



**Case Studies of Dual Language Teachers: Observations and Viewpoints on Authentic, Native-written Materials for Biliteracy Development**

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## Abstract

Dual language education programs are proven to be highly beneficial for literacy and academic language development with all students, and especially with English learners (ELs). That said, there are also significant pedagogical challenges associated with developing and fostering successful reading comprehension in students' first (L1) and second (L2) languages (Bunch, Walqui, & Pearson, 2014; Lindholm-Leary, 2012). One such challenge is the lack of readily available authentic, multidisciplinary classroom materials written by native-speaking authors in languages other than English. Dual language teachers are consistently faced with the complexities of teaching and learning for students' biliteracy development while simultaneously grasping for ample rigorous, culturally relevant text materials to compliment those available in English. In response, this qualitative case study features practicing dual language teachers' perspectives regarding the importance of authentic classroom materials for biliteracy development. The study and its findings also glean insight on how the participants' viewpoints may serve as recommendations for dual language teacher preparation.

## Introduction

Research has long established the extraordinary linguistic and cultural benefits of dual language learning in K-12 classrooms. Literature confirms bilingual and biliterate students' academic, cognitive, sociocultural, and economic advantages over their monolingual peers (August, Spencer, Fenner, & Kozik, 2012; Thomas & Collier 2012). More significantly, dual language programs are especially vital given the numerous academic and sociocultural successes with English learners (ELs) and emergent bilinguals (Lindholm-Leary, 2012, Collier & Thomas, 2009; de Jong, 2004). To this point, historical and current research argues that ELs in dual language programs master academic English skills better than traditional English as a second language (ESL) programs even though only half or less of the instruction is delivered in English (August & Shanahan, 2010; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). However, there is an increased need for native-written<sup>5</sup> materials that are fully attentive to the numerous sociocultural and linguistic nuances of written text, limiting teachers' access to authentic materials for academic use in the context of K-12 dual language education (Gámez & Levine, 2013; Guerrero & Valadez, 2011)).

Along with myriad benefits of dual language education comes significant linguistic, sociocultural and pedagogical challenges (Castro, García, & Markos, 2013; Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Decades of research provides emphasis on the point that literacy and academic language development in two languages is vastly complex and exceedingly challenging, especially in the context of content-based teaching and learning. Moreover, in the current era of standards-based instruction and systems of high stakes testing, there is surging attention given to disciplinary literacies and teachers' use of complex texts across grade levels in all subject areas. High expectations with cross-curricular, mainstream literacies intensify the need to consider first (L1) and second (L2) language reading theory and the use of authentic informational text materials to genuinely support ELs' and emergent bilinguals' biliteracy development (Beeman & Urow,

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<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this study, the term native-written refers to text and text materials written in a language by an author whose first language is that of the text. The term also refers to texts where the author is bilingual, biliterate, and multicultural to the extent of composing text mirroring native systems of writing, literary practices, registers, and contextually relevant communication patterns in the text language. The term intends to capture and represent a broad scope with a wide variety of dynamic linguistic repertoires.

2013; Bunch, Walqui, & Pearson, 2014; Calderón, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). Unique pedagogical considerations related to reading and text materials are especially poignant given dual language learners'<sup>6</sup> dynamic, vast linguistic repertoires.

Relevant literature stipulates that successful literacy development with ELs and emergent bilingual students is an intricate and multidimensional process, requiring new considerations beyond modifying colossal quantities of existing texts and materials (Bunch, et. al., 2014). Often times schools and districts approach the adaptation of curricular materials with purchasing a text book series, written originally in English, and the translated Spanish versions of the same text. While this may seem like a viable solution, recent theory cautiously advises that in effect there is a multifaceted relationship between “the reader” and texts with which they are interacting. Aspects including text features, the context of the reading materials, and the reading tasks themselves greatly shape students’ overall reading comprehension (Calderón, 2007). In the case of ELs and emergent bilinguals, with multilayered, dimensional language ranges, literacy development is even more intensified when texts and materials are presented in languages the students are still developing (Schleppegrell, 2004). Therefore, pedagogical solutions to these complex learners’ needs must honor varying linguistic ranges and adapt materials in authentic ways (van Lier & Walqui, 2012).

Studies also confirm the importance of sustained use and development of ELs’ and emergent bilinguals’ home languages (Guerrero & Valadez, 2011). In practitioners’ terms, dual language teachers are uniquely positioned with needing a wide-range of academic text materials to sincerely support students’ constructions of meaning while reading (Wong Fillmore & Fillmore, 2012). Text materials combined with specialized pedagogical skills are necessary to facilitate students’ comprehension and rich application of two languages while also attending to students’ increased academic language proficiency in both (DeFour, 2012; Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Dual language teachers are charged with recognizing the significance of sociocultural elements that influence ELs’ and emergent bilinguals’ successful literacy development. Dual language teachers are also obliged to demonstrate a wide repertoire of scaffolding techniques and pedagogical supports related to students’ identities, reading comprehension, textual challenges, academic language development, and sociocultural communicative domains of language (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2016; Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011).

