GATESOL Journal

Rethinking Policies, Procedures, and Practices Surrounding Language Learning and Learners

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Rethinking Policies, Procedures, and Practices Surrounding Language Learning and Learners

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The summer 2021 issue of *GATESOL Journal* is replete with research-based insights and strategies for supporting multilingual learners in varied teaching contexts. The five articles in this issue address ways to better equip multilingual learners for success in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society. One common thread throughout the issue is the *rethinking of policies, procedures, and practices* that surround language learning and learners. As the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 is on the rise and the future of K–12 and higher education continues to remain uncertain, we sincerely hope this issue of *GATESOL Journal* provides our wide conglomerate of readers—from K–12 mainstream and ESOL teachers to researchers and teacher educators in and outside of Georgia institutions of higher learning to state policymakers—ideas they can take back with them to their respective spheres of influence to make a lasting difference in how we *do* language teaching and learning in Georgia and beyond.

Rethinking Policies and Procedures Impacting Language Learning and Learners
In the first article in this issue, "The Perceived Metalinguistic and Cognitive Influences of Bilingual Education," Margaret Ashton and Dr. Eliana Hirano employ qualitative methods to investigate the perceptions of individuals who had participated in K–12 bilingual education programs. They interviewed 10 individuals who had spent at least four years in a K–12 bilingual education setting to determine trends in self-perceived outcomes of bilingual instruction. They found recurring insights regarding both metalinguistic and cognitive abilities among their participants. For example, all participants reported metalinguistic awareness of grammar between their L1s and English, while others described enhanced cognitive skills which facilitated their learning of an L3. Interviewees who had spent more time in a bilingual setting struggled to come up with specific examples regarding how their bilingual education may have influenced them. Most notably, Ashton and Hirano discuss the implications of their study on emerging dual language immersion (DLI) programs in Georgia, recommending programs invest in promoting to students and parents the non-linguistic benefits of their bilingual education programs.

 The next article in this issue, a literature review by Shuang Fu titled "Breaking the Silence: A Critical Review of Language Policy and Planning for Long-Term English Learners," critically examines policies surrounding long-term English learners (LTELs), which Fu defines as multilingual learners who are still receiving language support services after being in a U.S. school for 6 or more years. She organizes her review of 19 peer-reviewed journal articles along the three strands of the language planning and policy (LPP) paradigm: language management, language

ideology, and language practice. Fu elucidates the stereotypes, struggles, and challenges LTELs face, and argues for distinct policy changes: alternative measures of language proficiency beyond standardized English language proficiency (ELP) tests, abandonment of labels to classify multilingual students, and resistance to established hegemonies to promote positive learning experiences and equitable outcomes for multilingual learners.

In their article titled "Supporting Practitioner Inquiry in Teacher Education: Opportunities and Challenges in ESOL Contexts," Drs. Lindsey Chapman, Chelsea Morris, and Katherine Green endorse the implementation of practitioner inquiry in teacher preparation programs to help teachers better address the needs of emergent bi/multilingual students. They describe the experiences of two teacher candidates to emphasize both opportunities and challenges when using practitioner inquiry. For example, they describe how one candidate was able to overcome misconceptions about adopting a translanguaging pedagogy in their classroom through support from their mentor teacher, field experience supervisor, and the student's own analysis of the practitioner literature base. Among other recommendations for teacher preparation programs, they recommend teacher candidates keep a journal to record their initial wonderings, field notes, pictures of student artifacts, and notes on relevant literature from their ESOL coursework.

Rethinking Strategies to Enhance Student Language Learning
The last two articles published in this issue are teaching techniques pieces. In her article titled "(Re)Imagining Multilingual Learners: Using Photo Stories to Honor Students' Strengths, Interests, and Experiences," Dr. Jennifer Allen highlights photo stories as a literacy strategy that fosters critical and productive dialogue among educators and students. This dialogue, Allen argues, can help teachers recognize, appreciate, and even celebrate the diverse languages, cultures, interests, and life experiences present in their classrooms. She shares the steps involved in inviting students to create personal photo stories that honor their lived experiences.

Finally, in their piece titled "Enhancing Intensive English Program Reading and Writing Courses through Integrated-Skill Activities," Dr. Adil Bentahar and Kenneth Cranker describe an approach they have utilized in their foundation-year intensive English program (IEP) at the University of Delaware. The approach, one that integrates listening and speaking skills with instruction and assessment in reading and writing courses, has shown promising results in regard to enhancing students' reading and writing skills. They argue an integrated-skill approach is more closely aligned with the kinds of tasks students typically encounter in university classrooms. Examples of some integrated-skill activities they have used in their IEP classrooms are at the core of this piece.

This issue of *GATESOL Journal* showcases the work of scholars across the state and beyond who are committed to challenging the status quo and are actively seeking innovative ways to rethink policies, procedures, and practices surrounding language learning and learners. We trust our readers, all of whom we know share similar commitments, will find the research- and practitioner-based articles in this issue helpful as they too reconsider what constitutes effective and equitable language learning.

The Perceived Metalinguistic and Cognitive Influences of Bilingual Education

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Abstract
Despite the substantial body of academic research regarding the metalinguistic and cognitive effects of bilingual education, most of the literature reports on large-scale experimental studies (e.g., Bialystok et al., 2010) while little is known about how individuals who have participated in bilingual programs view their learning outcomes. The objective of this study was to investigate whether there are trends in the self-perceived outcomes of bilingual immersion education on people who have spent at least four years in a bilingual educational setting. Ten individuals who met this criterion were interviewed and the audio recordings of their interviews were transcribed and analyzed inductively to allow themes to emerge from the participants' words. Findings indicate there were identifiable themes in how participants perceived their education and the amount of time and specific grade levels spent in bilingual programs tended to correspond with certain participant response patterns. This study has implications for the many emerging Georgia dual language immersion programs and their recruitment strategies.

Keywords
bilingual education, dual language immersion, metalinguistic ability, cognitive ability

Introduction
In the past decade or so, there has been a growing number of dual language programs in Georgia. According to a 2014 article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (Farlow, 2014), the then-Georgia State Superintendent set a goal of having 20 dual language immersion (DLI) programs in Georgia public schools by 2020—a goal that has now been surpassed, with over 70 DLI schools listed on the Georgia Department of Education (2021) website. The push for bilingual immersion programs has been largely motivated by economic factors, as there are tens of thousands of Georgians who are employed by the many foreign companies that have put down roots in the state (Broady, 2019). Besides an economic advantage, bilingual immersion education, henceforth referred to as *bilingual education,* has been shown to promote the development of metalinguistic and cognitive abilities (e.g., Friesen & Bialystok, 2012; Mustard, 2010). Despite the evidence suggesting this type of education has generally positive effects beyond language development (Bialystok et al., 2010), little is known about how individuals who have participated in bilingual programs view their learning outcomes. Simply engaging in an academic program that purportedly has certain effects

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does not guarantee one recognizes the manifestation of those effects in oneself. Consequently, there may be a discrepancy between research findings from large-scale quantitative studies on the effects of bilingual education and individuals' perception of the outcomes of their personal experiences. The objective of this study, therefore, is to investigate how people who have attended a bilingual school perceive the influence of this type of education on their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities.

