, thus, placing myself in a space of self-exploration of both my persona and my practice as an educator. Ultimately, as Tienari also explains through the work of Adams and Jones (2011), the autoethnographic work is “uncertain, fluid, and open to interpretation;” it is a type of work that allows for constant revisions based on the time it is read. This work informed my practice today, and this same work, when seen through a diverse set of lenses in, maybe, a few years from now, will, too, inform my practice, but, most likely, from a distinct perspective. Therefore, the interpretation of my own experiences and monthly journal is fluid.

Author Borland argues that the most notable limitation of an autoethnographic work is its subjective nature (2009). In order to surpass this constraint and increase the credibility of this own study, Borland decided to triangulate his work utilizing three diverse sources, namely: reflective journals, linking his narrative to the narratives of three other educators’ published narratives, and finally performing a historical review about his topic (outdoor education) as told in local newspapers. Similarly to Borland’s study design, acknowledging this major limitation of autoethnographic research, my work was also linked to external artifacts: newspaper articles regarding the field of bilingual education.

The initial coding of the journal entries and the historical artifacts in the form of news articles about bilingual education in the United States between the years 2015 and 2020 was executed utilizing the software ATLAS.ti. Authors Woolf & Silver (2017) explain that ATLAS.ti is a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) or qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) and, to be able to be utilized as a true analytical tool, researchers need to use a back translation strategy. This tool for qualitative data analysis was showed to me while completing my coursework for this doctoral work, specifically in my methodology courses, in

conjunction with other data-crunching and analytical tools such as the Statistical Package for the Social Studies (SPSS). ALAST.ti is available for free at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) to all students. ATLAS.ti user-friendly setup and model reminded me of a listening tool that I used during my time in the creative and media advertising industry, Radian6. At the time, when social media platforms were a sui generis type of spaces, research teams and insights departments in the industry developed and/or were driven to more sophisticated digital spaces, which are now the norm to succeed in the management of any brand. Due to this experience and training, the learning curve for ATLAS.ti was not steep. Additionally, the many trainings that are offered on this tool's website in various formats, particularly video, allowed me to familiarize and master the tool at a beginner-intermediate level. The embedded coding feature in the software is one of the many tools available within the platform, which I utilized to begin the coding for both the journal entries and the media sources.

I categorized the news articles as "state" and "national," referring to information about the topic of bilingual education pertaining specifically to a U.S. state or to the country in its entirety. Therefore, obtaining three sources of information to be evaluated and codified for the purpose of the present study. Based on the work of Gonzalez et al. (2019), I assigned a letter code to each of the data sources, as follows: The journal entries were coded as source "A," the state-level articles were coded as source "B," and the national-level articles were coded as source "C." The manual coding I performed during my analysis constitutes my own version of the so-called "translating back" strategy. In support of the utilization of ATLAS.ti as an analytical software for qualitative projects, scholar Ravijot Singh (2017) explains through their work that its discussion focuses on "uncovering and consolidating the hidden complexities and patterns" (p. 84) brought up by the tool in the format of codes, sub-codes, and categories. I opted to

perform my data analysis following this foundation, as follows (taking into consideration all three sources were analyzed through a similar process within the platform):

1. I created a new project on the platform named "DIS journal entries," where I uploaded the corpus in the format of a MS Word document.
2. Subsequently, I used the feature "Search & Code" to create the initial coding and proceeded to the "AI Coding" feature.
3. The initial coding of the news articles was performed in a similar manner, with the following difference: All articles corresponding to the state news were uploaded as a singular MS Word file, under the project name "DIS state news;" the articles corresponding to the national-level news were uploaded as four different MS Word documents and coded under the project name "DIS US news." The reason I decided to execute the coding in this manner was to evaluate if there was any difference between the two diverse ways of uploading the corpus.
4. Once the coding was finished, I proceeded to evaluate the grounded numbers shown by the tool as these correspond to the frequency of codes applied to the data.
5. An inductive approach was then implemented to determine patterns or repetitive instances. This practice included creating (by me) or utilizing (created by the tool) short, descriptive labels that summarize greater segments of the data.
6. The coding performed by ATLAS.ti includes sub-codes for the most frequent instances.
7. I utilized the 10 most frequent codes to create core categories associated to the sub-codes and themes associated to the codes for each of the data sources.
8. ATLAS.ti creates an association between the grounded frequencies and citations from the documents that were uploaded to the tool.

9. I manually reviewed all citations to determine the associations were accurate, and subsequently proceeded to utilize these data to build exemplar codes to their corresponding codes and sub-codes.
10. Finally, I indicated which of the three sources responds to each theme.
11. I created a table to illustrate the results and perform a discussion.

The process for reviewing and revising the codes and categories was performed keeping at the forefront of the work the fact that the use a software may be faulty, it is not a perfect science. For this reason, the process for modifying codes and categories entails the hardest effort and the longest time in terms of selection and modification. The journal entries brought up a total of 199 codes, while the media entries brought up a total of 424. To allow for a manageable manual coding process, having so many codes and quotations to analyze, I decided to focus on the journal entries' codes and proceed with the analysis from that space, since my experiences are truly the heart of this work. This focus was guided by the six tenants presented in this study as part of my theoretical framework that ultimately allowed me to respond to my research question. These tenets are the elements that inform the value of an autoehnographic methodology, namely: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding.

Each category and subcategory of codes initially generated in ATLAS.ti was accompanied by citations from the sources that were entered to justify the argument for the categorization under the suggested labels. ATLAS.ti allows the visualization of these categories and citations in a report format and/or within the Code Manager dashboard. If the researcher chooses to utilize the latter, the platform offers a visualization either in diagram or preview format to read over the code distribution and make the necessary changes. The user is able to add and delete information

allowing to manually create a cleaner and more final set of codes and categories. I initially printed and utilized the report, but the user-friendly ATLAS.ti dashboard allowed for easier addition and deletion, especially at the time of replicating the coding process and cross-referencing the three data sources. I reviewed all categories and subcategories that emerged from ATLAS.ti. As previously mentioned, the guiding principles for the selection of the final codes that I used to guide this work were the tenets utilized as this study's theoretical framework.

First, I determined whether all categories were pertinent to the objective of my study. Two of the ten categories were labeled with adjectives, "characteristics" and "multifaceted." These two stand-alone terms did not provide enough depth to the overarching objective of my study and the citations attached to these overlapped with other codes, so I decided to eliminate them. The noun "impact" the third category I decided to initially eliminate as it only contained three grounded references, which I estimated not to be significant to fulfill the purpose of my study. The final category I eliminated was the term "educational models" for the same reason as the previous one, a lack of grounded references, and thus relevancy. This selection process allowed for the final six core categories to emerge.

Limitations

My positionality as a bilingual educator, a lifelong emergent bilingual, and a participant and witness of the intricacies of the public school system in the United States could lead me to implement an approach that shows my own critical pedagogical practices and devotion for the creation and implementation of educational models for emergent bilinguals that favor bilingual pedagogies and environments. This introspection is the richness that autoethnographic research provides. On the other hand, Méndez (2014) argues that it is precisely "the researcher's inner

feelings and thoughts [the elements that] require honesty and willingness to self-disclose" (p. 282).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 presented the foundations and rationale that serve as drivers for the proposed study, as well as an introduction to my origin story into the education field. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature that allows to explain the origins of the matter at hand, as well as permitting to set the stage of bilingual education and language policy in the United States, which permits to identify gaps in the research and open the space for the proposed study. In turn, Chapter 3 explained the design that drove this proposed study. Moreover, this chapter also restated the purpose and value of the proposed study, as well as presented once again the research questions, my role as a researcher, my methodological approach, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA SOURCES

Introduction

I never dreamed of nor planned to be an educator, let alone a high school teacher with a specialized niche such as bilingual education. The most inconceivable part is that all this is happening 6,200 miles away from where I was raised and where I started my higher education. In sum, thousands of miles from where I planned for my life to be. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s in Uruguay, the United States was portrayed as the ideal place to be where everything was as perfectly cool as shown through the Hollywood screen. Although I grew up in a British-style school, all the way from kindergarten through high school, the only real and tangent was association that we would do with the English language that we were acquiring at school was precisely with those experiences and situations that were to us through those movies.

This chapter reflects a recollection of my experiences as an educator in the United States from the year 2015 until the year 2020. According to the Alliance for Excellence Education in collaboration with the New Teacher Center (Neason, 2020), half of teachers leave their job after five years in their positions. As a career changer and new in the classroom, narrating and analyzing these first five years can help understand the many challenges that being a Latina educator entails. I spent one month gathering these entries, which are organized in chronological order and based on the geographical location where I lived these experiences, namely: the city of Jacksonville in the state of Florida; the cities of Long Beach and Biloxi in the state of Mississippi; and the city of Las Vegas in the state of Nevada. The latter ends in the year 2020, right after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is briefly included in the narrative.

In addition to the journal entries that are shared in this section, this study's approach included written media addressing state-level bilingual education programs, as well as narrative

regarding these types of educational endeavors at the national level, with the purpose of expanding the understanding of bilingual education across the United States. I selected a total of nine articles, five relevant to the topic of bilingual education programs at the state-level and four articles addressing matters of the mentioned subject but at the U.S. national level. The number of media sources selected were based on the amount of information that I could individually handle during the timeline for this study, as well as taking into consideration its scope. I set myself a 2-month timeline for the collection and analysis of the mentioned media sources. The collection process was based on research utilizing the following keywords: "bilingual education," "dual language," and "English as a foreign language." The decision to use these terms was based on suggestions obtained from utilizing Google Trend for trending topics discovery, as the selected keywords were the only one that had more than five relevant media sources corresponding to the years that I selected to research (2015-2020). Summaries of each of the media sources utilized can be found in the Appendix to this work.

Additionally, I can establish a contextual relationship between the selected media sources and the six tenets that serve as the theoretical framework of this study, namely: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding.

Table 2: Explanation of data sources

Data Source	Description	Quantity and collection timeline
Journal entries	Collection of narratives originated in personal experiences, organized by timeframe (Florida, Mississippi, Nevada, and Post-COVID19 in NV)	4 entries – 1 month
Media sources related to bilingual education at the state level	Selection of written media pertaining to the commentary about bilingual education in various U.S. states between 2015-2020	5 media articles – 1 month
Media sources related to bilingual education at the national level	Selection of written media pertaining to the commentary about bilingual education in the U.S. between 2015-2020	4 media articles – 1 month

This Is My Story

The First Attempt – A Florida "Education"

After more than a decade working for myself as a linguist (2003-2014) and having spent four years in the advertising industry (2010-2014), I did not necessarily know how the education system worked in the United States. Few people around me knew how it worked, either. Today, after another decade has passed, I do not specifically recall my reason to make the change from being a linguist and strategist in advertising to education, but I do remember the specific moment I had to make the decision.

After an unequivocally decision about the advertising world not being aligned with my overall life philosophy, in the year 2014 I decided to return to my translation world but, this time,

move away from being an independent contractor because it was a self-alienating space that I did not want to experience again, at least not during my 30s. I applied for a couple of jobs, but also the education world had such a pull on my soul that I did enough research to learn that my B.A. in Political Science could be converted into a 1-year provisional Social Studies license in the state of Florida to teach at the secondary school level. I was not entirely sure what it meant, but I knew I would have a teaching license in hand and that would help me get myself into the field. By the time I got the license in hand, the school year was well into its first semester and there were no Social Studies positions. I realized that Spanish as a World Language seemed to be quite available across the board in Duval County, FL; so... I applied for a couple of jobs to teach Spanish. After all, how difficult could it be in a country where people did not seem to be bilingual even though they learned languages their entire high school career? It is interesting to unpack that train of thought with the knowledge and from the perspective I have today. All I can do is roll my eyes at myself.

I had put myself *entre la espada y la pared* and was blessed with the opportunity of making a choice: A prominent U.S. bank, CitiBank, offered me a job as a Lead Linguist in their Jacksonville, FL branch; a position that had supervising responsibilities, an enticing salary, and availability to climb the corporate ladder (not sure to where, though). Simultaneously, I was also offered a job to teach Spanish in a so-called "academies of technology" high school. A public school that sounded fancy, promising, and at par with modern times (since the term "technology" was in its name). I got both calls on the same day, and both supervisors sounded equally anxious for me to accept the job as soon as possible so I could immediately start my duties. I chose the door that opened for me to enter the education world. That choice showed me that I lived in a bubble since I set foot in the United States. That choice taught me that I knew little about the

human struggle in a society that does not appropriately create spaces for every person. That choice made me realize that the history of the United States is not as simplistic as it was told to me in high school back in Uruguay. That choice revealed to me that my mindset was constructed with incomplete information, and an even more challenging matter was to become aware of my own biases. It was the best possible choice I could have made, even though it was short-lived.