Relevant literature further reveals challenging historical patterns for bilingual education in the U.S. as transitional (García, 2009). Regrettably, language-minority students were obliged to develop knowledge and language according to monolingual dominant-language norms (August & Hakuta, 1997; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Wong-Fillmore, 2014). Fortunately, more recent trends with dual language program design and development, give rise to the notion that programs for biliteracy development should honor both broad ranges of language learning students with equality and equity (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Thomas & Collier, 2009). With these points in mind, dual language education programs continue to be highly effective for students’ academic, sociocultural, and cognitive gains (Boyle, August, Tabaku, Cole, & Simpson-Baird, 2015). Consequently, dual language programs continue to increase in numbers nation-wide (Steele, Slater, Zamarro, Miller, Burkhauser, & Bacon, 2015; U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2012).

The purpose of this qualitative case study (Yin, 2014) was twofold. First, to closely examine a focus group of practicing dual language teachers’ observations and viewpoints regarding the importance of

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<sup>6</sup> The term dual language learner is used throughout the research and is meant to be an inclusive term. To address the wide scope of dual language programs across the United States, the researcher recognizes that dual language learners may include English learners, emergent bilingual students, and also monolingual native English-speaking learners all of whom are participating in programs with the goal of biliteracy.

using authentic, native-written materials with their dual language learners. Second, to discover how these teachers' articulations may serve to make recommendations for pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. The corresponding research questions were:

- 1) What observations and viewpoints do practicing dual language teachers make regarding the importance of authentic, native-written materials to enhance dual language learners' biliteracy development?
- 2) What should future dual language teachers be prepared for in connection to authentic materials for their instruction?

## **Theoretical Constructs**

### **Equity and Equality in Biliteracy**

The study's construct was framed for biliteracy development with dual language learners giving emphasis to equitable bilingual education paradigms with ELs and emergent bilinguals that shape academic language and literacy development in two languages (Collier, 1992; García, 2009; Guerrero, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 2014). As Cummins (1991) conveyed it is vital to avoid deactivating learners' primary, home languages when they are adding another language in their learning experiences. Similarly, students' successful comprehension and construction of meaningful language is dependent upon pedagogical supports that facilitate biliteracy via valuable text access (Wong Fillmore, 2014). ELs and emergent bilingual students need frequent reading and writing with engaged peer-to-peer interactions involving varying linguistic repertoires in changing sociocultural contexts for biliteracy development (Marting-Beltran, 2012; RAND, 2002). Expanding upon the constructs of additive biliteracy, two transected concepts within the study's framework that supported the investigation of dual language teachers' viewpoints on authentic, native-written materials were: 1) conceptions of academic Spanish and L1 text complexity and, 2) sociocultural constructs that support biliteracy

**Conceptions of academic Spanish and L1 text complexity.** Guerrero's (1997) historical research on the importance of contextualized, cognitively demanding learning experiences for Spanish academic language proficiency solidified this study's construct. It stands to reason that additive biliteracy in the context of dual language schooling requires teachers to understand subject matter, text complexity, and the relationships between readers and text materials while simultaneously attending to the significance of students' native language linguistic complexities. Some of Guerrero's points include: "Academic language proficiency is more than mere lexical representations associated with different aspects of the curriculum. It is an internalization and automatization of dealing with cognitively complex language at the level of discourse." (p.68). Expanding on this work, Guerrero and Valadez (2011) continue to emphasize the connections between constructing new knowledge in academic Spanish and the importance of texts written in Spanish by authors whose first language is Spanish. To date, far too often students and teachers alike are faced with limited resources that were authentically written in academic Spanish. Given the noteworthy relationship between the reader and text materials, it stands to reason students' reading comprehension is negatively impacted by this limitation of accessible authentic text materials. The diminished result may in fact be the misguided and over-amplified translation of new knowledge constructed in English into Spanish concepts (Ada, 1976). Ultimately, dual language teachers must demonstrate knowledge and pedagogical

skills to facilitate the use of culturally and linguistically relevant materials for students' expanded pragmatic conventions, and sociocultural layers of academic discourse development in two languages.

**Sociocultural theory.** Language learning in education has been framed for several decades on Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (Lantolf & Thomas, 2006; van Lier, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). An integral element in SCT is the notion that language learning with higher order cognition is developed through meaningful, contextual interaction. Students' successful language development is dependent upon language use in varying contexts, all essential for cognitive, metacognitive, and linguistic advancements (Cummins, 2014; Manning & Bucher, 2012). Similarly, with dual language, biliteracy development requires specialized pedagogies, including student engagement and peer interaction supported by complex text with structured language functions (Gibbons, 2015; World-class Instructional Design & Assessment [WIDA], 2012). In the context of content-based dual language instruction, collaboration and dynamic activities within students' Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) are key points to support increased language demands associated with language-dense materials (Schleppegrell, 2004; Guerrero, 1997). ELs and emergent bilingual students are entirely capable of highly complex analytic thinking, yet they need specialized support inclusive of rigorous texts and culturally relevant materials to accommodate increasing academic cargo at school (Clark, Jackson, & Prieto, 2011; Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Dual language classrooms require sociocultural literacy learning with empowering pedagogies to support students' comprehension of content concepts and dense texts (Calderón, 2007).