Understanding Metalinguistic Ability

Metalinguistic ability, one of the two main concepts explored in this article, is best understood as "the ability to think about and reflect upon the nature and functions of language" [1] (Gombert, 1990, p. 2). Research shows clear evidence metalinguistic ability in bilingual children does indeed differ from that of their monolingual counterparts. According to Friesen and Bialystok (2012), bilingual children tend to have a better understanding of the arbitrary nature of language. This phenomenon holds true for both bilingual children who have received a formal bilingual education and for those who have not, as such a concept could become obvious through simple personal reflection on one's own language use. As a result of their everyday experience, bilingual children are habitual code-switchers who tend to understand the relationship between sound and meaning is arbitrary; namely, words and concepts are not intrinsically connected. These individuals are, therefore, not bound by one lexicon and must therefore make decisions about which lexicon to use according to what is situationally appropriate (Hoff et al., 2011). By contrast, monolingual children lack the advantage of interacting with another lexicon, which renders them less likely to develop the capacity to conceptualize the expression of ideas in any way other than through the sole language they speak. To illustrate with a hypothetical example, a French-English bilingual child uses the word *flag* in conversation with her anglophone mother, thus choosing the appropriate English word based on the language of her interlocutor. The child knows, however, she could have just as easily used the word *drapeau* with a francophone interlocutor. Since she has two different lexica from which to choose, she would be more likely to have internalized the arbitrary nature of language compared to a monolingual child who knows only one word to represent the concept of a flag. This hypothetical child could be as young as a toddler and could be a sequential or a simultaneous bilingual learner. What matters as far as bilingualism goes is such a child can draw from both languages, as he or she has vocabulary available in both lexica.

Increased metalinguistic awareness in students in bilingual programs has also been shown to have a positive effect on these students' ability to apply logic and reasoning to language. For example, ter Kuile et al. (2011) conducted a study that tested the ability of students to decipher an unknown written language and found bilingual students performed significantly better than monolingual students. The success of bilingual students on this metric of metalinguistic ability indicates bilingual education provides advantages beyond fluency in another language.

Understanding Cognitive Ability

Cognitive ability is the other main concept explored in this article. Although people are born with a base level of genetic coding that affects performance in various areas, such as physical strength and general cognitive ability, the factors that can influence a person's abilities are not limited to innate, inherited traits (Mitchell, 2018). This interplay between nature and nurture is the fertile ground from which a significant proportion of current psychological and neurological research springs. Education is one such environmental factor. There is substantial evidence the education a

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[1] This definition was translated from the French original into English by the first author.

person receives can have a profound and lasting effect on the neurological pathways of the brain, with bilingual education, more specifically, having been shown to be a powerful tool for enhancing cognitive ability (Mustard, 2010).

Cognitive abilities relevant to bilingual education include linguistic problem-solving skills, non-linguistic problem-solving skills, and general cognitive skills outside of problem-solving. While linguistic problem-solving skills are associated with learning a new language, their non-linguistic counterpart encompasses diverse abilities related to math and spatial reasoning. General transferable cognitive skills unrelated to problem-solving include a range of abilities such as sustaining attention, using working memory, understanding the perspectives of others, and exercising executive control. As used by Bialystok and her colleagues (2010), the term *executive control* refers to the ability to focus one's attention and efforts on a given task. Research has demonstrated bilingual children are not as easily distracted by irrelevant information as their monolingual counterparts, as they are particularly adept at non-verbal conflict tasks that require the ability to concentrate on one aspect of the task while blocking out irrelevant information from another (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Bialystok et al., 2010).

Time Spent in Program
High levels of formal bilingual education as well as extensive exposure to both languages in everyday situations are the main determinants of the degree to which an individual can use both languages (Bialystok & Poarch, 2014). In other words, it is these two factors that ultimately dictate the general degree of bilingualism an individual achieves. Along the same lines, increased bilingualism as an isolated factor has been linked to better outcomes in both metalinguistic development and cognitive ability. This fact points to bilingualism as the source of these increased functions, rather than some other, unaccounted for factor (Bialystok & Poarch, 2014). As a result of having to filter through information in two languages, bilingual children also display better overall executive control when performing tasks of cognition (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Bialystok et al., 2010).

A common line of inquiry among researchers is to wonder to what degree students must be bilingual in order to reap cognitive benefits. Although there is no specific point at which students suddenly begin to increase their cognitive abilities, it has been shown as children become increasingly bilingual and have more experience in a bilingual education environment, their performance on nonverbal executive control tasks improves. This improvement in cognitive function has been shown by studying students throughout their progression in English/French/Hebrew bilingual education (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Bialystok et al., 2010).

Objective of this Study
The metalinguistic and cognitive benefits of bilingual education are well-documented in the large-scale experimental studies discussed above. In these quantitative studies, participants of a wide range of age and language backgrounds are usually brought into a laboratory where they engage with various tasks aimed at assessing their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities compared to monolingual control groups. It is largely unknown, therefore, whether individuals who had the opportunity to participate in bilingual programs are themselves aware they have reaped the benefits touted by that line of research. In light of this gap in the literature, the objective of this study is to investigate whether there are trends in the self-perceived outcomes of bilingual education on people who have spent at least four years in a bilingual educational setting. In pursuit of this objective, the following guiding research questions underpinned all decisions made in this study:

1. How do individuals who have received at least four years of bilingual education perceive the influence of this education on their metalinguistic abilities?
2. How do these individuals perceive the influence of this education in regard to their cognitive abilities?

Methodology

This study focuses on participants who attended a minimum of four years of bilingual education, specifically on their perceptions of the influence of this education on their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities. Considering the exploratory and emergent nature of this investigation, a qualitative approach to research (Creswell, 2003) was chosen. There was a total of 10 participants, who were recruited through flyers distributed on a small liberal arts college campus and through snowball sampling (Dattalo, 2008). The participants did not have to be students at this college. The requirement for participation was a minimum of four years in bilingual education, more specifically, in an immersion program in which two languages were used to learn core curricula. The requirement of four years, albeit somewhat arbitrary, was chosen for two reasons: if a participant attended a bilingual high school, four years would encompass the complete program. At the same time, lowering the requirement could have resulted in participants who were only briefly associated with a bilingual program, which may not have allowed for insightful reflections.

Data were collected using semi-structured one-on-one interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The interview questions in the Appendix were designed to explore participants' perception of the metalinguistic and cognitive outcomes of their bilingual education experience. Questions concerning the metalinguistic aspects of linguistic thought were meant to spur participants to discuss the degree to which they consciously process grammar and vocabulary, as well as whether they believe their bilingual education has contributed to how they process these components of language. Specifically, these questions were designed to explore the perceived influence of participants' bilingual education on the processing of grammar and vocabulary, vocabulary size, and vocabulary recall. Questions regarding participants' perceptions of the influence of bilingual education on their cognitive abilities explored their ability to learn another language, their problem-solving skills, and other transferable cognitive skills. Interviews started by obtaining participants' written consent and were conducted in person, except in the case of the Canadian participants, who were interviewed via video call. Interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim, lasted an average of 17 minutes, and were conducted in English by the first author.

The data produced in the interviews were analyzed inductively and recursively following a grounded theory approach (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to identify emergent themes. As Bernard and Ryan (2010) explained, grounded theory is well suited for "analyzing interview data about how people experience the mundane and the exotic, the boring and the enchanting moments of life" (p. 269). In addition, according to Thomas (2006), the use of inductive analysis allows "research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data" (p. 238). The first author was the primary analyst, and she used memo writing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) extensively to identify emerging themes and make connections between literature and participant responses and between the participant responses themselves. In grounded theory, the literature can be used to provide concepts (such as, in this case, metalinguistic and cognitive abilities) that are checked against actual data and to stimulate questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The transcripts were analyzed and coded at the paragraph and sentence levels. The second author read all transcribed interviews and met weekly with the first

author to discuss the analysis. Both authors are bilingual, although neither attended a bilingual school. It should be noted this study was conducted in compliance with the rules and regulations for the protection of human subjects, and its design was approved by the institutional review board of the college where both authors are affiliated.