One of the most irresponsible things that I witnessed any adult with a high-level of responsibility do was placing me in my own classroom without supervision, or any other type of support; me... a person with no prior training of any sort in the education field. They thought they had hit the jackpot with a native Spanish-speaker. According to its website, the *Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology* was named after "Mr. Vocational Education" himself, a prominent businessperson and community leader. The school's vision is for "All students will graduate with an appreciation for life-long learning, prepared to enter the work force and/or pursue higher education"; and its mission reads as follows: "Provide an equitable, high quality academic and career-technical education, and support the development of our students' work ethic, personal responsibility, and respect for others." A 100% magnet school structured with the following academies: Agriscience and Veterinary Assisting, Automotive, Aviation, Communications, Cosmetology, Culinary, Early Childhood Education, and Robotics. In 2014, there was no emphasis on language acquisition within any of these academies and there was no urgent need to support emergent bilinguals, possibly because they did not constitute a substantial number of the student population; with today's numbers between 3-4% of the student body (Figure 1).

The principal gave me a campus tour the day I interviewed in person. I remember being extremely impressed with the grounds, as well as with the resources that appeared to be readily

available to the students. The overall concept of "academies" was slightly off-putting to me because I associated it to the idea of *las escuelas vocacionales* in Uruguay. Growing up, I was conditioned to believe that those humans who were "not good enough" to pursue one of the more traditional careers (law, psychology, accounting, etc.) were the ones who would "end up" in a vocational school; usually, students from low socio-economic backgrounds or the "problem child" of more affluent families. I would know; my brother was one of those who "ended up" in a computer program in a vocational school, and never finished high school until he took the only Math class he had left. He was 35 when he completed it. Shortly after, since he would "not even follow vocational school," he was shipped to Angola to get straightened up by working in my uncle's export-import company. Later in time and well into my career as an educator and, more precisely, as a higher ed scholar, I learned the history of "vocational" schools in the United States. *Peterson* immediately came to mind. Either way, the position at *Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology* was an entry into the world I inexplicably wanted.

The classroom I was given consisted in an old storage room in a part of the building that I do not believe was even in use for classes at that time. That room did not even have a whiteboard; I remember going around the school trying to find a rolling whiteboard to bring back to my classroom. I knew nothing about classroom management, I did not even know that term back then, but my management experience in my own translation business came in handy to organize both my room and my students. Nevertheless, I quickly learned that teenagers not necessarily respond as the responsible young adults I expected them to be; let alone a group of humans who were facing life challenges that I could not even conceive it could possibly be the case in a country "such as the United States."

I never put much thought about the physicality of some teenagers in comparison to my petite South American stature. A fact that came very much to the forefront of my thoughts on my second week at *Peterson*. Two female students decided to bring their outside issues into my classroom, knives and all. I would have called the Office if I had a phone in my classroom. While I remember, I cannot help but shake my head thinking that I decided to place myself between the two girls to appease their emotions. In reality, the only thing that calm them down was the action of another student: Grabbing one of the desks in the classroom and through it down the stairs with such a strength that the entire process from when the desk started rolling down until it reached its destination kept our room vibrating in such a manner that snapped all of us out from the more pressing, perceivable dangerous situation.

Upon approaching the Principal, she explained that "all" I needed to do was teach them a few words "here and there" in Spanish and just keep them from "getting in trouble." I remember thinking, "No wonder Americans don't learn Spanish! They don't even care about it at school!" That same week I was given the final teacher contract by the Duval School District, in which it informed me that I had 90 days to decide to stay at my building, where I would remain for the following 3 years. In the case of leaving before the set timeframe, I would not be able to work in Duval County for 2 years. After what I experienced, both my gut and my common sense guided me not to sign such a ridiculous, binding commitment. To think that today, in 2023, we are begging teachers to stay!

Life did not take long to guide me into new spaces.

Figure 2

Duval County Public Schools – Accountability Report for Frank H. Peterson Academies, Part 1

DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FRANK H PETERSON ACADEMIES
7450 Wilson Blvd, Jacksonville, Fl 32210-3523
904-573-1150
School Hours: 8:25 AM - 3:25 PM   Grades: 09-12

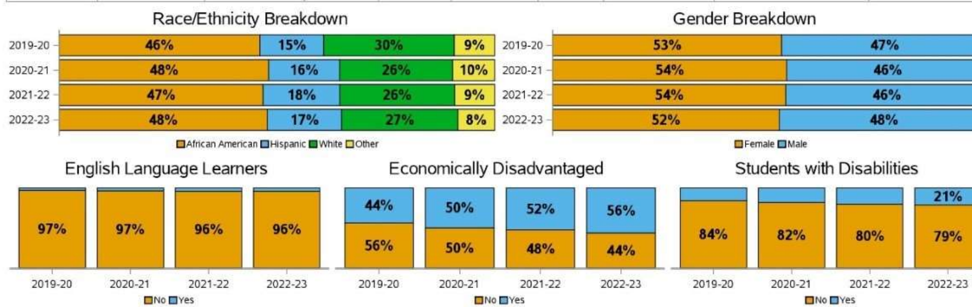
SUPERINTENDENT	BOARD MEMBER	REGIONAL SUPERVISOR	PRINCIPAL
Dr. Diana Greene	Warren Jones	Timothy Simmons	Jessica Mastromatto
greened@duvalschools.org	jonesw2@duvalschools.org	simmonst@duvalschools.org	parrishj@duvalschools.org

ENROLLMENT

School Year	Enrollment	09	10	11	12
2019-20	1,215	319	307	290	299
2020-21	1,202	320	315	255	312
2021-22	1,164	312	318	273	261
2022-23	1,101	351	277	224	249

DEMOGRAPHICS

School Year	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Female	Male	English Language	Economically Disadvantaged	Student with Disabilities
2019-20	46%	15%	30%	9%	53%	47%	3%	44%	16%
2020-21	48%	16%	26%	10%	54%	46%	3%	50%	18%
2021-22	47%	18%	26%	9%	54%	46%	4%	52%	20%
2022-23	48%	17%	27%	8%	52%	48%	4%	56%	21%



SCHOOL GRADES

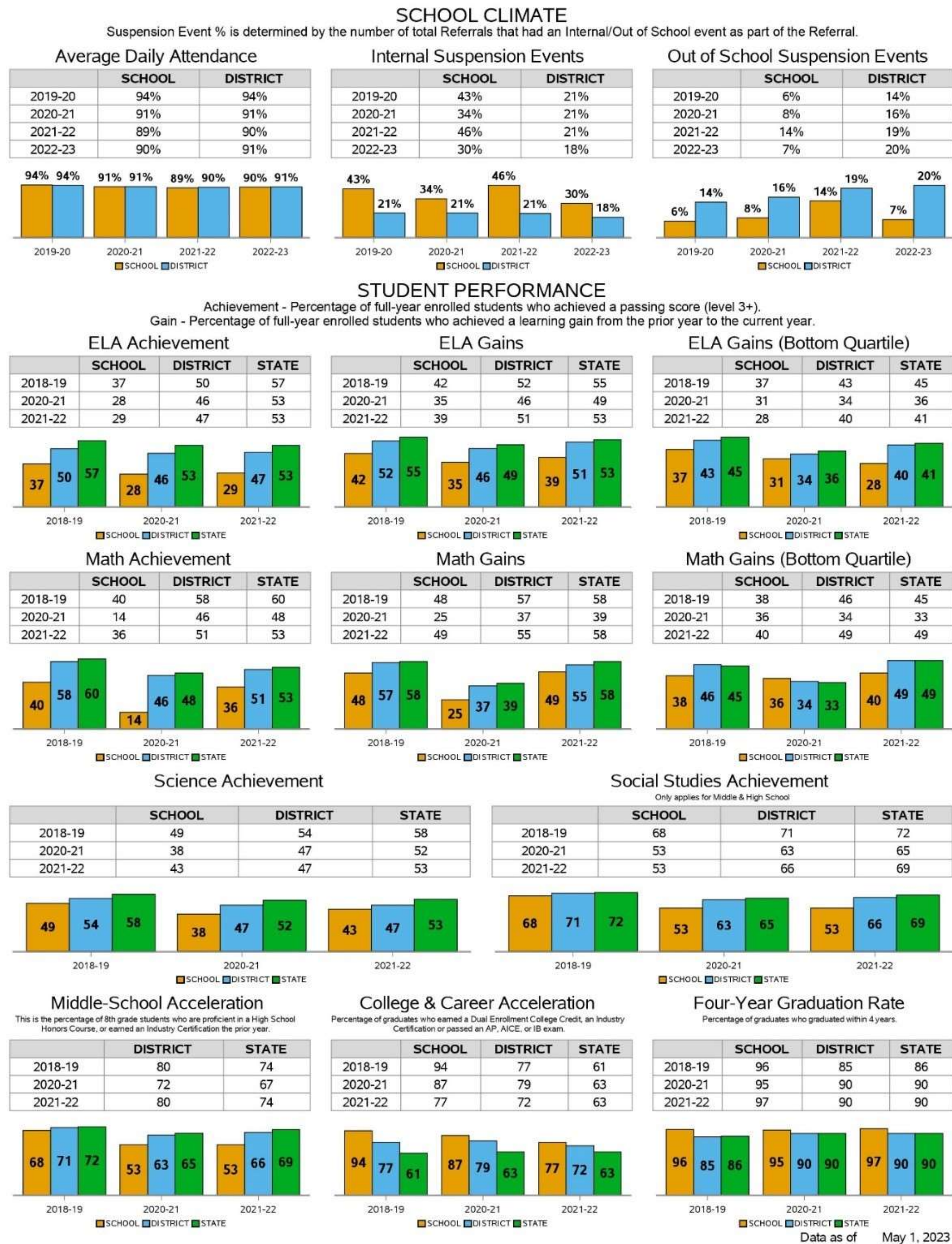
A missing grade means that there is no data to report. There were no grades in 2019-20 and grades were optional in 2020-21.

2021-22	2020-21	2018-19
C		B

Data as of May 1, 2023

Figure 3

Duval County Public Schools – Accountability Report for Frank H. Peterson Academies, Part 2



SCHOOL CLIMATE

Suspension Event % is determined by the number of total Referrals that had an Internal/Out of School event as part of the Referral.

Average Daily Attendance

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
2019-20	94%	94%
2020-21	91%	91%
2021-22	89%	90%
2022-23	90%	91%

Internal Suspension Events

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
2019-20	43%	21%
2020-21	34%	21%
2021-22	46%	21%
2022-23	30%	18%

Out of School Suspension Events

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT
2019-20	6%	14%
2020-21	8%	16%
2021-22	14%	19%
2022-23	7%	20%

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Achievement - Percentage of full-year enrolled students who achieved a passing score (level 3+).
Gain - Percentage of full-year enrolled students who achieved a learning gain from the prior year to the current year.

ELA Achievement

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	37	50	57
2020-21	28	46	53
2021-22	29	47	53

ELA Gains

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	42	52	55
2020-21	35	46	49
2021-22	39	51	53

ELA Gains (Bottom Quartile)

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	37	43	45
2020-21	31	34	36
2021-22	28	40	41

Math Achievement

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	40	58	60
2020-21	14	46	48
2021-22	36	51	53

Math Gains

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	48	57	58
2020-21	25	37	39
2021-22	49	55	58

Math Gains (Bottom Quartile)

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	38	46	45
2020-21	36	34	33
2021-22	40	49	49

Science Achievement

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	49	54	58
2020-21	38	47	52
2021-22	43	47	53

Social Studies Achievement

Only applies for Middle & High School

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	68	71	72
2020-21	53	63	65
2021-22	53	66	69

Middle-School Acceleration

This is the percentage of 8th grade students who are proficient in a High School Honors Course, or earned an Industry Certification the prior year.

	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	80	74
2020-21	72	67
2021-22	80	74

College & Career Acceleration

Percentage of graduates who earned a Dual Enrollment College Credit, an Industry Certification or passed an AP, AICE, or IB exam.

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	94	77	61
2020-21	87	79	63
2021-22	77	72	63

Four-Year Graduation Rate

Percentage of graduates who graduated within 4 years.

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
2018-19	96	85	86
2020-21	95	90	90
2021-22	97	90	90

Data as of May 1, 2023

The Years Along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi

Biloxi Junior High School

The city of Long Beach in the state of Mississippi is one of several coastal towns that stretch across the entire state, from Alabama to Louisiana. Travelling from East to West, Long Beach is located closer to Louisiana than to Alabama; in fact, it was in Long Beach, MS where Hurricane Katrina made landfall back in 2005... and the entire region had exactly that feeling: a post-Katrina vibe. I had the greatest intention to make The Coast a pseudo-forever home to such an extent that I bought my first house in the United States.