**Language, culture, and identity.** In conjunction with Vygotskian SCT, van Lier (2009) maintains that students' self-concepts of identity greatly impact the learning and thinking processes. Students see themselves in one fashion, forming an internal sense of self. On the other hand, students are also considering the external sense of self, simultaneously giving merit to others' opinions of how they are seen (Ryan & Shim, 2008). For dual language learning, connecting culturally relevant learning materials to students' intellectual development and broad spectrums of thinking serves to fundamentally support biliteracy development (Moore & Schleppegrell, 2014; Robertson, 2007). Based on these concepts of sociocultural development, teachers must look for ways to integrate students' cultures, histories, and language varieties into daily learning experiences via academic Spanish and English (Guerrero & Valadez, 2011).

Parallel to García and Guerrero's research, the study's construct was also supported by Thomas and Collier's Prism Model for Bilingual Learners (2007). The Prism Model's four components of sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes indicate that sustained responsiveness in these developmental areas is necessary for biliteracy development. The Prism Model's sociocultural tenet suggests that both language-minority and language-majority students as dual language learners need particular attention to cultural relevancy in order to fully comprehend linguistic constructs in two languages, especially with increased textual complexity and subject-specific, literacy related tasks (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavits, 2014).

With a focus on equitable bilingual education paradigms for ELs and emergent bilinguals that shape academic language and literacy development in two languages, this study was framed with theoretical constructs regarding academic Spanish and L1 text complexity partnered with sociocultural theory. Ultimately, the study's frame supported the research questions in order to glean clarity on dual language teachers' observations and viewpoints regarding the importance of using authentic, native-written materials in their classrooms.

## Research Methods

Seeking to gain clarity from participants' perspectives, the study's focus was on the importance of using authentic materials written to consider depth and breadth in language learners' dynamic linguistic and cultural ranges. Meaning, dual language teachers were asked about the significance of using a wide gamut of literature selections that capture unique cultural and linguistic aspects such as folklore, illustrations, metaphors, and culturally relevant characters to cultivate students' deeper meanings for biliteracy development. An example of this would be a dual language teacher working in a Spanish-English program selecting the book *El verde limón* written by Alma Flor Ada and Francisca Isabel Campoy in place of a story like *Charlotte's Web* written originally in English by E.B. White and then translated into Spanish. Another example may include a dual language teacher using an adopted math text book, originally written in English with native English-speaking students in mind rather than having access to a math textbook written by a native Spanish speaker to be used in Spanish-speaking classroom contexts. The researcher conducted a qualitative, interpretive case study with a focus group including six dual language teachers (Erickson, 1986; Yin, 2014). With structural tenets from the Center for Applied Linguistics Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education research (Howard, et. al., 2007) the study's purpose was two-dimensional. Accordingly, the following research questions related to authentic native-written materials and biliteracy guided the investigation:

- 1) What observations and viewpoints do practicing dual language teachers make regarding the importance of authentic, native-written materials to enhance dual language learners' biliteracy development?
- 2) What should future dual language teachers be prepared for in connection to authentic materials for their instruction?

## Context

This study was situated in the southeastern state of North Carolina where dual language programs are expanding (The State Board of Education, North Carolina [NCSBE], 2013) and the southwestern state of New Mexico where dual language programs have been in place for decades. Both states also have some form of bilingual endorsement for high school graduates (New Mexico Public Education Department [NMPED], 2016a, 2016b; Public Schools of North Carolina [NCDPI], 2015a; 2015b; US Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition [OELA], 2015). The six focus group teacher participants (Yin, 2014) from both states taught in dual language programs with English and Spanish speaking students. While other target languages were available in both states' dual language programs, this study focused on language-minority students and language-majority students in Spanish/English classroom settings. More specifically, both states had program models that supported varying structures for time percentages in target languages (i.e. 90/10, 80/20, 70/30, and 50/50).

## Participants

For the purpose of this research, purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998) resulted in a participant focus group consisting of six dual language teacher participants (see Table 1). Via personal recruitment and participant interest, the researcher was able to include three participant teachers from North Carolina and three from New Mexico. As part of a larger study conducted in both states, the participants for this focus group identified the research topic as an area of special interest. Participants' program sites represented dual language models with ELs, emergent bilingual learners, and some native English-speaking students. The languages of instruction in all participants' programs were Spanish and English. The teachers'



classrooms also represented a mixture of times spent in English and Spanish within their program models. For example, some programs represented 90% of the instructional day in Spanish and 10% of the day in English. Others were 70% of the day with instruction in Spanish and 30% in English (see Table 1).

Study sampling invited native speakers of Spanish and native English-speaker participants, all with qualifications to teach in dual language classrooms as required by the states where they worked. More specifically, the study participants all taught in elementary dual language programs. The focus on elementary level programs allowed for specific nuances to emerge relating to early developmental emergence of biliteracy and academic language in content-based instruction. The participating teachers were all biliterate and had a minimum of five years of experience in dual language classrooms. Additionally, all six participants were female. Some participants in the focus group self-identified themselves as Caucasian and some as Hispanic or Latina. In three cases with the participants whose first language was English, details were revealed in the demographic portion of the data set (Seidman, 2013) to indicate they had studied abroad to Spanish-speaking countries either during or after their teacher preparation programs. Parallel to this, one participant, a native speaker of Spanish, also self-identified as having attended a bilingual school in her home country for her elementary and secondary education experiences. These nuances are so noted on Table 1.