Educational Background of Participants

The table below summarizes the 10 participants' key information. They come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, representing three nationalities (American, Canadian, and Haitian) and a range of length in a bilingual education setting. It should also be noted that although some students participated in study abroad programs that involved their L2 or other languages, all were or are currently being educated at English-speaking colleges.

Table 1
The Participants

Pseudonym	Degree of bilingualism in the home	Country where bilingual education took place	Grades in bilingual ed. setting (# of years)	Degree of bilingualism in educational setting	Languages of bilingual ed.
Daniel	Créole and French, more Créole)	Haiti	K–12 (13 years)	Significantly more French than Créole	L1: French and Créole
Marie	Créole and French, more Créole	Haiti	K–12 (13 years)	Significantly more French than Créole	L1: French and Créole
Shannon	Mostly English, some French	United States of America	K–3 (4 years)	Mostly French, some English	L2: French L1: English
Jane	Mostly English, some Spanish	United States of America	9–12 (4 years)	30% Spanish 70% English	L2: Spanish L1: English
Cameron	English only	United States of America	7–12 (6 years)	50/50 split	L2: Spanish L1: English
Bridget	English only	United States of America	9–12 (4 years)	⅓ Spanish ⅔ English	L2: Spanish L1: English
Alexandra*	English only	Canada	K–2 3–7 8–10 11–12 (13 years)	100% French 80% French 20% English 50/50 split 25% French 75% English	L2: French L1: English

Hannah*	English only	Canada	6–7 8–10 11–12 (7 years)	100% French 50/50 split Three classes in French, the rest in English	L2: French L1: English
Sophie*	English only	Canada	6–10 11–12 (7 years)	100% French 50/50 split	L2: French L1: English
Luke*	English only	Canada	6–7 8–12 (7 years)	100% French 50/50 split	L2: French L1: English

Note. An asterisk (*) indicates participants who have already graduated with a four-year degree. Alexandra also holds a Master's of Teaching. All other participants are currently undergraduate students in college.

Findings

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed several reoccurring themes that characterized the participants' perceptions of the outcomes of their bilingual education. This section will first address key findings related to RQ1 (metalinguistic abilities) and RQ2 (cognitive abilities). We will then consider the amount of time participants spent in their bilingual programs, which was found to be an important factor to consider when analyzing the quality and way in which participants answered the interview questions. Finally, we will present data on one specific participant whose responses differed significantly from those of her peers and will speculate why that might have been the case.

Metalinguistic Ability

All participants affirmed their bilingual education contributed to the way they process grammatical concepts in general, which indicates participants' education may have increased their metalinguistic awareness of grammar. Their perception of the degree and nature of this contribution, however, was variable. Alexandra, for example, was unable to articulate exactly how her education affected her grammar but was sure it did. Cameron, Shannon, and Luke were reserved in their responses, using words like "sort of," "a bit," and "probably" when describing the generally positive influence their bilingual education had on their grammar. Bridget, Marie, Jane, Daniel, and Sophie were more confident and precise in their descriptions. Bridget described herself as more "aware" of grammar. Marie credited her education with giving her a "method" with which to understand grammar. Jane, whose first language is English, thought she gained a better understanding of English grammar "terms" and "verb forms." Daniel thought his French and Créole education made him more cognizant of grammatical rules. Sophie perceived both negative and positive outcomes:

> There's lots of grammar differences between French and English, and so I still, even though I haven't been in French immersion for 10 years now, I still make some of those errors in English. Like, putting the dollar sign on the wrong side it's like . . . these are all things that I still have to think about because during like those pivotal years when you're doing a lot of writing, I did that, and so there I think there are some negative consequences of . . . not consequences, but effects of having done that, in terms of my grammar.

She then went on to say the positive outcome was the general grammatical awareness she may not have developed without her "in-depth" bilingual grammar education.

Besides an influence on how they process grammar in general, all participants, except for Daniel, stated their bilingual education influenced their knowledge and use of vocabulary and/or grammar in their L1, specifically. Most participants perceived this influence to be positive. Three participants (Hannah, Sophie, and Shannon) indicated common roots and cognates between their native language and their L2 made it easier to decipher words in their native language. Luke summed up his thoughts by saying his bilingual education helped with "language in general." Alexandra saw delayed positive effects of her bilingual education on the grammar of her native language when she continued her study of her L2 and began an L3, German, at the college level. She said, "I'm sure it helped on some levels of just understanding, like, some of the grammar in German, just because in English, I don't think about grammar at all." She is unsure, however, if there has been an influence on her L1 vocabulary. Both Hannah and Cameron consider themselves more aware of grammatical structures in their native language, and Hannah has caught herself applying French word order to English. While Shannon perceived no influence of her bilingual education on her L1 grammar, Bridget perceived no influence on her L1 vocabulary. Daniel, who was educated in both of his native languages, French and Créole, expressed since he already spoke both languages at home and at school, he could not see the influence of his education on these languages. Marie, who was also educated in her two L1s, thought her bilingual education helped her to use more precise vocabulary, as she has more words from which to choose and is aware of nuances of meaning. However, she stated since both languages were native to her, her bilingual education did not have an influence on her knowledge of the grammar of these languages.

Cognitive Ability

In investigating the perception participants had of the outcome of their bilingual education on their cognitive skills, their thoughts on how well they were able to learn additional languages revealed varied experiences. Bridget and Marie both credited their bilingual education with having facilitated their attempts with a third language. They cited having a better understanding of grammar (Marie) and having general experience with language learning (Bridget) as reasons for their success with another language. Luke learned some Spanish while he was still enrolled in his French and English bilingual program and said the similarities between French and Spanish rendered his bilingual background "pretty helpful" for tackling Spanish. Jane and Cameron have not attempted to learn another language since exiting the bilingual programs in which they were enrolled but were confident their bilingual background would give them an advantage in future foreign language endeavors. Jane thought the Spanish she learned through her bilingual education would help her decode cognates in other romance languages, such as Italian, French, and Portuguese.

Other participants found it challenging to learn another language after being enrolled in bilingual programs. Hannah and Alexandra, in particular, struggled when they took language classes during their undergraduate degree programs, although they learned English and French in their K–12 schools. Alexandra described her shock when her German class became increasingly difficult, saying, "I realized how difficult it actually is to learn a language and how hard it is and how I don't, like, have some natural gift at learning languages." She then explained it was this experience that made her realize she only learned French easily because she was immersed from such a young age. Both participants expressed concern their background made them overconfident in their language abilities. Hannah summed up her thoughts on the subject:

I definitely think it made me overconfident in my ability to learn another language. There was such a huge difference in being like tossed into another language in formative years versus being like 20 and trying to learn something at just such a different pace in such a different environment.

Sophie had mixed feelings, saying she was able to read and write in Italian with more ease because of linguistic similarities to French. Overall, she still labelled her attempt at a third language as having "failed" and cited interference from French as a primary reason for this failure. It should be noted Hannah, Alexandra, and Sophie were in bilingual programs for at least half of their education.