I arrived in MS with a full license issued by the state of FL. The reciprocity agreement between states included both, a fact that allowed me to immediately acquire a MS license which was granted to me on a one-year provisional basis. During that year, the requirement entailed completing an Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) program to remove the provision and convert the license into a permanent one. Before finding an ARL program, I needed a job. The structure of the education system in Gulf Coast is organized in such a way that each one of the incorporated cities has its own school district, even though the proximity to one another. From Pascagoula to Waveland (both in the state of MS), form what is known as Coastal Mississippi, the line that stretches approximately 65 miles.

Figure 4

Coastal Mississippi Map

Determined not to make the same mistake I did in Florida, I decided to find a position as a substitute teacher, even though I had a full license. It did not take long for me to be hired as one in Long Beach High School. As I scrolled down my Instagram timeline, I reminded myself that my first assignment was a History class; it felt jus right… until I was hit by a reality that I was not entirely prepared to face. One aspect of my identity, something that "gives away" my condition of a speaker of English as a second language, a characteristic that might be translated also into denotating my immigrant background, is the way I sound when I speak English; in sum, my "accent." The only thing I was allowed to do by some of the students was take roll. As soon as I finished that task, I put down the clipboard and, to my surprise, I see a group of 4-5 young White males standing up leaning on the desks with crossed arms, almost forming a human wall.

Student 1: "We demand to see your Green Card to be sure you are not in this country illegally."

Me: "And you are questioning my immigration status under whose authority?"

Student 1: "This is America and any of us, Americans, have the right to request it."

Student 2: "Not only the right, but it is our duty to OUR country."

Me: “I am going to say this ONCE and I expect y’all to follow through: Go back to your seats, open your History book and read it because you seem to be missing a thing or two about the history of this country. Start reading so, one day, you can stop embarrassing yourselves in front of smart people like me.”

That was the end of that conversation. The fact that I returned the next day, and the day after that, and almost every single day of the semester is, in retrospective, almost unbelievable to me. The Principal appreciated my knowledge and helped me to understand the intricacies of the education system. It also helped that she was a woman of color, a Pacific Islander, and some of our conversations were about the spaces that people of color occupy in Coastal Mississippi. Eventually, the school had an opening in the Social Studies Department. Although the Principal wanted me to stay and give me the position, another educator was granted the position through a program known as Troops-To-Teachers, which gave precedent to any applicant in the pool, regardless of their experience and skills beyond the simple requirement of having a teaching license. This upset me as I had spent 6 months at the school and prompted me to investigate the other districts along the Coast.

I decided to take the same approach and apply as a substitute teacher, which allowed me to understand the school dynamics. I found out that Long Beach was the only district that directly hired its substitutes. All other districts contracted with a company called Kelley Services to do their substitute teachers hiring. I followed instructions and completed their application only to be told by this third-party that all districts were at capacity and there was no need for substitute teachers. They did not even look at my resume, I was not only licensed in Social Studies but also in Spanish, which is still considered a high-needs area.

If I did not have the professional experience that I had outside the education field, I probably would still be waiting for a call from Kelley Services. I wrote a letter and addressed it to every superintendent and HR Director of each of the school districts across the Coast. In my letter, I explained my background and the value I considered I could bring to the education field. I also noted my discontent and concern about Kelley Services and the missed opportunities that schools probably had due to this company's lack of due diligence. I got a call from the Head of the HR Department from Biloxi Public Schools the same week I mailed out the letters. He indicated it was not for a substitute position, but a grant-funded position and that he would like for me to speak with the Principal of Biloxi Junior High School (BJHS), which was the only middle school in the 40,000-people city of Biloxi, MS.

It was the week before the Winter Break when I met with BJHS' Principal, Mr. B., in December of 2015. I had a great meeting with Mr. B. He explained that the state had given the school a grant to hire three English Language ("EL") tutors to provide support to the students, as well as the current English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. He also explained that, as a grant-funded position, there was no guarantee that it would be renewed the following year. Not only I had no background in English acquisition besides being an English "learner" myself, but I had no idea it was "a thing" in American education. Up to that point, I thought the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) teachers were instructors that would get a certification over the weekend through a language institute, and they would only teach in non-English speaking countries or provide support to non-English speaking college students. The only experience I had with ESL was during my time in China, having my 4-year-old attending a neighborhood Chinese kindergarten in the city of Guangzhou, where we had an English teacher

from Portugal in an exchange program teaching English to the kids once a week. Mr. B said it would be a perfect space for me, so I followed his lead and accepted the job the following day.

After Winter Break, I reported to BJHS. It was that day when I met two amazing individuals with whom I am still in contact 7 years later, even across state and country borders. One of them, a young Latina from the U.S. whose energy inspired and fed my own. The other one, a sweet woman in her 50s from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both fully bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. We were immediately introduced to the ESL teacher and her classroom: A White American monolingual woman in her late 40s. Her anxiety about her own work was noticeable on the very first conversation we all had. The ESL teacher explained she could use the Spanish language assistance by us being there, as well as noting that we should create a schedule that would allow us to accompany the more struggling students to their core classes, an ESL instructional delivery approach known as Push-in. After that planning time, we were able to finally attend her class and meet the students. Her ESL class was a conglomerate of approximately 25 students from 6th through 8th grade, being most of them of Latinx descent and Spanish dominant. Two of the students were a set of sisters from Vietnam.

My 10-year perspective allows me to now understand that the chaotic site we witnessed upon entering the ESL room was a total failure in terms of classroom management. As soon as the kids understood we were there mainly to support them with the language piece, they quickly crowded around us and approached us with all sorts of requests, primarily things that they wanted to tell their teacher... but never could, even though the only Spanish teacher in the entire building was strategically placed in the room across the hallway. After the rowdy scene was settled, the lesson started. The ESL teacher created a long, continuous seat by putting the desks and chairs one next to the other one. It looked like a speed-dating type of lesson. The purpose

was to read aloud in English as a class by passing the one book to the classmate next to you upon finishing one sentence. From a distance, the book looked short and almost like a picture book. The kids seemed to get frustrated by the minute and the teacher kept on escalating the situation by getting frustrated, too. This frustration appeared to originate from the simple fact that there was a linguistic barrier among them. I approached the group to attempt to mediate the conversation. I asked the ESL teacher to handle me the book so I could help the students. It took those few minutes and that simple action for me to be almost as frustrated as the students. The book probably did not even reach a Lexile Level of 100, it had a few words on one page and a picture on the contiguous page. The ESL teacher immediately confirmed she acquired the book at the "Dollar Store." Neither of us needed experience in education or a degree in education to understand what was driving the students' frustration; the linguistic barrier was a secondary issue. Asking a 6th grader to read a book discernably geared towards kindergarten kids had failure written all over the place, let alone attempting to make the 8th graders in the room relate to the content. The most incredible thing was that students were advocating for themselves right there; it did not matter whether their teacher was in the room or not. They were noticeably exhausted from having to voice the same complaint daily. And they were evidently thankful for our presence in the room. My first day in my new job as an inexperienced educator and I am already forced to question the training and skills of an educator that has been "teaching" ESL for a few years. I was glad I was not going to bring this up on my own as my other two colleagues were in complete agreement. The information found in the media source from the CT Mirror (see Appendix) selected as a media source for this study supports sentiments of disappointment and frustration regarding this experience of my practice. Through the mentioned article we learn that

parental experiences show that there is a misconception about bilingual programs and their value in the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

Later in the week, the professional conversation did not go well among the four of us. The agreement was that one of us would always be present during ESL time (one period per day) to support the teacher and the students, as well as evaluating and determining which student(s) were more pressed for language support in their classes in order to create a rotation that would allow the three of us to help the most amount of our non-English dominant students. The implementation of the push-in ESL strategy allowed for other challenges and problems to become known. Upon request, I attended the ELA class with one of our 8th graders. The student was failing not because the student was not trying, but mainly because "*la maestra me sienta en una esquina y nunca me dá uno de los libros para trabajar*," as the student explained in their own words. Surely enough, as the teacher passed the workbooks around at the beginning of class, my student was skipped. My interaction with my student's ELA teacher went as follows:

Me: "Excuse me, but my student didn't get a workbook."

ELA teacher: "I understand. Your student doesn't have a workbook."

Me: "It seems to me that it is an intrinsic part of your class and the lesson. Why doesn't my student have a book?"

ELA teacher: "Well, he wouldn't be able to use it, so I didn't assign him one. It would be a waste."

Me: "So, what is my student expected to do in your classroom? And how will my student be successful in your classroom? He is going to high school next year!"

ELA teacher: "Yes, he will. And that will not be my problem anymore."

On the very next class, my student got his own workbook.

On the second week of school for us things remained the same; tensions grew drastically in the ESL period. Towards the end of the week, we walked into the classroom to the ESL teacher inconsolably yelling with exasperation at the students about their behavior. Some of the little ones ran towards us when they saw the EL tutors walking through the door. I was spoken to in the most unprofessional manner by the ESL teacher at several meetings we had during the following week. For the extent of two weeks, we did nothing but try to help her by sharing our point of view about challenges and problems and share strategies with her. It was after that scenario we walked into that we requested an immediate meeting with the Principal. We had enough evidence from inside and outside the ESL classroom to put together a report for him; and we did. During the following few weeks, the EL tutors focused on the push-in strategy with the kids and all three of us (not one, as initially planned) were present during the ESL class. On the first week of February 2015, something triggered the ESL teacher. On Saturday February 7, the 3 EL tutors received a dreadful email that led to Principal's immediate reaction: "Please, do not engage." I still have that email and I still shake my head about those words. On that Monday, my Principal approached us and asked me if I could take over the class since I was already a fully licensed teacher. We all agreed that bringing a substitute teacher into such a challenging environment could only cause more disdain, especially as there were only 3 months left in the school year. And that is how I became an ESL teacher.

The months that were left in the 2015-2016 school year went smoothly at BJHS without the problematic ESL teacher overseeing the classroom. Culturally relevant strategies to learn English as a foreign language were put in place, and family outreach was brought to the forefront of the program. Our Principal got word he was moving to Biloxi High School (BHS) the following school year, also as principal, and his vision was bringing me with him.

Biloxi High School

The summer between my work at BJHS and my first year at BHS was spent working on an English Language Summer Camp that I help the District create for our emergent bilinguals. We only had funds to do it for one month, but it was better than nothing and the first of its kind done on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. It was a success, and the families were introduced to digital language learning through memberships to Rosetta Stone provided by the District. The Guardian article utilized as one of the media sources (see Appendix) for this study precisely supports this "idea of diverse spaces and the success and challenges that can be observed through these experiences, as follows: "The article underscores the importance of bilingual education in integrating immigrants and improving education, as well as the need for more support and diversity in the teaching profession. It also emphasizes the significant contributions and inspiration drawn from Latino students and migrant allies, highlighting the historical legacy of marches and the solidarity shown in the pursuit of a new future for Latinos."

My Principal's vision for me at BHS was three-fold: 1. The English as a Foreign Language teacher; 2. Language support for students in their core classes, as well as some sort of "EL" instructional coaching for their teachers; and 3. The bilingual World History teacher. When I think back to it and realize that all these responsibilities were bestowed upon me, a teacher on paper but an educator with no training; I am glad I did not understand then even half of what I understand today about the education system, otherwise, I am not entirely sure I would have agreed to it. Driven by my entrepreneurial spirit, my Principal's instruction that followed seemed logical: The state of MS requirement for ESL teachers in high school is to obtain an ELA endorsement, being one path the Praxis one. He told me that on a Wednesday during our English Language Summer Camp. On Saturday I was taking the ELA Praxis test. At some point before this test, I had gone to the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg to take the World

Language: Spanish Praxis and I did not think much of it. In fact, I was upset I had missed ONE question, and I knew exactly which one. I cannot recall the timeline, but I remember thinking that having a Spanish endorsement would give me an advantage; a "just in case" tool in my educator's toolkit. The complexities of the ELA Praxis for me mainly relied on the fact that I did not grow up with the literature that is read and taught in the United States, but I had a general knowledge about most of the works. This fact paired with the classroom management and English as a Second Language questions which responses were guided entirely by my common sense and the semester experience acquired in BJHS were sufficient for me to reach the score necessary to be granted the ELA endorsement. My Principal also assisted me with my Alternative Route Licensure (ARL) program as I needed to complete one of these within the year in order to convert my provisional teaching license into a permanent one. I opted to do it at the University of Mississippi, which had a distance program that required two in-person meetings in Oxford, MS during that year of ARL work. Because I was already fully licensed, I was allowed to complete my observation hours (student-teacher hours) through my own practice. Here I was, an ESL and Bilingual Social Studies high school teacher in Biloxi, MS.