Table 1: Teacher participants

Table 1			
<i>Teacher Participants</i>			
Pseudonym	Teaching In	Native Language	DL Program Time Structure
Emily	North Carolina	English	90/10
Patricia	North Carolina	Spanish	90/10
Caroline	North Carolina	Spanish	70/30
Samantha	New Mexico	English	70/30
Rebecca	New Mexico	English	50/50
Cristina	New Mexico	Spanish	90/10
<i>Note.</i> Emily, Caroline, and Samantha all participated in extensive language training in some form of study abroad programs for at least a semester or more. Cristina attended a bilingual school for her K-12 education outside the U.S.			

## Data Sources

With purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998), the study's approach allowed for the exploration of the research questions in various dual language classroom settings, reflecting the communities where the school research sites were situated. The participants represented a deliberate sample with the goal of surfacing the views of each person in the focus group (Krueger & Casey, 2009). To maintain the initial larger study line of inquiry, the focus group included practicing dual language teachers as a result of the

researcher's fostered relationships with dual language educators in both states (Stringer, 2014). For case study data triangulation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), multiple sources of on-site evidence were examined in the context where the data were collected over a 12-month period. The data sources from each of the six participants were face-to-face interviews, artifacts and documents analysis, as well as participant observations in their classrooms. The researcher gave special considerations related to focus group reflexivity via the interview protocol and specific measures to soundly capture participants' viewpoints. Said considerations were vital to avoid mutual influences between the researcher and the focus group participants resulting in unintended methodological threat (Yin, 2014).

**Interviews.** Focus group semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews were conducted on-site in all six teachers' classrooms. Each on-site interview ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in duration. Interview recordings for each participant were transcribed, resulting in data transcriptions of 13-24 pages per participant. The semi-structured interview protocol (Seidman, 2013) was based on the tenets of the CAL Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education to explore current dual language teachers' perspectives regarding the importance of authentic, native-written classroom materials for biliteracy development. The interview protocol included a portion dedicated to participants' voicing open-ended responses to special interest topics, . The interviews were conducted in the participants' language of choice and transcribed in both languages as the researcher is fully biliterate in English and Spanish.

**Artifacts and documentations.** 375 photographs of artifacts and documentations regarding curricular materials, classroom-seating configurations with dual language learners, and classroom language supports were examined, coded, and analyzed as part of the data triangulation. The artifacts and documentation were in both program languages of English and Spanish, and encompassed varying content-area subjects including language arts, math, and science. Some artifacts were teacher-generated while others were supporting books and documents from site-based textbook adoptions. Artifacts and documentation also included text examples, classroom rubrics, and language supports across the content areas, in both languages.

**Participant observations.** Data sources also included participant 60-90 minute observations in all six participants' schools and classrooms both in North Carolina and in New Mexico. The purpose of the face-to-face observations was to view the teachers in the context of their own environment, to capture deeper understandings of the participants as they were in the community and schools where they taught. In some cases the observations took place while students were present and in other cases, the classroom observations were done during participants' planning periods. Each of the six participants self-selected the time of the observations based on their individual schedules and time constraints and for the purpose of this study to focus on teachers' observations and viewpoints, the researcher did not interact with the students. Anecdotal records, including photographs without students from literacy resource rooms, teachers' classrooms were kept capturing myriad details regarding classroom configurations, ancillary language supports, and other visible resources for literacy in both languages. The on-site observations provided a familiar environment for the participants, allowing for research observations while the participants accessed their own lexical schema based on where they teach and the dual language students with whom they work. This added more depth while examining the classroom materials and the relationship between languages with dual language teachers as, from a research perspective, these teachers were considered linguistically sophisticated professionals (Merriam, 1998).



## Data Analysis

In the interpretive case study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014), the data were analyzed for case descriptions to gain clarity and construct explanations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Yin 2014). With multiple, contextualized and triangulated data sources representing Spanish and English, numerous details for in-depth descriptions emerged for interpretation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Data analysis via open-ended coding (Saldaña, 2016) resulted in preliminary data categories. Continued data analysis for refinement implored categorical culling, grouping, and re-coding processes leading to more precise emergent data patterns with distinct code markers. The integration of thematic and categorical structures from coding each participant's data led to data categories and sub-categories within the holistic data set to respond to the research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The results included details and participants' observations and viewpoints associated with authentic, native-written materials for biliteracy development in dual language classrooms.