While participants were able to clearly recall their experiences learning additional languages, they had difficulty elaborating on other ways in which their bilingual education may have affected their cognitive ability. None of the three participants who were immersed in bilingual programs throughout their entire K–12 education could think of how their education related to their problem-solving skills. Other participants, however, readily formed articulate responses stating their education had a positive influence. For example, Cameron, a participant who was in a grades 7–12 program, was quick to explain when it came to problem-solving skills, her bilingual education "helped a lot," as she can "read the behaviors in a situation to . . . basically find the best solution." Bridget, who was in bilingual classes from grades 9–12, gave a lengthy response explaining the ways her bilingual program gave her tools that help her to solve linguistic problems using context clues and "get across" what she means even when she does not know the exact word she needs. By contrast, two of the participants who spent their entire K–12 education in a dual language immersion (DLI) program, Alexandra and Marie, were quick to conclude their education had no discernable influence whatsoever while Daniel, also a K–12 participant, described the question regarding problem-solving as "really hard" before proceeding to take a long pause followed by saying he developed better general language-learning skills because of his education. Responses followed a similar pattern regarding transferable cognitive skills outside of problem-solving skills, with Cameron saying her skills were "definitely" improved, and she is "more analytical," a perception shared by other participants who were not enrolled in bilingual education from K–12.

Time Spent in Program
There was a general trend that the participants who spent the most time in a bilingual setting struggled to think of specific examples that demonstrated how their bilingual education may have influenced them. In particular, these participants were the same ones who tended to see little to no connection between the development of problem-solving skills and transferable cognitive skills outside problem-solving skills and their bilingual education. As mentioned above, the Canadian participants generally struggled to articulate the influence of their bilingual education on their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities. Three of the four Canadians were in bilingual programs for grades 6–12 (Hannah, Sophie, and Luke), and Alexandra's entire K–12 education was bilingual. In response to interview questions about the outcomes of their education, Hannah and Alexandra both gave responses that included the words "I'm sure," within the context of responses that were not at all sure. For example, Hannah used each of the following sentences as part of her responses to three different questions: (a) "I'm sure it was," (b) "I'm sure that they are there," and (c) "I'm sure that it has." She employed words and phrases of uncertainty like "probably," "I don't know," and "I don't really remember" to qualify the rest of the responses containing the "I'm sure"

phrases. Hannah also said the word "probably" 15 times, whereas the mean frequency of this word across all 10 participants was 6.6 occurrences per transcript. Luke gave similarly unclear answers to several questions, using the word "probably" eight times. When asked about the influence of his bilingual education on his native language, Luke replied, "I'm not sure how it necessarily impacted my understanding of English, rather than like just language in general." Other participants did not use phrases conveying uncertainty to the degree Hannah, Sophie, and Luke did and responded with more clarity throughout their interviews.

In addition to their general uncertainty regarding the exact nature of their bilingual education's outcomes, some Canadian participants said they did not think their bilingual education had any influence on their thinking. Participants expressed difficulty tracing the origin of their skills and abilities to their bilingual education. For example, three of the four Canadian participants struggled to answer the question: *Do you believe your bilingual education has contributed to the way you understand and process grammatical concepts?* As discussed above, two of these three stumbled through giving some sort of response but hedged their answers with words like "I don't know" and "probably." Alexandra replied more straightforwardly saying, "I'm not really sure how it's done that." She went on to elaborate since she was always in the bilingual program, she feels like she "has only ever understood and processed it (grammar) that way." Sophie was the only Canadian participant who did not generally flounder while articulating the outcomes of her bilingual education.

Shannon's Case
Out of the 10 participants, Shannon seemed to be the most reluctant in answering the interview questions. In particular, she found it difficult to credit any of her cognitive or metalinguistic abilities to her bilingual education. The most distinguishing factor in her experience, compared to the other participants', is she is the only one who did not participate in a bilingual education program as a high school student. Many of her replies included words like "hard to say" (repeated four times) and "probably" (repeated 18 times). She repeatedly explained it was hard to be sure the origin of her skills was, in fact, her early participation in a bilingual program. She also indicated since she has gone through many experiences in both her education and general life since exiting her bilingual program, it was difficult to definitively attribute various outcomes to her bilingual program. Although she is now "definitely very conscious" of the grammar of what she is writing, she does not feel she can attribute this consciousness to her bilingual education.

Discussion
The analysis of the interviews unveiled trends in how participants perceive the influence of their bilingual education on their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities. Some of these trends align more closely with the established literature than others, but all require further discussion. To begin, bilingual programs have been shown to affect students' ability to apply logic and reasoning to language (ter Kuile et al., 2011). Since this effect applies to language in general it should, in theory, work for any language these students choose to learn. The participants in this study, however, had mixed perceptions on how their bilingual education influenced their ability to learn another language. Several participants' experiences aligned with the literature, as they used cognates and pattern recognition to help them reason through new languages. These participants felt their bilingual education facilitated the language-learning process. On the other hand, some participants perceived their bilingual programs hindered their progress learning another language due to

confusion between the L2 and the new language and promoting a detrimental sense of overconfidence in one's language-learning abilities.

According to research, spending more time in bilingual programs increases exposure to the L2 and ultimately enhances program participants' degree of bilingualism, metalinguistic development, and cognitive ability (Bialystok & Poarch, 2014). Despite this fact, participants who were in bilingual programs throughout their K–12 education had the most difficulty pinpointing the benefits they reaped besides a high level of bilingualism. Alexandra, Sophie, and Daniel, for example, struggled to talk about the outcomes of their bilingual education on non-linguistic skills likely because they have no basis for comparison, never having been to a monolingual educational context. As Alexandra said, "I didn't really recognize that I was learning."

It is possible these participants have reaped the metalinguistic and cognitive benefits the literature indicates they should have, but they are unable to recognize them. Imagining how one's mental processing could have been different if developed in a context completely devoid of the bilingualism that was always an integral part of one's education would be a challenge for many. If not made aware of these benefits, it can be nearly impossible to trace their development.

By contrast, individuals who were immersed in their L2 later may have had a better basis for comparing the influence of their bilingual education on both their linguistic and non-linguistic skills. Jane and Bridget, for example, joined a bilingual program in ninth grade, which may account for the ease with which they responded to most questions. At ninth-grade, students would have approximately 14 years of monolingual life experience from which they could draw when assessing the outcomes of their bilingual programs. Additionally, high school students are more cognitively developed than younger students, which means these participants would have entered the bilingual phase of their education at a time when they were better equipped to make judgements and comparisons, as well as develop an awareness of language rules. Participants who entered their programs in elementary or middle school would not have begun the bilingual phase of their education with the same critical-thinking tools that come with increased cognitive maturity.

Concluding Remarks

In sum, this study revealed several patterns in participants' perception of how their bilingual education influenced their thinking. There were a few strong commonalities all participants shared, such as none of them wished they had withdrawn from their bilingual programs and believed these programs contributed to the way they process grammatical concepts. Almost all participants stated their bilingual education had an influence on the vocabulary and grammar of their native languages. Participants who spent the longest amount of time in their programs struggled to articulate the specific benefits their education had in relation to both their cognitive ability and their ability to learn a new language. The participants' perception of how their bilingual education affected their ability to learn another language was mixed. Some thought their previous experience with language learning was beneficial, while some participants who had been in bilingual programs the longest explained they were overconfident in their language-learning abilities and struggled with other languages.