The room that I was given used to belong to the previous ESL teacher, who was now moving to a different town in the state. The room was strategically located next to the school's reading strategist. Eventually, I would find out that the religious philosophy of our reading strategist would not allow books with witches, warlocks, or other "satanic" references. This educator was not outspoken about her views. The high school campus was practically new, built after Hurricane Katrina destroyed the previous building. In fact, the only reason this situation came to my attention was because one of my students and I walked into her room at a time she was classifying a shipment of books that she received; books that were recovered and saved

during the mentioned hurricane and only in 2016 the school was able to access these again. The help she provided to my emergent bilinguals outweighed the literature censorship, so we simply went with the flow, recovered some of the books from the trash, and went on about our day.

My duties within the Social Studies Department included teaching one period of World History for emergent bilinguals. Most of my students were those who moved up with me from BJHS, including my two Vietnamese sisters. We added to the group a student from Jamaica whose IEP stated he was illiterate. Although he spoke English, his mother tongue was Jamaican Patois, hence his emergent bilingual status. My next-door colleague was teaching him how to read and the year went by with lots of successes in this area. The work I had to do with my Jamaican student was like nothing I had ever done before. Did I legitimately know what was I supposed to do with this unique case? Not at all. His critical thinking skills were at level and his capacity to retain information was incredible. Therefore, my instinct dictated that doing everything verbally with him could be successful. And it was. I would find videos related to the content we needed to cover, and we would have oral formative assessments that were created based on the video content. The summative evaluations were in writing, and I made sure to always create multiple choice versions that I would read aloud and would sit with him to follow my reading. My finger would follow each single word for an entire school year. I will never forget him crying because it was the only "B" grade he has ever gotten in his academic career. It was the most time-consuming instruction I have ever done in my 10 years as an educator. From time to time, it was exhausting for the other students, too but creating a community, having a group of students who fully trusted me and vice-versa was of utmost importance for the success of my Jamaican student. Due to the diversity of my students in the group, instruction was done both in English and Spanish.

The language acquisition portion of my ESL duties encompassed two periods in my schedule. My classes were populated with all the students that came from BJHS with me, as well as the 10th-12th grade students that were in BHS. Most of the students who were already in high school were of Vietnamese original or descent. Although I had the Vietnamese sisters with me at BJHS, I never asked myself the reason for the predominance of the Vietnamese community on the MS Gulf Coast. At this point, I asked around and one of our Social Studies teachers at BHS explained that many Vietnamese families settled in the Coast during the Vietnam War. The reason they chose this part of the country was due to the availability of shrimp; the shrimping industry prevailed back home, which allowed Vietnamese immigrants to immediately establish themselves both economically and socially across the MS Gulf Coast.

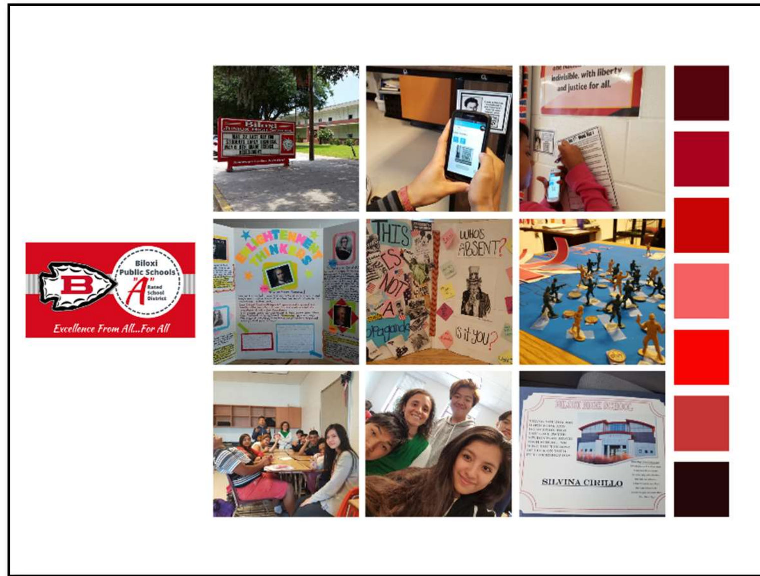
The second set of responsibilities of my ESL duties were more aligned to coaching and inclusion. From the point of view of instructional coaching, I assisted teachers who had emergent bilinguals in their classroom with content, translations, and other strategies. In terms of inclusion, contrary to the model that I followed at the middle school (which entailed staying in the classroom with the student and serving as some sort of in-house private tutor), at the high school level we decided for a co-teaching structure. This was especially useful and very much needed in their English Language Arts (ELA) course. Not all emergent bilinguals were in the same grade, but we had them all together. This involved being strategic as there were several ELA courses happening at the same time in one single period. I planned with the ELA teacher, and we designed lessons that addressed content standards that were mainly shared across all ELA levels. When we could not overlap the standards, we would then split the classroom and teach mini lessons to comply with the requirements. For the most part, ELA lessons shifted into English language acquisition lessons, especially among our newcomers. Although the ELA

teacher was a veteran one, the one thing that would always be a struggle was classroom management. I mention this because I see this being the case across the board with monolingual teachers when they have a large group of emergent bilinguals. The nature of the challenges is not necessarily rooted in students' poor behavior or the teachers' lack of capacity to control their own classroom, but rather in the mutual frustration due to the language barrier paired with a precarious training in language acquisition educational strategies. The mini lessons strategy also worked well for the U.S. History "inclusion" time; in reality, this allocation followed more a pull-out method than an inclusion one as, most of the time, I would bring the students to my own room. Finally, the remaining class period we utilized it as a Tutoring, during which I was able to help our emergent bilinguals with all their classes.

After two years in education, paired with tremendous changes in my personal life, I decided the one year of alternate route training at the University of Mississippi was not enough; I needed to dive deeper into the education arena. More importantly, I needed to learn how to be an advocate for our emergent bilingual students, as well as improving foreign language education in this country. When I go home to Portugal, there are 3-4 languages spoken at the table and that is not something that we observe in the U.S. On the contrary, language has been used as a tool to exert dominance over marginalized communities, and that needs to change. Biloxi, MS was simply too small for me to study, understand, and pursue this quest.

Figure 5

Potpourri of events at Biloxi Public Schools (2014-2016)



The Fifth Largest District in the Nation

The decision to leave Mississippi was easy, even though it was the first place where I have ever owned and restored a house. The tremendous support I received from my Principal, especially as a new teacher, made me question a move, but I was fully aware that the only way to grow in the field of education was to take the leap of faith, if that is what I ultimately chose to do. The most difficult part of was choosing the location: It was my opportunity to relocate to Portugal, where my family lives, but I had no job prospects and I had recently changed careers at 36 years old. Las Vegas, NV was the contender based on my son's place of birth and our history in the city and the overall region (Southern Utah). At least, seven years later, I can say I have

been able to enjoy both places by traveling to Portugal as much as we can during the summer months.

I will never forget the big, cool, shiny poster at the airport in Las Vegas. The campaign was known as "Calling All Heroes" and even Education Week was reporting about it in 2015 (Superville, 2015). I came to visit Las Vegas as part of my relocation research, before even making the decision of Las Vegas over Portugal. I took the welcoming poster as a sign and, upon returning to Mississippi, I reached out to Clark County School District (CCSD).

Figure 6

Clark County School District – Marketing Campaign

To my surprise, I learned that CCSD was the fifth largest school district in the United States, amounting to 330,000 students in 2017 (NCES). I reached out to the Human Resources Department via LinkedIn and I was pleased to get a response rather quickly. The Head of HR indicated they had a school that was looking for an educator with my skill sets, and they immediately connected me with the Principal. The Principal requested an interview via Skype;

the hour and a half conversation went well enough that I was asked to then speak with the assistant principals of the school. That interview happened only an hour or so later following my initial interview. I think the decision to offer me the position was already made within the first 15 minutes of my first interview. Although I did not know much about his North Las Vegas high school, our visions were aligned and I was hired to teach World History, U.S. History, and U.S. Government in a bilingual setting, but predominantly in Spanish, as well as closely collaborating with their ESL teacher; in fact, we were placed in rooms across each other. Room 807 would be my home for seven years, across two different schools in CCSD. Additionally, I would be starting a Ph. D. in School Psychology, which I will later shift from it into the Curriculum & Instruction program.

The relocation went smoothly, and I was content at my new school. I had a splendid work companion in my ESL colleague, and I was given the liberty of teaching in Spanish and/or utilizing the strategies that I deemed most effective. I had no support in terms of professional development, but it was not surprising considering my short, previous experience had already shown me a great lack of focus in training teachers in ESL education. At that moment, I was convinced that the U.S. neither knew how to teach a second language accurately nor how to support students who need to learn English as a foreign language. I was never trained for it (a fact that would eventually change); I just had the experience of my own upbringing and years of experience in the translation field, which allowed me to get general training in the field of linguistics. If there is something my experience as a linguist taught me is that just because any given human is capable in two languages does not necessarily mean that they are able to manage all dominions of both languages, let alone to serve as a *dador de fé* from one language to the other. Unfortunately, the concept of being the "carrier in good faith" of both languages does not

exist in the U.S. (as it is the case in countries where translation degrees exist, such countries in Latin America and Europe). I observe a similar challenge in terms of language teaching and learning in the U.S.: The fact that I was licensed to teach another language (Spanish) simply because I sat for and passed a test that demonstrated my knowledge of English and Spanish and basic cultural features that appear in countries where there is a predominance of these languages should not translate into being an effective educator.

It only took a month for me to understand that the challenges the District faced were beyond the capacity of educators teaching a foreign language, but they rather appeared to be centered in the [probably unintentional] allowance for discriminatory attitudes and actions to be present in school buildings. The CT Mirror article utilized as one of the media sources in this study (see Appendix) supports this cultural issue of discrimination and inequality that I narrate in this entry, when it established the following: “While dual-language programs are recognized as superior for English learners' academic achievement and language proficiency, their growth is hindered by misconceptions, financial considerations, and logistical challenges.” One of the built-in activities I had in my Government course was the school’s participation in a program with one of the state universities. Teachers needed to prepare students with three different cases that were carefully devised by our Principal and the Head of the Law School. Students would present the cases’ merits in an event at the law school’s mock room. It was important – Authorities would be present; law students would be in attendance; students would be the center of attention. The event would take place in February. We started talking about this event from day one in my U.S. Government PLC.

The situation is engraved in my head. A little over a month after the school year started, one of my U.S. Government colleagues (it was 3 of us in total) took the liberty of coming to my

classroom, asked me to step out as this person needed to speak with me "for a minute," and proceeded with their explanation. As the Department Head, this human explained that there was no need for me to "waste" my time in preparing "those kids" for the university's event as "they are not able to comprehend neither the task nor the content, let alone having to debate it in English." This person rambled about the same idea for the entire class period, precluding me from being inside my room working with my students. The "consolation price" was that we got to go on a field trip with the rest of the Government students to "support" their work. As a brand-new teacher in the District (and, almost a new teacher overall), I was not entirely prepared to respond on the spot; I was not prepared to respond even after I had time to process what I was told. I was raised in a culture where we respect our educators and our elders. The challenges in terms of salaries and resources are greater than what we experience in the U.S., but like most communitarian societies, we know and understand the level of preparation and education that educators have, and we come to respect their background and intellectual authority. My own cultural background betrayed me in a crucial moment. That year, my students had their field trip and we all observed from the audience. The following year, things would be different.

The following school year challenges were greater at my high school. There was a similar expectation for my students regarding the U.S. Government project (that was, not to participate); the Principal's vision appeared to have shifted and I no longer aligned with it; and the concept of Restorative Justice was introduced to the school with rather problematic examples. Once again, at the beginning of the new school year, my Dept Head "refreshed my memory" about the expectations regarding my students' participation in the UNLV project: Nothing had changed and my students, "those students," as explained, were only skilled enough to visit. This year I was a different person; I understood how the District worked and I was not shy to voice the fact

that my students were being discriminated against and segregated. I brought it up with the Principal. It was a costly move, but something that needed to be done. My students were allowed to participate from a *pobrecito* type of perspective; they were granted a space as “a favor.” My students did not only prepare in TWO different languages, but they also delivered in English and Spanish. The first time in the history of this project to see a bilingual delivery, my students got a standing ovation not only for their bilingualism, but also for their critical thinking skills that were evident in the reasoning and presentation of their cases. We did not ask for prior permission to do this in two languages, otherwise I am positive our suggestion would have been shut down. My Principal was inappropriately affectionate during the standing ovation, but by that time in February I had already put my transfer to another school for the following year.