## Findings

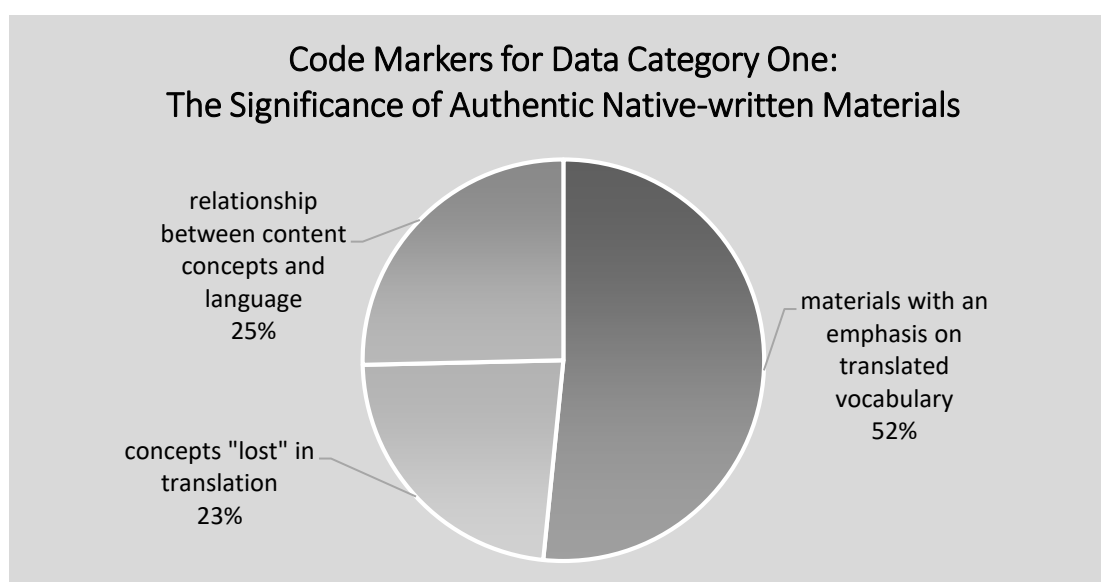
The study's findings address the research questions of 1) What observations and viewpoints do practicing dual language teachers make regarding the importance of authentic, native-written materials to enhance dual language learners' biliteracy development? And, 2) What should future dual language teachers be prepared for in connection to authentic materials for their instruction? The study's findings also reinforce existing literature on learning academic language in two languages as highly complex and significant (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; Guerrero, 1997; WIDA, 2012).

Likewise, study results directly link to new pedagogical implications for teacher preparation programs. Findings also correlated with the sociocultural tenet from Thomas and Collier's Prism Model (Collier & Thomas, 2007) suggesting that authenticity and cultural relevance in dual language learning materials are fundamental for biliteracy development and second language acquisition. The study's findings include amplified details from dual language teachers' viewpoints regarding the significance of authentic, native-written materials for biliteracy development. Participants also described ways in which they have compensated for the shortage of readily available materials meeting said descriptions, therefore extending pedagogical guidance for explicit dual language instruction. Data analysis conveyed details related to cultural variations in language, students' identities, language status, and the relationships between content concepts, communicative language forms, and the role of translation in the process (Calderón, 2007; Krashen, 1985, Reyes & Klein, 2010).

The study's findings as they relate to the research questions resulted in the formation of three data categories as connectors to a predominant thematic axis of: Preparing Teachers for Dual Language Classrooms (Saldaña, 2016; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data categories were: 1) the significance of authentic, native-written materials, 2) connections to sociocultural complexities in biliteracy development, and 3) recommendations for preparing dual language teachers. All three categories had corresponding code markers from the data sources, supporting the streamlining of codes-to-assertions in the data set (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Saldaña, 2014). Given the nature of the data categories, the emergent code markers from triangulated data sources were predominantly connected to the first data category of the significance of authentic, native-written materials and research question one on teachers' viewpoints. The emergent, corresponding code markers for this data category were a) materials with an emphasis on translated vocabulary; b) a relationship between content concepts and language; and c) concepts lost in translation. The prominent code marker's sources in this data category were primarily artifacts and documents,

including curricular materials, photographs, classroom supports, and exemplary text materials (see Figure 1). Participant interview transcripts were the principle data source for the additional code markers (see Appendix A).

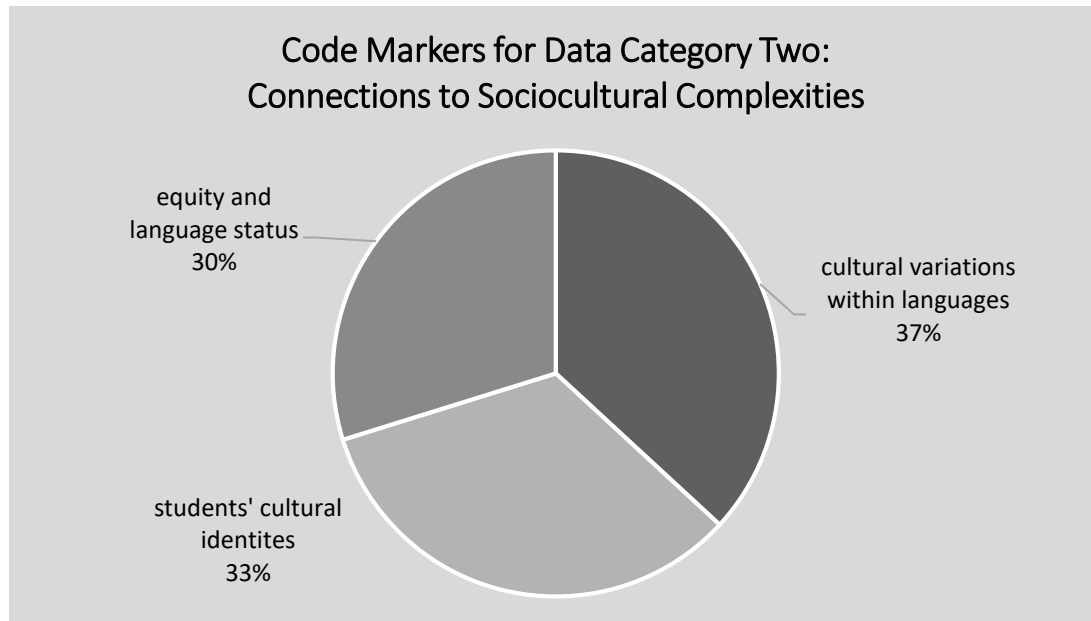
Within the triangulated data coding, other noteworthy details emerged to include: 1) 100% of the participants had access to materials written in both Spanish and English, 2) in the case of Spanish language arts materials, in one instance 100% and collectively over 60% of the literature-based materials were translated stories available in both Spanish and English with a majority of native English-speaking authors, and 3) other content-based materials such as texts, posters and graphic organizers represented an emphasis on vocabulary-level Spanish language development.