The findings from this study bear implications on the growing efforts of Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs in Georgia. Understanding how to communicate effectively with prospective and current Georgia DLI families is crucial for ensuring the continued growth of these nascent programs. Although such programs are a good investment for the Department of Education on paper, recruiting families to enroll their children and follow through with that commitment requires a public relations campaign that communicates the multitudinous personal benefits that

are at least as enticing as the economic forecasts of how students can fit into the future labor market. One way of assisting families in their decision of whether this type of education is the right fit for their children is by highlighting research on the various impacts of bilingual education. Despite the academic literature indicating bilingual programs provide many advantages, students in this study showed they might fail to perceive these benefits clearly. To enhance students' perception of the benefits of a bilingual education, DLI faculty and staff should be encouraged to work intentionally to raise students' awareness of their program's research-proven assets. Armed with a more precise understanding of how they have been positively influenced, students who experience bilingual education for all or most of their K–12 schooling could be turned into the strongest advocates for the promotion and promulgation of their programs.

In particular, it could be helpful to familiarize students with the non-linguistic outcomes of their education, such as enhanced problem-solving and other cognitive skills. It was clear from this study the participants who had the longest, most extensive bilingual education experience struggled to come up with concrete examples of how their education related to non-linguistic skills. By emphasizing the cognitive benefits of bilingual education not directly related to language skills, such as problem-solving skills, schools could make their programs more attractive to families who might otherwise choose different academic paths for their children. People who do not consider themselves linguistically gifted or even particularly keen on being fluent in another language would have new reasons to consider trying programs that would not normally appeal to them. It would be up to schools and other educational agencies to use student advocates to promote their immersion programs from this new and more complex perspective.

There are different ways this topic can be expanded, as a better understanding of the underlying reasons for the patterns identified in participant responses could aid schools in their efforts to communicate the positive aspects of bilingual education to parents, students, and prospective families. One avenue for expansion regards the finding that participants had varied perceptions of how their bilingual education affected their ability to learn another language. In particular, the difference in responses between students who had been in immersion education for a long time and those who had not was stark. Several of the individuals who spent a long time in bilingual programs expressed they were overconfident in their linguistic abilities. Further research concerning the origin of this overconfidence and how to address it could help schools to give their students more realistic expectations of the work future language-learning endeavors may require. Students would be armed with the knowledge they need to tackle other languages without becoming discouraged or disappointed in themselves for not being, as Alexandra put it, "amazingly gifted in languages."

Although the findings of the current study shed some light on the perceptions participants have of the influence of bilingual education on their metalinguistic and cognitive abilities, it is important to acknowledge there were only 10 participants, whose education took place in one of three countries. Future studies exploring the experience of students from other countries are certainly warranted. In addition, while we avoided terms in interview questions participants may not be familiar with, such as "metalinguistic ability," we kept phrases such as "problem-solving skills," which participants may not have been able to immediately relate to their experiences in order to provide an insightful answer.

As mentioned above, the lack of awareness shown by the participants who were in bilingual programs for the longest time regarding metalinguistic and cognitive skills should be of great interest to schools. If students are unable to attribute their skills to their education, they will be poor ambassadors for their programs. Further research on this topic could be helpful in determining

the cause of this difficulty, which would, in turn, give schools the tools they need to address the problem and, eventually, schools could develop long-term strategies for creating and maintaining awareness of the benefits of their bilingual programs.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Metalinguistic Ability

1) During your bilingual education, was there an emphasis on explicit instruction in grammar?

(Wait for response before moving on to the next part of the question.)

If so, how do you feel this explicit instruction influenced your understanding of grammar? If not, what was the method for learning grammar? How do you feel this method influenced your understanding of grammar?

2) When you speak, to what degree do you consciously process the grammatical aspects of what you are saying? Please give examples, if possible.

3) When you write, to what degree do you consciously process the grammatical aspects of what you are writing? Please give examples, if possible.

4) Do you believe your bilingual education has contributed to the way you understand and process grammatical concepts? Please elaborate.

5) Do you believe your bilingual education has contributed to the way you understand and process vocabulary? Please elaborate.

Item 6 is for individuals whose bilingual education was at least partially conducted in a language other than their native language:

6) What impact did learning a second language have on your understanding of the grammar and vocabulary of your native language or languages? Please give examples, if possible.

Cognitive Ability

1) Have you learned or attempted to learn another language since exiting the bilingual program in which you were enrolled?

(Wait for response before moving on to the next part of the question.)

If so, what effect do you think your bilingual education had on your ability to learn another language? What is the basis of your reasoning? If not, what effect do you think your bilingual education would have on your ability to learn another language? What is the basis of your reasoning?

2) Do you think your bilingual education helped you to develop transferable cognitive skills outside of language learning? If so, please elaborate.

3) What impact do you believe your bilingual education has had on your development of problem-solving skills? Please elaborate.

4) What impact do you believe your bilingual education has had on the size of your vocabulary in your native language/languages? Please explain your reasoning.

5) Is there one language in which you mentally retrieve vocabulary more easily? For example, I can think of the specific words I want to use more easily in English than I can in French.

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Breaking the Silence: A Critical Review of Language Policy and Planning for Long-Term English Learners

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Abstract

Despite scholarship on emergent bilingual students that continues to evolve, the subgroup of emergent bilinguals who are labeled as long-term English learners (LTELs) have been overlooked and underserved for too long. LTELs refer to English learners who have been educated in a U.S. school for six years or more. This literature review is aimed at bringing awareness to this subgroup population and identifying the characteristics and classification process of LTELs described in the present scholarship. The review critically examines the de facto policy about LTELs from perspectives of the current climate of standardized tests (language management), the label itself (language ideology), and programs and schooling experience of these students (language practice). The literature review not only speaks to the stereotypes, struggles, and challenges that LTELs face, but also calls for future research studies to be conducted in addressing these problems pedagogically, institutionally, and systematically.

Keywords

long-term English learners, English proficiency, language policy, standardized test, labeling

Introduction

Recent estimates from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019) indicate that emergent bilingual learners are one of the fastest growing populations in U.S. schools. Over the past decade, there have been several seminal works generated in the field. These studies cover students' school experience, linguistic repertoires, cultural diversities, and digital literacies (e.g., García & Kleifgen, 2010; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Reyes et al., 2016). However, as the scholarship on emergent bilinguals continues to evolve, the subgroup of emergent bilingual students who are labelled as long-term English learners (LTELs) has been overlooked and underserved for long. In broad terms, the label LTELs tends to include the following entities: students who speak a language other than English, who have been educated in the U.S. for six years or more, and whose social listening and speaking skills are similar to native English speakers but are still designated as English learners (ELs). They typically perform far below grade level in academic tasks that require discipline-specific English oral language and literacy (Olsen, 2012). Despite there being a small but growing body of literature on understanding the educational backgrounds and unique needs of these students, knowledge about LTELs comes from studies conducted in only a handful of states (e.g., New York, California), and the development of pedagogical approaches and instructional programs serving LTELs still remains very low (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; King & Bigelow, 2018).

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There is no national standard nor estimate identifying the number of bilingual learners having long-term status, but data at the state and city level indicate LTELs are a sizable percentage of the student population. For example, the New York City Department of Education reported that 11.7% of the student population was classified as LTELs during the 2015–2016 school year (Kieffer & Parker, 2016); earlier research conducted in 40 districts in California found that LTELs constitute 59% of the multilingual student population (Olsen, 2010). In Chicago, LTELs comprise approximately one-third of secondary emergent bilinguals (de la Torre et al., 2019). These striking statistics indicate an urgent need for great attention to LTELs, as LTELs are disproportionately represented in national dropout and grade retention (Callahan, 2013).