Getting my students to the UNLV space was not an easy task. The push back coming from my Department Head was so much that it prompted a meeting with the 3 U.S. Government teachers (one of them being me) and our Principal who, by October of my second year at his school was playing the role of our direct Supervisor as the previous one chose to transfer to another school. In that meeting, I was recommended not to use Spanish in the classroom. I immediately noted that the purpose of my existence in the school was, precisely, to teach in a bilingual environment, utilizing the most needed language to convey and teach content to my students. The recommendation almost immediately transformed into a mandate and, upon my disagreement and even pushback by stating my students’ educational rights, to the point of quoting every law I knew that protected them both at the federal and state levels, my Principal’s response was as follows: “Ultimately, Ms. Jover, this is my school and you do as I say.” The so-called Thanksgiving week could not come soon enough. It was unthinkable to me that already in my second year in my new District I already had to reach out to my Union. Upon approaching

my Union, the representative explained a few things to me as follows: “We have a big dossier on this particular Principal, but he always plays the “colored card,” and we cannot ever do anything about it.” The Union representative recommended for me to go to the District’s HR; which I did the following day. I explained the situation: A Principal asked me to violate my students’ educational rights. I indicated to the Head of HR at the time that I had already spoken with my Union, and I narrated their response. Their comment: “I will have to agree with your Union. For this reason, it is better for us to look forward. I know the perfect place where you can be of service and the Principal shares your educational philosophy.” I dealt with my transfer as soon as Transfer Season arrived, in January. In addition to HR’s recommendation about the possible school for me to transfer, I had a friend in the Counseling Department precisely at that school who indicated they were looking for a Social Studies teacher. I applied. One of the assistant principals came to observe my lesson and he offered me the job on the spot. Two days after I was at the school interviewing with the ELL Facilitator and the Principal of the school.

I moved schools at the end of the school year, and I am now in my sixth year at the recommended school. I was particularly satisfied with my decision after the end-of-the-year training on Restorative Justice at the school I was leaving behind. The Principal became the main voice on restorative justice practices in our District, including a book deal. This scholarly positionality within the academic community elevated the Principal to eventually become a Superintendent somewhere in the state of Washington. When we got our first training, the example was a video of a teacher referring a student to restorative justice practices based on the following “behavior to be corrected”: Speaking Spanish in their classroom. I could do nothing about it, and I was also leaving the school, so there was no feasible way of me protecting our Spanish-speaking students at that high school. Based on my experience upon voicing my

complaint, I doubt the District proceeded with any sort of corrective action in regard to this program.

My new high school for the 2018-2019 school year was eager to have an educator with my skillset, particularly because they had put in place the previous year an educational foundation that specifically helped our newcomers. They named this model the “ELL Cohort” and focused on providing newcomers an additional layer of services throughout their core classes (English, Social Studies, Science, and Math). The cohort would stay together, if schedules permitted, and the students would rotate into core classes where teachers were either bilingual (mainly, English and Spanish) and/or were highly trained in language acquisition strategies. The “ELL Strategist” at the time explained that the school applied to be a dual language school based on this model, but it was rejected because, indeed, this is not a dual language model. They did not have a bilingual Social Studies teacher until I arrived, so I fit well in the plan. Language acquisition programs such as this one, particularly because even these core classes were taught in English, are subtractive in nature as the main goal is to help students acquire English language skills. I worked under this cohort model for 4 full years, including our 1.5 distance learning years of during the COVID19 pandemic. An asset-based model would be the one built and implemented in subsequent years guided by dual language principles under a bilingual education umbrella.

The Post-COVID Era

It was exactly 3 weeks before our city and state lockdown due to the COVID-19 global pandemic that the Annual Conference of the National Association of Bilingual Education took place in Las Vegas, NV. For the first time in 5 years, I witnessed a gathering of K-16 educators, businesspeople, and legislators who were interested in multilingualism. The only school

represented, though, was ours. Only 2 bilingual teachers (including myself) were in attendance and, *a duras penas*, my Principal. Nevertheless, this attendance was a "before and after" for my school in terms of bilingual education. And then... the pandemic hit, and everything changed, at least it did for the duration of the lockdowns and the post-pandemic year.

It was precisely during this time that people in education and across the community seemed to connect with one single purpose: to help our students and families as much as possible. It was an unprecedented time during which I witnessed equally unprecedented collaboration. These actions led to the starting point of the bilingual education program that is currently in place in CCSD, including the creation of a Multilingual Education Department which now houses Dual Language and World Languages. The story of the challenges and tribulations of this endeavor will be the topic of future work.

Figure 7

Clark County School District (2016-2022)

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I discussed the history of language politics in the United States and showed how this is a country built on anti-bilingual sentiments. I also narrated my own teaching journey across three different states in this country with the purpose of setting up the stage to critically unpack the situation of Latinx educators and the value that their positionality brings to the system. In Chapter 2, I presented the relevant literature that deals with our Latinx students in the U.S., as well as bilingual education programs and other language-type of educational programs in the U.S., focusing on the situation in the state of Nevada. In Chapter 3, I explained the research design that I chose for this study and dove into the intricacies of autoethnographies as a methodology. In Chapter 4, I shared a series a journal entries that expand across almost 10 years of my career in the education system in the United States. Additionally, I included in my research a series of carefully curated media sources published between the years 2015 and 2020. The content of these sources supports the sentiments that emerged from the narrative shared through the journaling process regarding my experiences as a new educator in the United States between the aforementioned time period. Finally, in this Chapter I discuss the most prominent themes that emerged from the journal entries, cross-referencing these with autoethnographic literature of other educators with the purpose of strengthening the overall validity of the findings.

Research Questions

The following questions framed my study:

A. How does autoethnography enable understanding of the needs of emergent bilinguals in the sociopolitical context of local and federal language policies in the United States?

a. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from journal entries crafted by the author of this study?
b. What are the patterns and variations that emerge from state and national news pieces between the years 2015 and 2020?

Putting It All Together

This autoethnographic work was guided six specific tenets that conformed this study's theoretical framework, namely: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding. These ideas constitute a series of themes that summarize the value of this type of methodology. Sharing my personal experiences from the beginning of my career as an educator in the United States, as an immigrant who came to this country as a bilingual adult, and particularly due to the fact that it was a career change at 36 years old, and the subsequent analysis of these observations, allowed for an introspective work that ultimately helped understand, first and foremost, a shift in my own identity. This pivotal change is mainly reflected in the understanding of the challenges that are present in the work that Latinx educators do in the field of language teaching and learning on a daily basis and, as a direct effect, the advocacy work that we end up doing (and, on occasions, an expectation of us having to do the said advocacy work, as if it was implicitly embedded in our job description). Documenting experiences through autoethnographic work allows to reach an understanding that translates into the creation of tactics and strategies that can tackle the now known challenges and share best practices on how to precisely attempt to either create better spaces or eliminate these obstacles.

Informed by the work of Gonzalez et al. (2019), I assigned a letter code to each of the data sources that I used in this study, as seen on Table 3. The objective of this letter coding

allows to, ultimately, understand the frequency of the themes and categories appearing in the narrative and media sources, and allows to establish patterns and variations emerging from the mentioned data sources.

Table 3: Code assignment for data sources

Data Source	Code
Journal entries	A
Media sources related to bilingual education at the state level	B
Media sources related to bilingual education at the national level	C

The data analysis of the journal entries performed with ATLAS.ti provided a total of 199 grounded codes, grouped in ten distinct categories with their corresponding sub-codes. In turn, the number of grounded codes created by the abovementioned tool corresponding to the state-level news amounted to a total of 241. Finally, the corresponding grounded codes created by the tool regarding the national-level news amounted to 183. In terms of the citations associated with these codes, they amounted to 52, 152, and 110, respectively.

As shown in Table 4, the subsequent manual coding following the utilization of ATLAS.ti for the initial coding, as described in the methodology section, generated a total of ten overarching themes, and six of these themes and core categories remained, namely: "career development" with "career advancement" and "career change" as core categories; "cultural issues" where "discrimination" and "inequality" surfaced as the theme's core categories; "diversity" showed the core categories of "success" and "challenge" as its secondary topics; "education" encompasses the core categories of "advocacy," "education system," and

“professional development;” the theme of “emotional experience” observes the emotions of “disappointment” and “frustration” as its core categories; and finally, “language education” as an overarching theme envelops the topic of “bilingual education” as its sole core category. The decision to discard four of the codes (“multifaced,” “impact,” “educational models,” and “characteristics”) that were generated was based on either the lack of frequency of grounded information relevant to that specific code and/or the irrelevancy of the term on its own. Additionally, the exemplar codes that are shown on the mentioned table are the manual product and summarization of the interpretation of 314 total quotations that were created and automatically associated during the initial coding of the corpus.

Finally, cross-referencing the three different types of sources allowed the study to interconnect the various topics. Nevertheless, not all data sources addressed all core categories. The study shows and overlapping of all three sources through exemplar codes under the core categories of discrimination, inequality, success, education system, professional development, disappointment, and bilingual education. In turn, the study shows that the only theme that was addressed solely by one of the three sources (journal entries) was the career development one. It is worth noting that the advocacy core category under the education theme is strongly present through the journal articles, but rarely addressed throughout the media sources utilized in the study.

Table 4: Themes, core categories, exemplar codes, and artifacts represented in each category

Theme	Core Category	Exemplar Codes	Type of Source (*)
Career development	Career advancement	• Praxis exams. • ARL system. • Dealing with HR.	A
	Career change	• Important being passionate when changing careers. • Important to have a mentor when shifting careers.	A
Cultural issues	Discrimination	• Many in the system tends to associate a Spanish-speaking educator to having only the capacity of teaching Spanish as a foreign language. • School districts are not good at approaching and fighting against discriminatory practices and attitudes in school buildings.	A, B, C
	Inequality	• Emergent bilingual students do not have access to the same opportunities as students who are monolingual.	A, B, C
Diversity	Success	• Once administrators and school districts understand the benefits and models of bilingual education, they are willing to test it out. • Considering programs specifically designed for diverse students (e.g. summer language academy).	A, B, C
	Challenge	• Students with IEPs in multilingual environments.	A, B
Education	Advocacy	• ESL and DLBE educators additional [and unspoken] responsibility is to support emergent multilinguals and their families within their buildings.	A

		• ESL and DLBE educators need to be fully versed in the legal aspects that can support our emergent multilingual students and families. • This advocacy work might look and feel very lonely, especially if there is a lack of support from administrators.	
	Education system	• Education of foreign languages is not taken seriously, which is reflected in the aversion towards bilingual and multilingual programs. • ESL teachers are not well-equipped to teach English as a Foreign Language. • Students are not as well-prepared academically as they are in other countries.	A, B, C A, B A
	Professional development	• Praxis tests appear to be difficult to pre- and in-service educators who were raised in the U.S. • Development that entails teaching and learning of bilingual education programs are not common and, in some cases, even non-existent or even questioned.	A A, B, C
Emotional experience	Disappointment	• Foreign languages are not a priority in the U.S. • Foreign languages are not effectively taught in the U.S.	A, B, C A, B, C
	Frustration	• The importance and complexities of the ESL field is not entirely recognized.	A
Language education	Bilingual education	• A framework that is still confused with ESL.	A, B, C

(*) Type of Source: A = Journal entries. B = News articles, states. C = News articles, nation-wide.

Upon analyzing more in depth the patterns and variations by observing the themes and core categories presented in Table 4, we can immediately notice that the first theme of "career development" is only present in source A. This source shows as narrative regarding Praxis exams, the ARL system to become an educator, as well as addressing HR systems within the field. The journal entries teach us about the importance of passion when changing careers, as well as a strong mentorship system for educators to succeed. On the other hand, the media sources collected do not necessarily address this topic, but rather illustrate the situation of English language acquisition programs in general, and bilingual education programs in particular.

The "cultural issues" overarching theme is found in all three sources. The patterns that emerge from this theme can be summarized as follows: First, a vast number of humans in the system tend to associate a Spanish-speaking educator to having only the capacity of teaching Spanish as a foreign language. Second, school districts are not good at approaching and fighting against discriminatory practices and attitudes in school buildings. Finally, emergent bilingual students do not have access to the same opportunities as students who are monolingual. As shown in Table 5, the relationship between the two texts lies in their focus on challenges within educational settings related to language instruction. The journal excerpt highlights discriminatory attitudes impacting teaching, while the media piece discusses obstacles hindering the growth of dual-language programs, such as misconceptions, financial constraints, and logistical issues. Both texts shed light on challenges faced in language education, whether through discriminatory practices or systemic barriers to program expansion.

Table 5: Cultural issues as cross-referenced across sources

Journal Entry	Media Source Summary
"It only took a month for me to understand that the challenges the District faced were beyond the capacity of educators teaching a foreign language, but they rather appeared to be centered in the [probably unintentional] allowance for discriminatory attitudes and actions to be present in school buildings."	While dual-language programs are recognized as superior for English learners' academic achievement and language proficiency, their growth is hindered by misconceptions, financial considerations, and logistical challenges.