*Figure 1.* Data category one: The significance of authentic, native-written materials with its three corresponding code markers and frequencies. The prominent code marker *materials with an emphasis on translated vocabulary* had a frequency of 52%.

The second data category of connections to sociocultural complexities also had three code markers. They were a) cultural variations within languages; b) students' cultural identities; and, c) equity and language status. The code markers' principle data source was participant interview transcripts. The code marker of cultural variations within the languages specifically refers to participants' references to different dialects of Spanish between students of Mexican origin, contextually-dependent types of formal and informal Spanish, variations between native Spanish-speakers with cultural and linguistic backgrounds from countries other than Mexico, and how these variations impact academic language development in both languages. At a more particularized level, participants' quotes from transcribed interviews described when and how these language variations manifested in their classroom materials and the impacts on learning (see APPENDIX A). Similarly, the code marker of equity and language status refers to participants' mentioning the importance of materials reflecting equal prominence to Spanish and English languages within the dual language materials. Lastly, the code marker of students' cultural identities refers to students' abilities to

view culturally relevant illustrations and to have access to culturally relevant characters, language patterns, and content-based text (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Data category two: Connections to sociocultural complexities.

Lastly, the third data category of recommendations for other dual language teachers, connected to research question two shared the primary data source of participant interview transcripts. Participants unanimously described a shortage of options for authentic materials to use with their dual language learners. All six resoundingly, and independently from one another described scenarios where they were either without materials written in Spanish all-together or, that they only had access to translated materials that often times were not as helpful as the English-written materials. The participants further explained that teachers need to be prepared for situations where translated materials are challenging to use simply because the language patterns and content concepts in the translated materials didn't align with students' linguistic and/or cultural norms in meaningful ways.

In summary, all six focus group participants expressed viewpoints related to the importance of having access to more authentic native-written materials in their classrooms. They explained that this for the mutual benefit of both the native Spanish-speaking students as well as the native speakers of English for biliteracy development. Likewise, they all voiced the idea that the sociocultural aspects within the materials are hugely vital for students' biliteracy development, making linguistic, cognitive, and metacognitive connections within the teaching and learning (García, 2009; Guerrero; Grosjean, 2010; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). They also all expressed concern for materials that have been designed in English and then simply translated into Spanish, supporting the idea that dual language students' construction of new knowledge is linguistically and contextually dependent and therefore needs to be connected with both academic Spanish and English in mind (Guerrero & Valadez, 2011).

## Discussion

In discussion, the study's findings directly connected to the research questions and revealed observations and viewpoints regarding the significance of authentic, native-written materials for biliteracy development. Addressing research question one, the participants presented detailed ideas and explanations of what they viewed as important regarding authentic, native-written materials necessary for biliteracy development, through the practitioner lens of perspective.

### Supporting Biliteracy with an Array of Text

The study discussion suggests the need for dual language teachers to use an array of texts, written by varying authors with a broad scope of linguistic and cultural dimensions. Similarly, teachers' use of complex, authentic text and curricular materials must point to students' rigorous engagement with academic languages. To clarify, the use of authentic text materials does not mean simplifying text density nor reduction in academic depth. The dual language teachers from this study expressed the need for their learners to have greater access to authentic materials, therefore providing multiple, amplified entry points for students' reading comprehension, linguistic, and cultural connections within the dual language learning processes.

**Using text materials with variety.** All six focus group participants specified they felt a great sense of limitation and pedagogical disconnect with the variation and types Spanish and English materials they had to use with their students. Even with the materials they did have access to, they mentioned prevalent shortcomings to the extent that they had to search for other creative options. In one instance a participating teacher relied on bilingual secondary school students in the feeder pattern of her elementary school to actually write and illustrate supplementary materials for her classes. This way, she could guide the written structure, focus, tone, and register of the materials as they were created for her class. To that point, findings also gleaned insight on the challenges associated with locating sufficient authentic materials. In further discussion, teachers' reflections and recommendations regarding authentic, native-written materials for other dual language teachers addressed research question two.

**Preparing dual language teachers for the challenge regarding authentic materials.** Much like the discussion on the study's findings related to research question one, all six focus group participants made clear recommendations for dual language teacher preparation. For pre-service and in-service teachers alike, the participants echoed the point that dual language teachers need to be ready for the challenge of locating and using authentic text and curricular materials. In their current practices, none predicted how much time they would spend looking for relevant, native-written materials that genuinely addressed the pedagogical needs of their classrooms. Even with strong L1 and L2 reading interventions, the use of dense and rigorous text, heavy peer-to-peer engagement, and other best practices for language learning (Peercy, Artzi, Silverman, & Martin-Beltrán, 2015), the participants articulated that the issues of authentically written text variety and shallow applicability of the existing materials was a serious pedagogical barrier. In unison, the participants stated all dual language teachers should be ready to "think outside the box" regarding the issues, knowing there is no one simple solution. They also indicated that the topic had such merit that it deserved a preparation course within teacher education.