Because these students come to school with a wide range of home languages, literacy proficiencies, and education experiences, their academic needs may be different from those of typical bilingual learners who have arrived in the U.S. in recent years. Due to issues such as disrupted schooling and transnational experiences, LTELs generally do not have opportunities to develop literacy in their home languages. Therefore, these students have been described as having less than full proficiency in either L1 or L2 (e.g., Freeman et al., 2002; Olsen, 2010) and have been socially constructed in connection to the concept of "semilingualism" (Cummins, 1979, p. 40). The label LTELs was created to make educators aware of this group of students and was aimed at improving the educational outcomes of these students. However, as a bilingual educator in the U.S. with a transnational background, I find the label problematic, particularly because I realize the label LTELs often frames students as deficient and views students solely based on English language proficiency testing results, while ignoring other complex factors, such as racial/ethnic backgrounds, transnational/disrupted educational experiences, and everyday language practices. I argue LTELs engage in flows of values, beliefs, cultures, and languages through "technological, financial, and other global infrastructures" (Skerrett, 2019, p. 502) of students' home culture and U.S. culture. Immigrant students' schooling experience is more than a simplistic "acquisition of knowledge and skills in English language and U.S. culture" (Valenzuela & Rubio, 2017, p. 4360). But more importantly, under the globalized context, ELs are constantly learning and unlearning the cultures, values, and beliefs of U.S. society and socializing into the communities that they become a part of.

Therefore, the first goal of this literature review is to bring awareness to this subgroup population and identify the characteristics and classification process of LTELs described in the present scholarship. The second goal orients from the perspective that a systematic understanding of research studies should be critical and humanizing. Labelling students as LTELs, for example, omits the bilingualism of these students and perpetuates inequities in the education of this population. My third goal is to inform future research concerning LTELs. Through reviewing and examining the existing literature, we can better set up goals for policy reforms and pedagogical practices in classrooms for LTELs. The research questions I'm seeking to address in this literature review are:

1. What differentiates students who are classified LTELs from dual language speakers who are placed in the mainstream classrooms?
2. How does the classification and reclassification system relegate LTELs to a perpetual status of academic and linguistic deficiency?
3. How does the label affect the ways students are perceived in schools, and to what extent does the perception impact students' opportunities to learn?

Methods of Literature Search and Selection

To address the research questions, I sought empirical studies pertaining to LTELs within the past decade. I set the parameters of publication years because the population of school-aged ELs has significantly increased over the past decade, transforming language policies and school instructions around them. The literature search process involved several steps. First, I included only peer-reviewed journal articles. ERIC, JSTOR, and Web of Science were used as the primary search engines. In the database searches, I searched a variety of terms referring to the same population, including long-term English Learners, long-term English language learners, LTELs, and LTELLs. Then I visited scholars' websites that I identified as renowned in the field to see their related publications. These scholars are Kate Menken, Tatyana Kleyn, Nelson Flores, Laurie Olsen, and Maneka Deanna Brooks. These publications also represent scholars' different approaches to conducting research and how they shift the framing of LTELs over the years. It is worth noting the paucity of literature discussing the education of LTELs. The majority of studies were conducted in California (29%), Texas (18%), and New York (4%), and few were found in other states. Presumably, this is because the three states have more than half of the nation's EL population (Ruiz-Soto et al., 2015), and my identified scholars also reside in these areas. I did not apply other reduction criteria at this step if the studies were focused on LTELs. Finally, I searched Google Scholar for articles that were not found with the first two search steps. After these steps, I initially reviewed 26 articles at the abstract level and started eliminating those that didn't meet my review criteria. For example, I didn't include studies that focus on LTELs outside of the U.S. Finally, I included 19 articles in this review.

The literature search procedures have several limitations. First, considering only peer-reviewed journal articles may have caused me to miss many important studies that are presented in other ways, such as doctoral dissertations, academic presentations, and edited collections and books. Second, I selected key words in the title as the search setting, which could possibly exclude related empirical studies as well. Despite these limitations, the systematic searching process was thorough enough to address the research questions.

Theoretical Framework

Language planning and policy (LPP) has been broadly defined as an approach to solve social problems created by language differences in nation development since its emergence from the beginning (Fishman, 1968a). With its aim to solve language problems after the independence of new nations, LPP in the post-colonial years of the 1950s and 1960s concentrated on the language planning at the state or national level. As Rubin and Jernudd (1971) explain, "Language planning is deliberate language change; that is, changes in the system of language code or speaking or both that are planned by organizations that are established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfill such purposes" (p. 29). These earlier frameworks in the field of LPP focused on top-down authoritative language planning and the resolutions of language problems at the national or state level (Fishman, 1968b; Haugen, 1966). In other words, during the earlier period of LPP development, how a policy was implemented and what the implementation process looks like was ignored and overlooked.

While LPP studies primarily focus on the policies of government officials promoting systematic linguistic change in a community or a society, there are various forces at the macro- and micro-levels at work. Across stages of language planning, different individuals and social agencies are distinctively linked to the rules, regulations, and practices and hold important roles in achieving the intended language policy. Therefore, each individual language user and different

social agencies cannot be isolated from the sociopolitical contexts in which they dwell or are educated (Canagarajah, 2005; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In this way, LPP moves beyond the top-down or bottom-up construct to a conceptualization of being a more dynamic, interactive, and nonlinear process (García, 2009).

To highlight the complexity within the LPP creation and implementation, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) introduced the metaphor of an onion framework to evoke a multi-layered understanding of how language policies work. The layers of the onion from outer to the center illuminated the political processes from the state and national agencies to institutions and individuals to enact language policies. Within the framework, agents at the national, institutional, and interpersonal levels are all engaged in the process wherein interacting with one another. Thus, through the application of the onion metaphor, we can see the connection across different layers and how power moves at different levels.

Furthermore, Spolsky (2004) suggested that language policy encompasses three interrelated but independently describable components: "language practices, beliefs and management of a community or polity" (p. 9). Specifically, language practices refer to the actual linguistic choices and behaviors; language beliefs are the values and statuses assigned to named languages and language varieties; language management refers to the explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify related practices and beliefs (Spolsky, 2004). According to Spolsky (2004), language policies can be both overt and covert, and can include all decisions people make about language in the society. Spolsky's inclusive definition of language policy redefines who can be policymakers. That is, people with all different positions in the social, political, and economic world are capable of enacting macro-/meso-/micro- levels of language policies. This three-component LPP framework provides us an important approach to examine a wide range of language issues, such as the establishment of official language(s) in a country, the discussion of official language(s) in schools, as well as language ideologies embedded in education and so forth.

Education is seen as central to LPP and schools serve as an important space for education policy implementation (Menken, 2008; Menken & Garcia, 2010). Informed by Spolsky's (2004) LPP framework, Shohamy (2006) spoke of "language education policy" as the "mechanism used to create de facto language practices in educational institutions" (p. 76). Shohamy (2006) investigated how the three components contribute to the construction of de facto language policy and in what ways de facto language policies are connected with language beliefs and practices. Shohamy argued that language education policy has often been determined by political considerations or sociopolitical ideologies instead of pedagogical factors in the field of bilingual education. Shohamy's perspective aligns with Johnson and Johnson's (2015) ethnographic studies with EL students where he found LPP is political in nature. Because for students who speak English as their second or foreign language, their performance on standardized testing can decide what content is being taught in schools, how and by whom it was taught, and in which language. The significant impacts of the testing policy on EL students' schooling experience, in other words, becomes the de facto language policy.