The "diversity" overarching theme is found in all three sources. The patterns that emerge from this theme can be summarized as follows: First, once administrators and school districts understand the benefits and models of bilingual education, they are willing to test it out. Furthermore, there is a consideration for programs specifically design for diverse students (e.g. summer language academy). Finally, it is challenging to have students with Individualized Educational Plans in multilingual environments. As shown in Table 6, the relationship between the two texts lies in their emphasis on the value of bilingual education and support for emergent bilinguals. The journal excerpt showcases the creation of an English Language Summer Camp for bilingual students, introducing them to digital language learning resources. Similarly, the media article stresses the importance of bilingual education for immigrant integration and education enhancement, while also highlighting the need for diverse support in the teaching profession. Both texts highlight the positive impact of language programs and underscore the significance of inclusivity and support for bilingual learners.

Table 6: Diversity as cross-referenced across sources

Journal Entry	Media Source Summary
"The summer between my work at BJHS and my first year at BHS was spent working on an English Language Summer Camp that I help the District create for our emergent bilinguals. We only had funds to do it for one month, but it was better than nothing and the first of its kind done in the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. It was a success, and the families were introduced to digital language learning through memberships to Rosetta Stone provided by the District."	The article underscores the importance of bilingual education in integrating immigrants and improving education, as well as the need for more support and diversity in the teaching profession. It also emphasizes the significant contributions and inspiration drawn from Latino students and migrant allies, highlighting the historical legacy of marches and the solidarity shown in the pursuit of a new future for Latinos.

The "education" overarching theme is found in all three sources. The patterns that emerge from this theme are centered in the aspects of advocacy, the education system, and professional development and can be summarized as follows: First, educators in the field of English as a Second Language and Dual Language Bilingual Education have additional and unspoken responsibilities that entail the support of emergent multilingual and their families within their buildings, at most times, beyond academics. Second, educators in the abovementioned fields need to be fully versed in the legal aspects that can support our emergent multilingual students and families. The most notable pattern that emerges in terms of the advocacy piece regarding the self-care of the educator is the fact that the advocacy work on and by itself might look and feel very lonely, especially if there is a lack of support from administrators. Moreover, education of foreign languages is not taken seriously, which is reflected in the aversion towards bilingual and multilingual programs. Additionally, teachers who specialize in English as a Foreign Language are not well-equipped to teach the subject. In terms of the students themselves, the observation is that they are not as well-prepared academically in the United States as they are in other

countries. Finally, in terms of professional development, two patterns emerged: Praxis tests appear to be difficult to pre and in-service educators who were raised in the United States; and the fact that professional development that entails teaching and learning of bilingual education programs are not common and, in some cases, even non-existent or even questioned. As shown in Table 7, the relationship between the two texts lies in their shared focus on the importance of bilingual education and the challenges faced in advocating for it. The journal entry highlights the struggle faced by the researcher in implementing bilingual teaching practices despite opposition from superiors. Similarly, the media article discusses how the immigration debate has spurred a call for bilingual education, as evidenced by the Oklahoma teachers' march demanding better education funding and support for bilingual schools. Both texts underscore the significance of bilingual education in integrating immigrants, promoting cultural inclusivity, and enhancing overall educational outcomes.

Table 7: Education as cross-referenced across sources

Journal Entry	Media Source Summary
"Getting my students to the UNLV space was not an easy task. The push back coming from my Department Head was so much that it prompted a meeting with the 3 U.S. Government teachers (one of them being me) and our Principal who, by October of my second year at his school was playing the role of our direct Supervisor as the previous one chose to transfer to another school. In that meeting, I was recommended not to use Spanish in the classroom. I immediately noted that the purpose of my existence in the school was, precisely, to teach in a bilingual environment, utilizing the most needed language to convey and teach content to my students. The recommendation almost immediately transformed into a mandate and, upon my disagreement and even pushback by stating my students' educational rights, to the point of quoting every law I knew that protected them both at the federal and state levels, my Principal's response was as follows: "Ultimately, Ms. Jover, this is my school and you do as I say." The so-called Thanksgiving week could not come soon enough. It was unthinkable to me that already on my second year in my new District I already had to reach out to my Union. Upon approaching my Union, the representative explained a few things to me as follows: "We have a big dossier on this particular Principal, but he always plays the colored card and we cannot ever do anything about it." The Union representative recommended for me to go to the District's HR; which I did the following day."	The article from The Guardian discusses the Oklahoma teachers' march, highlighting how the immigration debate has amplified the call for bilingual education. The march, with over 100 teachers from Tulsa to Oklahoma City, aims to demand better education funding in the state, emphasizing the importance of bilingual schools in integrating immigrants. These schools provide an environment where young children can learn in the language they speak at home without feeling ashamed, while their non-Spanish speaking classmates can also learn Spanish with the help of Latino peers. The march leaders stress that funding bilingual education is not only crucial for integrating Latinos but also for enhancing education overall. They emphasize the benefits of bilingualism, with one teacher noting that bilingual students can learn faster and have a better understanding of different perspectives, as they constantly transition between cultures.

The "emotional experience" overarching theme is found in all three sources. The patterns that emerge from this theme are focused on the sentiments of disappointment and frustration which can be summarized as follows: First, foreign languages are not a priority in the United States. Consequently, foreign languages are not effectively taught in the U.S. Additionally, the

patterns and variations show that the importance and complexities of the ESL field are not entirely recognized. As shown in Table 8, the relationship between the two texts lies in their shared focus on challenges within language education, particularly concerning appropriate materials and instructional approaches for bilingual students. The journal entry highlights the frustration caused by mismatched reading materials and the importance of student advocacy in addressing such issues. In contrast, the media excerpt discusses misconceptions around language acquisition, emphasizing the effectiveness of dual-language programs despite obstacles like cost, staffing, and student turnover. Both texts underscore the need for culturally sensitive and effective educational strategies for bilingual learners while addressing misconceptions and systemic challenges within language education.

Table 8: Emotional experiences as cross-referenced across sources

Journal Entry	Media Source Summary
"The book probably did not even reach a Lexile Level of 100, it had a few words on one page and a picture on the contiguous page. The ESL teacher immediately confirmed she acquired the book at the "Dollar Store." Neither of us needed experience in education or a degree in education to understand what was driving the students' frustration; the linguistic barrier was a secondary issue. Asking a 6th grader to read a book discernably geared towards kindergarten kids had failure written all over the place, let alone attempting to make the 8th graders in the room relate to the content. The most incredible thing was that students were advocating for themselves right there; it did not matter whether their teacher was in the room or not. They were noticeably exhausted of having to voice the same complain daily. And they were evidently thankful for our presence in the room. My first day in my new job as an inexperienced educator and I am already forced to question the training and skills of an educator that has been 'teaching' ESL for a few years. I was glad I was not going to bring this up on my own as my other two colleagues were in complete agreement."	Donación García, a parent who initially enrolled his daughter in an English-only classroom, represents a common misconception that English immersion is the best approach for language acquisition. However, research shows dual-language programs, where instruction is offered in both English and the learners' native language, are more effective. Despite their proven effectiveness, such programs face obstacles, including the perception that they are costly, a lack of willing English speakers, and difficulties such as finding qualified bilingual staff and high student turnover.

The "language education" overarching theme is found in all three sources. The pattern that emerges from this theme is focused on the idea that bilingual education as an educational model in the U.S. is still confused with the field of English as a Second Language. As shown in Table 9, the relationship between the two texts centers on the efficacy and importance of bilingual education. The journal entry highlights the collaboration between bilingual individuals and my experiences as an ESL teacher to support students effectively through an instructional method known as Push-in. On the other hand, the media excerpt discusses the pedagogical benefits of dual language education, emphasizing the advantages for both minority- and

majority-language children. Together, these texts highlight the value of bilingual approaches in education, dispelling misconceptions and promoting the idea of enhancing language skills rather than replacing them.

Table 9: Language education as cross-referenced across sources

Journal Entry	Media Source Summary
"After Winter Break, I reported to BJHS. It was that day when I met two amazing individuals with whom I am still in contact 7 years later, even across state and country borders. One of them, a young Latina from the U.S. whose energy inspired and fed my own. The other one, a sweet woman in her 50s from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both fully bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. We were immediately introduced to the ESL teacher and her classroom: A White American monolingual woman in her late 40s. Her anxiety about her own work was noticeable on the very first conversation we all had. The ESL teacher explained she could use the Spanish language assistance by us being there, as well as noting that we should create a schedule that would allow us to accompany the more struggling students to their core classes, an ESL instructional delivery approach known as Push-in."	Viorica Marian, a professor with extensive research experience in bilingualism, underlines the proven pedagogical benefits of dual language education for both minority- and majority-language children, citing an Illinois study as evidence. She also addresses the misconception that bilingual education is about replacing English rather than supplementing it.

The analysis of all three sources was guided by the six tenets of autoethnographic work that constituted the theoretical framework for this work, namely: 1. Explain identity, 2. Document experiences, 3. Address challenges, 4. Advocate for change, 5. Share best practices, and 6. Build empathy and understanding. These guiding principles allowed me to focus on the search of patterns and variations within the journal entries and media sources, and ultimately compare these sources to provide a solid support of the findings. In terms of constraints, the

amount of data produced by ATLAS.ti was quite significant, a fact that led me to carefully select the passages that were used in this study. Without a set of guiding principles as set forth during the methodological stage of this study, the scope could have been greater and thus the attainability of these findings might not have come to fruition.

CONCLUSION CHAPTER

The commonalities among three diverse data sources denotes not only a tangible argument to further support the accounts shared through the journal entries but could also be used to supplement the topics addressed in the educational narrative at the time of this study by suggesting the work and/or implementation in what showed to be lacking.

The findings of this study centered in the journal entries, can be grouped into two main categories: the first category being the academic piece and the second category evaluates the research questions and reaches to conclusions from a social justice perspective of Latinx students and educators in the United States. There is a third, less obvious category that emerges from this study that does not take is not necessarily centered in the academic piece, but does involve the community at large, more specifically the Latinx *comunidad*: *las familias*. These categories do not exist independently from each other, but rather they overlap and interconnect through the values that are most important to the community. Ultimately, it is about relevancy, trust, and belonging.

The six tenets set forth at the beginning of this study served as the guiding principles for the development of the themes, ultimately driving the three final conclusions of the present study. This autoethnographic work allowed to explain my own identity within the education system of the U.S.; and identity that has grown and evolved throughout the years and that has most definitely shifted from that very first day as an EL tutor in Biloxi, Mississippi. I noticed this changed as I documented my experiences. The greatest shift was in the perception of the U.S. education system, its strengths and weaknesses for teachers, students, and families. This perspective allows for a greater understanding of the challenges that need to be addressed for all stakeholders involved to have a more just and fair experience within the system. The advocacy

work that I now understand to be implicit in the work that I do as a Latina educator in U.S. educational environments is guided by these challenges that came to light through this work. The perception of many of these challenges already existed, but an in-depth comparative work with external sources allowed me to corroborate whether I have been on the so-called right track of the work that I do daily. This autoethnographic work is also giving me a voice and creating a space in an environment beyond my classroom; a setting that allows me to navigate tertiary education spaces where I can find mentors and allies with whom to share best practices and receive feedback to be able to push through in community and not alone. The sentiments of empathy and understanding that the documented experiences are able to convey to the reader allow for the creation of spaces where colleagues, scholars, and other education stakeholders can dialogue and, in turn, share their own experiences and support to eliminate those challenges. That is the value of this autoethnographic work.

The ancillary research questions to an overarching questioning regarding the needs of emergent bilingual students in the sociopolitical context of local and federal policies in the United States presented the need to discover patterns and variations that emerged from the sources utilized for this study. This dissertation has explored the process of becoming an educator in the United States as an immigrant, as a Latina, through the lens of autoethnographic work, aiming to bridge the personal with the cultural and to illuminate the complexities of the sociopolitical context not only for me as an educator, but mainly for my students and families. The patterns identified within my narrative have not only echoed existing theoretical constructs but also revealed variations that suggest a need for a broader interpretive foundation in the field of multilingual and multicultural education. Key patterns such as cultural issues and diversity were consistently aligned with the sociopolitical context of the Latinx community throughout the

history of the United States, whereas variations like the professional development spaces created (or lack thereof) in and for the language education field highlighted the nuanced and often contradictory nature of my personal experience within these contexts. These patterns and variations informed the work by providing a rich, deep understanding that statistics alone could not convey, thus offering a more holistic view of the current needs in the field of multilingual and multicultural education for all players involved in the system. The findings implicate that Latinx educators, teacher preparations programs, and systems and policymakers all play a role and need to work together to address the challenges in the field, suggesting that an autoethnography is not only a valid methodological approach but also a necessary one to capture the depth of human experience. At the end of the day, this is precisely the heart of education. This contributes to the scholarly work of multilingual and multicultural education, and it sets the stage for subsequent inquiry that may adopt similar or dissimilar methodological approaches.