The participants' viewpoints regarding the significance of authentic, native-written materials for biliteracy development demonstrated their essential observations that ultimately shaped their dual language pedagogies. Likewise, it should be noted that these discussions are continued thoughts regarding authentic, native-written materials as opposed to an all-inclusive list of solutions to the complex issues. On the contrary as questions on the subject still remain. Is it possible that the process of translated materials from

English to Spanish is the over-simplified reaction to a deeper issue of language complexity? In the essence of curricular support, have the instructional materials remained superficial while we ask teachers to “dive deeper” into language learning practices? Even when “the Spanish and English languages in the materials” are obvious, there are many hidden layers of meaning that teachers’ viewpoints indicate are lost in translation. What makes these findings and the corresponding discussions unique is how the participants continuously articulated the importance of and the shortage of authentic, native-written materials for biliteracy development in their own words based on application and use of resources in their classrooms (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Morales & Aldana, 2010).

### **Recommendations and Future Directions**

The study suggests that practicing dual language teachers recognize and affirm the importance of using authentic, native-written materials with their dual language learners. More specifically, the participants described the significance of these materials and how challenging it is at times to find sufficient resources necessary to capture the academic language complexities in both Spanish and English. The granular level observations and viewpoints expressed in study interviews revealed participants’ expressions of essential pedagogical concepts that shaped relationships between languages and text materials along with the impacts on teaching and learning in their classrooms. Likewise, they authenticated their viewpoints by recommending other dual language teachers be prepared for the challenges related to finding sufficient, necessary materials. From here, the study results provide a platform to make solid recommendations for teacher preparation programs, addressing the research questions and making the connection back to the axial theme of: Preparing Teachers for Dual Language Classrooms.

Some practical implications for practice are threefold. First, to emphasize Guerrero’s work (1997), the fields of dual language education and teacher preparation must continue to implore more native authors to participate in publishing native-written materials. This would amplify availability of materials while simultaneously broadening language varieties for academic Spanish development. Second, current dual language teachers, both preservice and in-service must be prepared to compensate for the current shortage in authentic, native-written materials. Colleagues may explore co-authoring materials relevant to lesson design. They may also find creative ways for dual language learners to become authors themselves. Such configurations might occur within the same grade level or, from upper grades to lower grades, co-constructing native-written materials. Another practical solution may be for teachers to work collectively within school or district programs to seek funding resources for more formalized efforts to obtain native-written materials from international publishers. A point to consider here is the importance of curricular alignment with such international materials, which may, or may not be easily addressed given the ranges of curricula worldwide.

From a wider scope, the qualitative data collection and analysis, the study revealed the continued need of specialized preparation for dual language teachers. The resulting implications for practice include considerations for concrete solutions within teacher preparation. More specifically, teacher preparation for dual language should encompass coursework on second language acquisition (SLA) and biliteracy with language minority and language majority students. The course contents would further examine second language acquisition theory and principles through the lens of additive biliteracy and linguistic constructs with both languages as opposed to viewing SLA only from the English learner perspective. Candidates would explore how two partner languages interact with one another in distinct ways with regard to discourse patterns, writing structures, as well as metalinguistic and sociocultural patterns with bilingual students (Bialystok, 2004).

Similarly, another practical solution for specialized coursework should include dual language teaching methods, emphasizing the importance of authentic materials as well as scaffolded instruction in two languages with changed language supports based on when students were L1 or L2 learners (Gibbons, 2015). Additionally, the probable need for increased clinical fieldwork and internships in well-established dual language classrooms exists. Revised coursework might include substantially deepened dual language teacher mentor relationships in K-12 settings to emphasize the use of authentic, native-written materials (Flores, Sheets, & Clark, 2011). This all-inclusive thinking suggests practiced constancy to include theory and application of standards-based dual language principles (Howard, et. al, 2007).

The implications from this study have two branches. First, from the current dual language classroom perspective, the concepts and associated nuances with authentic, native-written materials remain crucial points of pedagogical consideration. Teaching and learning in two languages with ELs, emergent bilinguals and other dual language learners require unique approaches with special attention to sociocultural features. Second, in order for dual language students to deeply access curricular and linguistic concepts, dual language teachers must continue to place emphasis on the use of a wide variety of authentic, native-written materials, many of which are difficult to find. Ultimately, it is increasingly vital to address the specific nuances of dual language teaching and learning (Knight, Lloyd, Arbaugh, Gamson, McDonald, Nolan, and Whitney, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Herrera, Cabral, & Murry, 2013). In doing so, the numbers of prepared dual language teachers may increase, giving more students access to increased biliteracy development.



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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Transcript Excerpts: Participants' Quotes

The following excerpts from the participants' interview transcripts correspond to emergent data categories one and two, encompassing code markers from both. Patricia, a native Spanish-speaker expressed her ideas regarding bilingual materials in the context of a math lesson delivered in Spanish, articulating her viewpoints. She specified:

When I think about what we use [for books] it's a challenge sometimes. What we have in Spanish is good, and I know because I can express myself 100% in Spanish. I can express ideas [about math] proficiently with the students. But, that's the easy part for me. The hard part is that I struggle with the resources. The books. We have [named publisher] materials but you know, it's not really what we need or, what I look for. It's close with the translated vocabulary but, the way it's taught, using the American method, is different. It feels like a fish out of water. The primary focus in the book is the Latino part and the concepts but, I use the English book more because of the way the information is presented.