I adopt this perspective of seeing standardized testing as the de facto language policy in my literature review. I argue the issues with language policy, specifically within the educational contexts, are deeply intertwined with the status of languages in the society and illuminate the sociolinguistic ideologies. By examining the previous literature around LTELs labelling and exploring their educational trajectories, I argue the binary thinking that categorizing students into English learners and English speakers and even with a subcategory of LTELs tells a set of

ideologies about languages. And the tactic binary sociolinguistic logic can powerfully transfer over to the ways how bilingual learners are treated and educated in the U.S. school context. Furthermore, the EL and LTEL labels establish a deficient perspective of bilingual learners and ignore the linguistic skills and assets of knowledge bilingual learners bring into their schools and classrooms. Consequently, the labelling and the current EL classification system fails to challenge the logic of sociolinguistic ideologies and continue to frame students who embrace language practices other than English as inherently deficient. Thus, we must seek an alternative approach to racial assemblages and understand students who are labelled as ELs and LTELs inhibit various historical, political, and economic positionalities as they migrate to the country and enroll into the public school system, so that we can ensure their academic rigors and continue honoring minority communities' racial, cultural, and linguistic practices.

Findings
To understand how the status of LTELs impacts their learning opportunities and learning outcomes, I align my arguments with Spolsky's (2004) three components of de facto language policy framework. First, the use of standardized testing to decide students' further educational experiences indicates the perception of ELs' linguistic proficiency as inadequate. Thus, regulating students' language use through the current classification and reclassification system to fix EL students' language problems is an example of language management. Second, I find the label LTEL used in policies, reports, and academic journal articles is indicative of a language ideology that privileges English monolingualism. The monoglossic language ideology works to exacerbate educational inequities and fosters a systematic negation of minoritized students' cultures and languages. Third, I reviewed literature on LTELs' schooling experience for illustration of individuals' language practices. Recognizing the inadequacy in educational programs and pedagogies development for LTELs can help us better counter the subtractive educational practices and undergird LTELs' schooling experiences.

Long-Term English Learners in the Context of High-Stakes Standardized Tests
According to Nekvapil (2006), language management can range from micro levels such as a family to macro levels such as a nation-state. In the domain of English language education, a state English language proficiency (ELP) exam can be considered as a type of language management, determining whether an EL exits English language learner status. ELP exams, in the U.S. K–12 context, were developed after the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which required ELs to be tested annually for English proficiency (NCLB, 2002). NCLB mandated the assessment of language proficiency, thus determining programming, instruction and curriculum. With the reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) replaced the previous law of NCLB and required schools to build English proficiency rates into their accountability framework. Although federal policy dictates all states use ELP exams to assess ELs, proficiency is essentially a cut score decided by convening a committee within each state. For example, in California, an overall proficiency level 4 on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) must be identified to be considered for reclassification. In Texas, students must score 40th percentile or above in the State Standardized Reading Assessment before their reclassification case can be sent for review. In New York, students must score at the commanding level on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to be classified. In the end, where the cut scores are set is a matter of a state committee's judgment about how students ought to perform on

the test (Rosenberg, 2004). Moreover, there is no homogeneous definition of proficiency to exit EL status across and sometimes within states, either. According to Title III of ESSA, an EL is defined as:

> an individual . . . whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language . . . may deny the individual the ability to . . . (a) meet the state's proficiency level of achievement on state assessments; (b) successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (c) the opportunity to participate fully in society. (Title III, ESSA, 2015)

As demonstrated from the text above, current policy in practice places great emphasis on assessing language proficiency through the lens of state assessments. Under ESSA, states are authorized with much control of accountability. As a result, the proportion of bilingual students who are identified as ELs varies across states, suggesting that one student who is considered an EL might be reclassified as a non-EL in a different state, thus leading to different programs and learning opportunities. In New York City, approximately half of ELs are able to be reclassified within three years of school (Conger, 2009; Slama, 2014). However, Umansky and Reardon (2014) found that in California, the time for students to be reclassified is much longer. The median time necessary for reclassification to occur for the Latino ELs in California was 8 years (Umansky & Reardon, 2014). In fact, an EL student in New York City is only required to demonstrate proficiency on the state ELP exam to become reclassified. The same student in the state of Iowa is required to demonstrate proficiency on the state ELP exam and academic content test to be reclassified. Moreover, that same student attending school in California would be required to demonstrate proficiency on the state ELP exam and on the academic content test in English Language Arts, plus teacher evaluation of the pupil's curriculum mastery using a locally developed protocol and parent consultation are both needed for the student to be reclassified (Cook & Linquanti, 2015). This is significant because as the measures used to determine student acquisition of the English language vary, so does the number of students reclassified from state to state and district to district (Cook & Linquanti, 2015). The implementation of ESSA requires states to answer the question, "How long does it take for ELs to become proficient?" Because each state has its own criteria for reclassification, it is difficult to compare results across states (Linquanti & Cook, 2013).

There have been several concerns and questions raised about ELP exams (Clark-Gareca, 2016), among which are whether the tests solely assess students' language proficiency or whether they evaluate students' knowledge of the content areas represented in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). After reviewing a variety of ELP assessments in use across the United States, Solórzano (2008) found the tests had different definitions of proficiency and thus assessed proficiency quite differently. Based on the synthesis of the literature, Solórzano concluded the continued use of high-stakes test results for decision making has adverse consequences for ELs and LTELs. In fact, because of the complex components to define proficiency in the test, some teachers have questioned whether non-ELs from mainstream classrooms would score highest if they took the ELP exams. With the adaptation of CCSS and to support EL students in meeting the rigorous content standards for college and career readiness, each state was required to adopt ELP standards that correspond to the college and career-ready standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2016a). In particular, the latest reauthorization of ESEA clarifies that each state must adopt ELP 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" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016b, p. 24). I find it troubling when tests attempt to measure the integration of literacy and content standards, because it might not portray accurately what students know and are able to do. The washback effects of high-stakes tests have drawn attention from test developers and educational researchers due to the impacts of such tests on education and society (e.g., Fox & Cheng, 2007; Green, 2013; Menken, 2006). For example, Menken (2006) examined the washback effects of policy-driven high-stakes tests on ELs and found that the curriculum and instructions for ELs were driven by the tests rather than aligned with students' learning needs. Thus, it's doubtful whether the instructions students received have a positive impact on their learning. In other words, students' learning needs can be easily overshadowed by the massive washback effects of high-stake tests.

As a comprehensive system made up of 40 U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies, WIDA (formerly World-Class Instructional Design & Assessment) is a consortium that aims at developing, designing, and implementing a high-quality culturally and linguistically responsive system to support English language learners in K–12 contexts. In 2019, WIDA published a research report and estimated the potential LTEL population across 15 states, representing all four quadrants of the U.S. In the study, the minimum threshold was defined as a composite proficiency level (CPL) of 4.5 for the prior school year on the ACCESS for ELLs test. This minimum CPL was also the standard for ELs to be reclassified as English proficient across all 40 WIDA states and territories. Among the cohort of 167,000 students in grades K, 1, or 2 during the 2009–2010 school year, approximately 13% of ELs were identified as potential LTELs, 65% were classified as potentially proficient, while 22% dropped out from the analysis prior to 2014 (Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018). The study also found that the proportions of potential LTELs varied significantly across states from 2% to 24%, and this was true even after adjusting for states' varied reclassification requirements (Sahakyan & Ryan, 2018). The findings here raise questions to what extent state language policies affect the observed variability and make implications for stakeholders to further work on understanding factors that are associated with LTEL rates.