Reflecting on the process, this autoethnographic work has proven to be both challenging and liberating. It required a rigorous examination of personal experiences while demanding a critical analysis withing a broader context. Despite the natural subjectivity of this work, this approach has yielded insights that are valuable for both personal and academic growth.

Implications

Bilingual Education As a Tool to Reclaim Language Power

The rise of bilingual education programs in the last two decades in the United States is rooted in a cultural shift within the language teaching and training field. The understanding that a language can be taught and learned without the need to cancel the dominant language of the person has created spaces where the idea of translanguaging prevails. Moreover, this research-based change has served as a tool to fight the narrative of educators who defend "English-only"

classrooms as a justification of a "more efficient" way of learning English. The lack of education about multilingual educational environments and language acquisition, as well as thoughts and actions with discriminatory undertones that were utilized for decades in the United States to segregate non-English dominant students are now a failed attempt to exhort dominance over our immigrant students and families. The elimination of the various state laws that have popped out throughout several decades punishing the use of other languages besides English in public schools has now given space to pedagogies that take into consideration the funds of cultural and linguistic knowledge that students bring to their classrooms.

Today's challenge is educating two players within educational systems: First, districts and schools in terms of the differences of the objectives of ESL and dual language models which entails moving from subtractive programs to asset-based models, centered in the cultural value and richness of our students. Second, families and the misconception of full immersion into the English language as the only way for students to learn it; paired it with an attempt of "helping" their children "blend in" to prevent episodes of discrimination. One of the pillars of bilingual education programs is sociocultural competence which is, ultimately the goal that informs the other two pillars of bilingual education -bilingualism and biliteracy and high academic achievement for each student- (Howard et al., 2018).

Latinx Teachers and the Perceived Lack of Power

The United States occupies an incredibly extensive piece of land, a fact that reflects, in part, its cultural and linguistic diversity and, together with these, the feelings and ideologies that sustain or reject the continuation of the multifaceted *cultura estadounidense* ("American" culture). Although it cannot be generalized across states, my experience in states as different as Nevada, Mississippi, and Florida taught me that the marginalized spaces that many Latinx

teachers are relegated to within their K-12 buildings are created due to a lack of preparation on critical multicultural education in the respective teaching and training programs. The autoethnographic work of Acevedo-Febles supports this statement when the author argues that a consequence of their study was "the realization that the dialogue around teacher attrition is too often disconnected from teacher preparation" situated "in a country that fears a dialogue about race, culture, gender, and sexual preference," leading to a cultural isolation of bicultural teachers (pp. 284-286, 2016). We have more power than we think we do; we simply do not know how to use it; and that has been done on purpose. Part of being a Latina educator in the United States is reclaiming the spaces that belong to us in a system that was initially devised for us not to occupy much of it.

The autoethnographic work of Rosemary Hendricks (2018) explains that the negative experiences of teachers of color, mainly Latinas and Black educators, reflected through a shared history of segregated and unequal schooling, is what motivates and encourages them to become educators. The poor representation of Latinas and Black teachers, paired with the weak relationships that, in many cases, they had with their own teachers growing up, drives many to become themselves those teachers that they did not have growing up. The disruption of the equilibrium of the status quo can only come to life once we truly and authentically know ourselves.

I once read the words of the Argentinean cartoonist Quino (Joaquín Salvador Lavado Tejón), globally known as the creator of the comic strip *Mafalda*, the difference between *educar* (educate) and *enseñar* (teach). He said that *educar* is more difficult than *enseñar* because, to be able to teach we need to know the content, but to be able to educate we need to be (Suárez, 2011). And this is exactly what our systems need to empower Latinx educators: Having authentic

conversations about their own identities, including the historical facts as well as understanding the intersectionalities that shape who we are so we can BE the educators that our students are in desperate search of during their years in the education system.

The Power of the *Arraigo* to the Community

Being a Latina educator in the K-12 space creates an almost immediate connection with Latinx families, students, and other educators. The shared history and language are elements bring us together, even though our immigrant experiences might be slightly different. Even during those times when language officiates as a divisor, contrary to what non-Spanish speakers believe, it is *el fútbol* that also knows how to create bridges across the various Latinx cultures. To a certain extent, this element also serves to tear down gender walls that were created through the patriarchal system brought into our lands by European colonizers.

El arraigo, the sense and reality of belonging (Torrente et al., 2011), allows for relationships between Latinx educators, students, and their families to exist and grow. Although an *arraigo* to the Latinx community in the United States, in many cases, entails an expectation to abandon our *arraigo* to our nationalities, it is precisely this teamwork that makes us stronger as a group that has been historically marginalized in the United States. The sense of belonging and creating spaces and relationships based on our ethnic commonalities should not ever translate as an actual desertion of our ethnic individualities, but rather promote opportunities to celebrate diversity within the group. The *arraigo* to the group brings us together, which in turn reinforces and intensifies the power of our community.

Limitations

The nature of autoethnographic work is both its strength and its limitation: The story is told from one’s own perspective. The capacity to process, internalize, and further evaluate and

analyze my own experiences might be confined not only to my memories, but also to my geographical spaces. The generalizations in one place (for example, Florida) might not align to the generalizations that can be made for a different location (for example, Nevada).

Another factor that limited my narrative is my current role as an educator in a public-school setting. It is not rare to learn of situations about educators who suffered from retaliation from their own districts for critically speaking about values and programs in it. I purposefully did not share the intricacies of my experiences in my current school district driven by the fear of rubbing the wrong way people who currently occupy spaces of authorities over my own "just a teacher" space.

Recommendations

The non-exhaustible list of recommendations that emerges from this study speaks to several groups within the education system, including our community of parents and our society. For Latinx educators: Learn who you truly are, both personally and in the classroom; understand your background, your biases… your identity. For this to come to fruition, educators need to be willing to position themselves in uncomfortable conversations and be ready to go on occasions, through existential crises to grow and be able to guide your students from a truly authentic space. Additionally, find each other; educators do not need to do this work alone. Nevertheless, we do need to create the necessary spaces and engage in self-reflection practices before inviting others to that space (Rodríguez-Campo, 2021).

Teacher preparation programs should demand from their institutions to allow for the necessary access that would lead to the creation of critical programs that can allow pre-service and in-service educators to understand the superficiality of the theory in comparison to the practice. Having students write 100 lesson plans at a time that many schools are moving away

from such a structured practice is a waste of time and money. Having students learn classroom "management" strategies that collide with our students' cultural backgrounds is doing a disservice to our educators and the effort to create safe spaces. The lack of critical multicultural courses, as well as the non-existence of bilingual education programs or programs in this field that do not have a solid foundation in critical frameworks about diversity and multilingualism, simply perpetuates the idea of English-only classrooms for our emergent bilinguals.

School systems and policymakers also need to create spaces for their participants to do introspective work. These systems need to support our Latinx educators and students by creating programs that are asset-based in nature and move away from deficit-based narratives that only serve to almost immortalize monolingualism in the United States and, in turn, continue to feed segregationist and discriminatory narratives in our education systems.

APPENDIX

State-level Media Sources

THE GUARDIAN | April 10, 2018 **Oklahoma Teachers' March: Immigration Debate Fuels Calls for Bilingual Education**
The article from The Guardian discusses the Oklahoma teachers' march, highlighting how the immigration debate has amplified the call for bilingual education. The march, with over 100 teachers from Tulsa to Oklahoma City, aims to demand better education funding in the state, emphasizing the importance of bilingual schools in integrating immigrants. These schools provide an environment where young children can learn in the language they speak at home without feeling ashamed, while their non-Spanish speaking classmates can also learn Spanish with the help of Latino peers. The march leaders stress that funding bilingual education is not only crucial for integrating Latinos but also for enhancing education overall. They emphasize the benefits of bilingualism, with one teacher noting that bilingual students can learn faster and have a better understanding of different perspectives, as they constantly transition between cultures. The article also sheds light on the challenges faced by teachers in schools with a significant Latino population. Cindy Gaete, the daughter of Chilean immigrants and one of the lead march organizers, stresses the need for more support for Spanish speakers and increased funding for bilingual education. She highlights the lack of diversity in the teaching profession, pointing out that many potential immigrant teachers are discouraged from pursuing this career due to low pay and limited access to higher education for necessary teaching certifications. The media narrative surrounding the teachers' strikes has been criticized for largely overlooking the

role of Latinos and their migrant allies, as well as the inspiration drawn from Latino students who have protested the repeal of protections for undocumented young people. Additionally, the article mentions the involvement of migrant organizations in supporting the teachers' march, illustrating the significant historical legacy of marches in the US and the need to recognize Hispanic leaders like Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Overall, the article underscores the importance of bilingual education in integrating immigrants and improving education, as well as the need for more support and diversity in the teaching profession. It also emphasizes the significant contributions and inspiration drawn from Latino students and migrant allies, highlighting the historical legacy of marches and the solidarity shown in the pursuit of a new future for Latinos.

BOSTON MAGAZINE | November 16, 2017 **Massachusetts Legislature Passes Bilingual Education Bill**
The Massachusetts Legislature has passed the LOOK bill aimed at addressing the educational challenges faced by English language learners (ELL students), who make up over 90,000 students or approximately 9.5% of the student body in the state. The bipartisan bill, passed with near unanimity, reforms the existing policy established in 2002 by allowing for more flexible bilingual lesson plans tailored to the needs of individual students, a departure from the previous mandate for instruction predominantly in English. The legislation seeks to close significant achievement gaps, as evidenced by MCAS data showing only 20% of ELL students meeting or exceeding expectations, a high dropout rate among this demographic, and a graduation rate that falls behind the state average.

The bill has garnered praise from several state legislators and aligns with contemporary educational philosophies that advocate for student-centered, individualized learning. House Speaker Robert DeLeo and Senate President Stan Rosenberg highlighted the bill's potential to enhance the state's top-rated education system and its responsiveness to the diverse and evolving needs of Massachusetts communities.

As the bill awaits Governor Charlie Baker's signature, it represents a significant shift in educational policy for ELL students, recognizing the need for a more adaptable and inclusive approach to education in a global community, and striving to eliminate language barriers as an obstacle to academic success.

NPR | November 25, 2016

Bilingual Education Returns to California. Now What?

California voters have repealed English-only instruction mandates, passing Proposition 58 with a substantial majority, thus reopening the door to bilingual and dual language education in public schools. This measure, effective from July 2017, prompts state and school district officials to address key issues: the number of schools offering bilingual programs, potential additional costs, and sourcing qualified bilingual teachers—a critical concern given the exodus of such educators during the prior restrictions. The law does not make bilingual education compulsory, leaving the decision to individual school districts based on parent demand. A minimum threshold of parent interest will obligate schools to provide bilingual instruction, while fewer requests may still exert pressure on schools to accommodate such needs.

Under Proposition 58, the administrative process for enrolling students in bilingual classes has been simplified, removing the waiver previously required and potentially altering teacher recommendations. The shift aims to enhance educational opportunities for California's 1.4 million English language learners, permitting a more seamless integration into bilingual or dual-language programs. This change aligns with the growing demand among various parent demographics for dual language immersion programs, recognized increasingly as an academic asset.

Economic concerns regarding the implementation of bilingual education have been addressed by Proposition 58 sponsors, who assert that no additional state funding will be required; rather, local districts will reallocate existing funds as they see fit. The broader context includes the U.S. Justice Department's 2015 findings, which criticized California's English-only policies for failing to adequately support English language learners (ELLs). In response, state education officials have introduced new training and monitoring procedures to comply with the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. Bilingual and dual language instruction will now be incorporated into the educational strategies aimed at improving ELLs' quality of instruction and their progression to English proficiency.

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS | March 1, 2017 **We need hope for the future of bilingual education in Texas**
The text underscores the urgent need for bilingual education in Texas, particularly in the North Central Texas Region, due to the increasing linguistic diversity among students. The author,

Melinda Cowart, points out the critical shortage of bilingually and ESL certified teachers, despite various incentives and legal mandates to provide equitable education. Challenges in recruitment and retention include a deficit in bilingually certified teachers, inadequate Spanish materials, and rigorous certification exams that are especially tough for those whose academic Spanish development ceased early in their schooling. Cowart calls for comprehensive efforts to enhance the recruitment and retention of bilingual teachers. These include providing appropriate Spanish materials, prioritizing the retention of certified educators, fostering the value of bilingualism, and encouraging the continued development of academic Spanish beyond elementary school. The author also shares personal experiences and examples of support strategies used at Texas Woman's University, such as BTLPT language workshops and targeted practice tests, to help aspiring bilingual educators reach the necessary proficiency. The text concludes by emphasizing the importance of bilingual education, not as a language replacement, but as an effective way for English language learners to simultaneously learn content and English. The author stresses that meeting the challenge of recruiting and retaining bilingually certified teachers is crucial for the future success of students and society.