Emily expressed similar ideas regarding materials and the complexities of biliteracy in the context of her primarily Spanish-speaking classroom when she is delivering reading concepts in Spanish. Her viewpoints emphasize the impact of having authentic, native-written materials, with cultural depth. She indicated:

We have adopted new materials this past year. We now use [named publisher and title of the books] and they help. It's a newer series that is really based on Common Core, whereas the previous series was not. So, in this new series, the stories are what I would call authentic Latin American stories, written by Latin American authors in this specific [cultural] voice. They are also paired with English stories but, they're not the same story—they're not translated. They just have parallel aspects. It's a combination [of things]. In one they're discussing the water cycle and in another they've presented a fable in one language and non-fiction in the other. They're both talking about the water cycle and something to do with it and they really go together.

She further articulated:

And so the way they fit together is really beautiful. And wonderfully. Experienced authors [names three prevalent theorists in the field of ESL and special education, one of whom is a native Spanish-speaker] were involved and it shows they kept this [authenticity] in mind.

Caroline followed with her viewpoints, with a somewhat different experience yet, continuing the message regarding the importance of authenticity and the connection to sociocultural connections within language development.

She affirmed:

All our materials are translations from English [into Spanish]. So, you have to realize this when you're teaching. And for sure new teachers need to pay attention to this. They have to learn to consider those materials but, to not go by them 100%. If you're doing [names a copy written program] they're direct translations. It's more critical in dual language. You



have to know that if the [Spanish speaking] kids don't understand, it's because of the translation. It may or may not match what they know [in Spanish]. What we need are [authentic] materials. Materials that are written in Spanish for Spanish. And this is another issue. We have things that come from Spain, some from Mexico and the vocabulary is all very different. It's gotta be materials that are actually created in the locality, in the United States with dual language kids in mind. The Spanish we use here. And then this points to the [standardized] tests. They learn one Spanish word and when it appears on the test, it's another Spanish term.

She continued in the context of a math lesson:

Here's another example. So, you're teaching a lesson on Geometry with this vocabulary in English and then the vocabulary in Spanish, in the [context of math]. You have to cover all the dialects of language you have in your class. And, then there is whatever dialect [of Spanish and/or English] will come on the test. So, they have a lot to learn and manage. The materials don't support these details.

In a similar connection, Samantha who is also a native speaker of English shifted the viewpoint to directly discuss children's literature in the context of English language arts and Spanish language arts lessons. She expressed:

I believe they [teachers] all need information on children's literature with a dual language emphasis. Everyone needs to be exposed, all the time, to authentic literature in both languages. The teachers and the students. It's for the importance of rich, authentic, not translated literature and exposure to lots of it. Things [ideas and concepts] get lost in translation. You don't get rich vocabulary, you don't get language structures and [cultural] norms that are natural. You don't get poetry. And it would be even greater to be a part of a literacy club [she laughs] because they [the kids] need to see "Oh! This person was an author of a book and her name is Claudia, just like my tía [the Spanish word for aunt] Claudia!" They need to see names that are similar to theirs.

Connections to the sociocultural forces came through as she also expressed:

They [the kids] need to see authors and illustrators. They need pictures and drawings that mean something to them. And, things that promote the partner language. Kids really need to make cultural connections so they all see the importance of both languages, so you can really "up" the status of the partner language. The native speakers [of both Spanish and English] need to see how both languages help in school but also in extracurricular activities. Think about career days. We really need to encourage presenters who are bilingual to talk about how being bilingual helped in their jobs, things like that.

Rebecca, a native English-speaker reflected on the idea of both Spanish and English within the materials she uses in her classroom. She explained patterns related to her approach to teaching and, the students' approach to learning. She stated:

When you teach reading, in either language, you need know the implications of this. You need to understand sounds in both languages and select materials that actually help with these concepts. You need to know what things [books] look like that make the two languages different but, bridge them all at the same time. This is really hard to explain. For example, when I'm using a book in Spanish, I explain it from the Spanish point of view

[language and culture]. The same in English. The internal strategies for decoding and things like that are different and, grammatical problem-solving is different. The materials need to support this.

She continued to express the challenges with this:

I work with [names a co-teacher who is Spanish-speaking] and we are both really competent teachers and yet we both struggle with finding the right things to help teach this. We are really struggling. This is especially important when we have to help students learn to make reference to things in a text, in English and Spanish. The way you look for things in stories is different [depending on the language]. And, we are somewhat stubborn. We won't settle for stuff that has just been translated. It doesn't work. At all. We have to train people [who write materials] to know the kids and keep them in mind. Maybe even use student examples of work.

Finally, adding another layer of sociocultural impact Rebecca indicated:

It's ever harder for Native-American kids in our school. They might look a little bit Hispanic so, people think they are. They're not. There is a huge cultural disconnect for them. Every time I have a Native-American kid in my class, I think about how urbanized they are but, are less stable. I have to really work hard to help them understand school and the things we read. Sometimes they don't stay the year.