CT MIRROR | June 12, 2017 **English Learners: Other Places are Showing What Works**
This article discusses the challenges and successes of dual-language programs in U.S. schools, focusing on the benefits of bilingual education for English learners and the barriers to its

broader implementation. Donación García, a parent who initially enrolled his daughter in an English-only classroom, represents a common misconception that English immersion is the best approach for language acquisition. However, research shows dual-language programs, where instruction is offered in both English and the learners' native language, are more effective. Despite their proven effectiveness, such programs face obstacles, including the perception that they are costly, a lack of willing English speakers, and difficulties such as finding qualified bilingual staff and high student turnover.

The article highlights various examples of dual-language program expansion, such as in Portland, Oregon, and contrasts them with the limited reach of such programs in Connecticut. The demand for bilingual education is high, driven by both the cultural value of maintaining heritage languages and the competitive advantage bilingual individuals have in the job market. Utah is showcased as an unexpected success story, with bipartisan political support facilitating a rapid increase in dual-language offerings. Former Governor Jon Huntsman's leadership and the state's culturally diverse Mormon population played significant roles in this expansion.

The article also addresses the nationwide shortage of qualified bilingual teachers, citing Connecticut's additional certification requirements and the lack of incentives as contributing factors. Innovative solutions, like Portland's partnership with Portland State University to train more bilingual teachers, are presented. Financial concerns about the cost of dual-language programs are mitigated by examples such as Utah, where modest state financial support has allowed for widespread implementation without significant extra costs.

In summary, while dual-language programs are recognized as superior for English learners' academic achievement and language proficiency, their growth is hindered by misconceptions, financial considerations, and logistical challenges. Success stories from places like Utah and Portland, where stakeholder buy-in and strategic approaches have overcome these barriers, demonstrate the potential for widespread adoption of bilingual education.

National-level Media Sources

November 8, 2016 **Bilingual Education Can Be An Asset for White Students But a Deficit for Immigrants**
The document examines the contrasting realities of bilingual education in the United States, highlighting its benefits for white, English-speaking students while underscoring the challenges it poses for immigrant students, particularly in states with English-only instruction mandates. In Massachusetts, bilingual programs are legally available only if they also serve native English speakers, as a 2002 ballot initiative made English-only instruction compulsory for English learners without a special waiver. This has led to a performance gap between English learners and their native English-speaking peers, with evidence suggesting that dual-language programs could narrow this gap. Advocates for bilingual education in Massachusetts are pushing for legislative changes, bolstered by research supporting the academic and cognitive benefits of bilingualism. In contrast to Massachusetts, bilingual education in the Austin Independent School District in Texas is recognized as valuable for native Spanish speakers, aiming for bilingual academic proficiency. The article also discusses the experiences of individual students and their families,

demonstrating the personal impact of these educational policies. For instance, Claudette Bautista, who emigrated from the Dominican Republic, initially lost her Spanish proficiency due to the focus on English, but later regained it through a dual-language program. The article further explains how dual-language programs can academically benefit English learners and even outperform monolingual instruction. Finally, the document touches on the political and legislative landscape, noting that while English-only instruction laws persist in four states, there are movements to introduce more flexibility and promote bilingual programs. In California, the success of the Seal of Biliteracy program and Proposition 58 campaign, which aims to overturn the state's ban on bilingual education, serves as a model for advocates in Massachusetts. As educators and policymakers debate these issues, the document underscores the importance of recognizing bilingualism as an asset and fostering educational equity.

LANGUAGE MAGAZINE | May 16, 2018 **The Future of Education is in Two Languages**
Fabrice Jaumont discusses the transformation of the American educational system towards bilingualism and its benefits. The article emphasizes the growing recognition of bilingual education to preserve cultural heritage, enhance cognitive development, and provide professional advantages. Dual-language programs that have been emerging in recent years have garnered significant interest among families and reflect a shift from monolingual to multilingual societal norms.

Jaumont highlights the importance of parental involvement in advocating for and implementing dual-language programs in schools. He stresses that these programs should not be exclusive to the privileged but should also support minority communities potentially affected by gentrification. The article argues that bilingual education contributes to a more inclusive society by promoting cultural understanding and mutual respect.

The author advocates for bilingual education as a critical element for success in the 21st century, fostering respect, tolerance, and a global perspective. He concludes that bilingualism should be a universal educational offering, as it has the potential to transform individuals, communities, and societies, supporting the idea that children should have the opportunity to learn and engage with multiple languages and cultures.

THE HILL | March 16, 2018

The US Needs to Embrace Multilingual Education — Our Children Will Benefit from It

The article, authored by Viorica Marian and published by The Hill on March 16, 2018, asserts the pressing need for the United States to adopt a more robust multilingual education system. Marian emphasizes that while private sector entities like Google Assistant are expanding language support, reflecting the importance of multilingualism, the U.S. education system is not keeping pace. Despite a significant portion of American children speaking languages other than English at home, access to dual language education is limited. Moreover, a substantial majority of American adults believe children should be fluent in a second language by the end of high school, a standard not currently met by the education system.

Marian, a professor with extensive research experience in bilingualism, underlines the proven pedagogical benefits of dual language education for both minority- and majority-language children, citing an Illinois study as evidence. Not only does dual language education aid in cognitive development, but it also leads to higher academic performance in both reading and math. She points out the disconnect between research findings and educational practice, noting that investment in bilingual education is often criticized as costly, despite potential long-term economic drawbacks of not doing so. She also addresses the misconception that bilingual education is about replacing English rather than supplementing it. The article concludes with a call to action, urging the implementation of bilingual education as a means of avoiding educational disadvantages for children, regardless of their native language. Marian advocates for bilingual programs that develop deeper cognitive skills in a child's native language while they learn English, as well as teaching a second language to native English speakers. This dual approach could harness cognitive, neurological, economic, and cultural benefits for all students. Marian's stance is that investing in education not only elevates academic and earnings outcomes but also decreases poverty and incarceration rates, making a strong case for the societal value of multilingual education.

EDUCATION WEEK | January 25, 2016 **Need for Bilingual Educators Moves School Recruitment Abroad**
The article from Education Week by Corey Mitchell highlights a critical nationwide shortage of bilingual K-12 educators in the United States, prompting school districts to recruit from abroad, particularly from Spanish-speaking regions such as Puerto Rico and Spain. The

shortage is exacerbated by the growing number of English-language learners and the demand for dual-language programs. Districts are competing for a limited pool of qualified bilingual teachers, offering substantial stipends, and signing bonuses to attract candidates.

The challenges faced by school districts include meeting the legislative requirements for bilingual education in states like Texas, responding to demographic changes, and contending with the often difficult cultural and pedagogical adjustment for teachers coming from abroad. Despite recruitment efforts, the issue of teacher retention due to cultural and systemic adaptation difficulties persists. Initiatives to provide support systems for international recruits aim to improve retention rates and ensure educational quality for students.

The article also discusses concerns from educational organizations such as the Council of the Great City Schools and the National Association for Bilingual Education regarding the lack of a federal response to the shortage of bilingual and ELL teachers. The recent Every Student Succeeds Act does not address the need to increase the number of bilingual specialists, indicating a continuing challenge for districts in fulfilling their bilingual education mandates.

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Viloria, Maria de Lourdes (2019). Culturally responsive leadership practices: a principal's reflection. Journal of Latinos and Education, 18(2), 171–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1371604

CURRICULUM VITAE

Silvina Jover
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EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) in Curriculum & Instruction -
Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education **2024**

University of Denver
M.A.L.S. in Global Studies **2010**

Southern Utah University
B.A. in Political Science • Certificate in International Relations **2008**

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE in EDUCATION

Clark County School District (CCSD) **2016-Present**

- Instructed the following high school courses in English:
  - World History. U.S. History. U.S. Government & Economics. Psychology. Latin American Studies.
- Instructed for the following high school courses in Spanish:
  - World History. U.S. History. U.S. Government & Economics. Latin American Studies. International Relations.
- Developed curricula for all courses taught in Spanish.
- Coached educators across core high school disciplines to prepare curriculum and instruct emergent bilingual students in their classrooms.
- Coordinated state English language acquisition exams for emergent bilinguals.
- Advised after-school programs of Cultural Studies and Latinx students.
- Researched, developed, and implemented the current Dual Language Bilingual Education program at the District level as a member of its Advisory Committee.
- Co-authored CCSD's Dual Language Handbook

Biloxi Public Schools (BPS) **2014 - 2016**

- Instructed English as a Second Language (ESL) courses at the middle and high school levels.
- Supported non-English speaking students in their various English-medium courses.
- Supported non-English speaking families navigate the school system.
- Instructed World History course at the high school level in Spanish and English.
- Coached English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies high school educators to research and prepare curriculum for emergent bilingual students in their classrooms.
- Coordinated state English language acquisition exams for emergent bilinguals.

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Collaborated as member of the Advisory Committee on Bilingual Education for CCSD. [Present.]
- Served as Board member (Secretary) of The Parent Leadership Team of Nevada. [Present.]
- Lobbied Nevada legislators together with the President of the Nevada State Board of Education to implement a differentiated salary scale for educators with bilingual and multilingual skills in the state.
- Collaborated as member of the English Language Learners Advisory Committee for CCSD.
- Collaborated as member of the Newcomer Instructional Curriculum Taskforce for CCSD.
- Participated in the Teacher Leadership Academy of the Public Education Foundation.
- Collaborated in the Teacher Advisory Council of the National Constitution Center.
- Collaborated in the Nevada Digital Learning Collaborative as a cohort member.
- Authored several articles published in Education Week in collaboration with educator Larry Ferlazzo.
- Collaborated with educators across the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic through contributions to various podcasts and webinars focusing on the topic of teaching Social Studies to emergent bilinguals at the high school level.
- Participated as the education expert on the local weekly show "*Cita con la educación*" during the 1.5 years COVID-19 lockdown in the state of Nevada.
- Served as the Education Policy Analyst for the Nevada Hispanic Legislative Caucus.

Conference & Panel Presentations

Bengochea, A., & Jover, S. (2023, November). *Positioning multilinguals' languages as a resource in English-medium settings: Toward response-able pedagogies and systemic change* [Conference session]. UNLV College of Education Summit on Nevada Education. Las Vegas, NV.

Jover, S. (2023, July). *Family engagement and guardian collaboration* [Virtual break-out session]. Break-out day of the UNLV College of Education Paraprofessional Pathways Project. Las Vegas, NV.

Dillard, C., Jover, S. (2023, February). *Educators LEAD professional development day* [Panel session]. Nevada Institute on Educator Preparation, Retention, and Research (NIEPRR). Las Vegas, NV.

Jover, S. (2023, February). *Planning for emergent bilinguals utilizing WIDA can-do descriptors* [Conference session]. Nevada Institute on Educator Preparation, Retention, and Research (NIEPRR). Las Vegas, NV.

Bengochea, A., Jover, S., Mari, V., Ortíz, F., Ruíz, I., & Troche, A. (2022, February). *Getting to the heart of bilingualism: Conversations on current trends in diversity and language education* [Panel session]. Nevadans Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Symposium. Las Vegas, NV.

Jover, S. & Lozada, S. (2022, February). *Estrategias para comunicarse con los padres y las madres bilingües y multilingües.* [Conference session]. Nevadans Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Symposium. Las Vegas, NV.

Jover, S. & Mari, V. (2022, February). *Advocating for bilingual instruction in your district: Actionable steps to informing stakeholders* [Conference session]. National Association of Bilingual Education Conference. New York, NY.

Jover, S. & Rasmussen, M. (2021, October). *Who am I? Who are you? Let's talk about it!* [Conference session]. Southern Nevada Diversity Summit. Virtual.

Jover, S., Limbrick, L., & Rodriguez-Campo, M. (2019, February). *Coping with racial battle fatigue: A critical dialogue on "agitating" historically White spaces* [Conference session]. Graduate and Professional Student Forum (GPSA). Las Vegas, NV.

Jover, S., M., Limbrick, L., & Rodriguez-Campo, M. (2018, November). *Coping with racial battle fatigue: A critical dialogue on "agitating" historically White spaces* [Conference session]. National Association for Multicultural Education Conference. Memphis, TN.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Education Industry

Nevada State University (Las Vegas, NV) — 2023 - Present

- Courses corresponding Bilingual Education licensure:
  - Curriculum and Methodology (in Spanish).
  - Assessment for Multilingual Students (in English).

Creative and Media Advertising Industry — 2011 - 2014

Alma DDB (Coconut Grove, FL) • The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, FL)

Language Industry — 2005 – 2012

Around the Globe Translations (United States • China) - Owner

International Business — 2000 – 2004

Namaskar Trading Co. (Uruguay) • MITC Investimentos (Uruguay)

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Native or fluent:	Spanish
Native or fluent:	English
Working knowledge:	Portuguese
Working knowledge:	Italian