Another approach for better understanding the process of ELs becoming LTELs is to investigate ELs' time to be reclassified. ELs' reclassification not only provides details of students' progress in the pre-LTEL period, but also sheds light on why some bilingual learners enter long-term status. Studies by Cummins (1981) and Collier (1987) were representative among early research in the 1980s. Based on analysis of a dataset from over 1200 immigrant students in Canada, Cummins (1981) suggested that it takes between five and seven years for an EL to acquire nativelike English language proficiency (ELP) for academic purposes. Later research conducted by Collier (1987) confirmed and extended Cummins' finding. Collier additionally suggested students' age and basic literacy in L1 upon arrival are essential variables to determine time to attain ELP for academic purposes. However, these findings have also been discussed much in later literature. As Conger (2009) noted, the studies relied on small samples of participants during the 1970s and 1980s, and participants were concentrated in only one or two schools. As a result, the length of time needed to achieve proficiency estimated in these studies should be viewed critically.

Generally, students move through six steps that include EL screening, initial proficiency testing, assignment of service, annual proficiency testing, analysis of scores, and exiting EL status. However, a significant number of ELs have difficulty exiting because they are not gaining proficiency at the expected rate. For example, Parrish et al. (2006) estimated that the probability of an EL remaining classified as an EL after 5 years in the U.S. is 75%, and fewer than 40% of ELs are reclassified out of the status 10 years after designation. Parrish's result is based on examining data from California over a period of five years, where the population of ELs and

LTELs is the largest across the nation (NCES, 2017). The protracted progress of ELs limits their understanding of the grade-level content courses that are taught in English and also precludes them from advanced coursework that is prerequisite for higher education opportunities. Therefore, instead of blaming LTELs for lack of language proficiency and academic literacy, it is of greater importance to view the current designation system critically and examine whether it is serving ELs and LTELs and providing them with enough learning opportunities. To have a better understanding of ELs' language developmental trajectories, Larsen-Freeman (2016) proposed Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) in tracing ELs' language proficiency growth over time. According to CDST, language can be depicted as a dynamic system (i.e., a set of variables that interact over time), and language development can be viewed as a complex dynamic process. Larsen-Freeman (2016) argued that spontaneous occurrence of new changes arises from the interaction of the components of a complex system. By applying CDST in studies of second language acquisition, the findings will help policymakers and educators develop programs that facilitate students gaining English proficiency and reduce the risk of bilinguals entering long-term status.

As shown by the studies we've discussed in the section, standardized test results play an important role in assessing students' English proficiency. Though the test is not necessarily considered to be bad, the washback effects of the test reflect the negative effect of a type of language management. While the problematic process of classification and reclassification of ELs is not the sole cause for students to become LTELs, it is influential in deciding subsequent programming and school experience which should not be overlooked. Thus, sometimes ELs become LTELs, not due to their actual English abilities, but due to errors in bureaucratic processes (Brooks, 2018; Thompson, 2015). Given that EL students are heterogeneous in many ways (e.g., race, age, learning progress), more evidence other than ELP test score needs to be gathered to fulfill students' needs more adequately. Rather than relying on one single assessment for making high-stake decisions, other assessments or measurements should be incorporated to counteract the adverse impact of any one poorly devised test (Stokes-Guinan & Goldenberg, 2010/2011). In terms of the assessment use and purposes, formative assessments gathered from classroom activities can provide deliberate collection of information on student performances at the micro level, and EL learners' needs can be responded to by teachers more incrementally. In this way, we are using assessment *for* and *in* learning rather than *of* learning (Wiliam & Thompson, 2017).

Connotations of the Label of Long-Term English Learners

Guided by Spolsky (2004), the second component of the LPP framework is language beliefs, sometimes called language ideologies. The established ideologies are significant to language policy and planning as they associate with the values assigned to languages and language variations. In examining the label of LTELs, I suggest that the label can be understood as a symbolic term naturalizing monolingual and English-only ideology. As Link and Phelan (2013) said, any label is a "package deal" (p. 528), encompassing both costs and benefits. García (2009) demonstrates how the language used to identify bilingual learners impacts their educational experience in multiple ways. For example, she notes that referring to students as emergent bilinguals instead of limited English proficiency (LEP) or English Learners (ELs) highlights their potential rather than shortcomings or limitations of English skills. Therefore, labelling to some extent may lead individuals to experience injustice and discrimination. In specifically looking at the literature associated with the LTEL label, this part of the review attempts to uncover the powerful ideologies inherent in the term and provide a more complex understanding of students

who are labelled LTELs. Through analyzing the label, we will be able to recognize that the description of these long-term bilinguals is not as neutral as it may appear.

California was the first state to adopt the term LTEL as an accountable category in state official policy. Assembly Bill 2193 defines LTEL in its Section 313.1 and further requires the department to "annually ascertain and provide to school districts and schools the number of pupils in each school district and school, as specified, who are, or are at risk of becoming, long-term English learners" (Chapter 427). The passage of Assembly Bill 2193 was influential in helping raise the visibility of the subgroup of bilingual students and attempting to address their special educational needs. Weeks after the passage of the Bill, a guidance book was released by a state-wide advocacy organization named California Together. In this document, Olsen (2012) provided suggestions and instructions to educators and administrators for best practices. Despite the justice-rooted orientation, Olsen's (2012) recommendations discursively positioned LTELs as deficient and assumed a monolingual-English standard. For example, in the guidance, Olsen defined LTELs as students "struggling academically and stuck in progressing towards English proficiency despite six or more years in US schools" (p. 4) and noted the urgent need for schools and districts to address the "academic gaps of these students". While emphasizing students' failure in language and academics, there is no mention of bilingualism nor translanguaging (García 2009; García & Wei, 2014) that can be regarded as dynamic linguistic and semiotic resources of this student population. Therefore, the label of LTELs demonstrates a monolingual language ideology and views these students from a deficient perspective.

This monolingual and English-only approach is also a reflection of the state's anti-bilingual education policy. In fact, California was the first state in the nation that initiated a ballot asking voters to eliminate bilingual education in favor of an English-only approach. In June 1998, the proposition (Proposition 227) passed with 61% for and 39% against. Since then, California had started requiring bilingual learners in all public schools to be taught only in English and enter mainstream classrooms within a maximum of one year of instruction in their home language (Gándara et al., 2000). In this case, instead of viewing students' social and home language practices as language resources, the English-only movement treats bilingualism as a problem that prevents students from fitting a monolingual ideology. A large-scale study investigated the long-term effects of the English-only approach, finding that English-only instruction did not contribute much to improving bilingual students' academic performance (Parrish et al., 2006). Though recently more people began realizing the importance of bilingualism and Proposition 227 was overturned in 2016, the twenty-year implementation of English-only instruction results in sharp declines in the number of bilingually certified teachers in the state (Garcia, 2020).

Recently, there has been criticism about the notion of LTELs and some scholars have specifically reformed the ways they talk about the students who are LTELs (Flores et al., 2015; Menken, 2013). Flores et al. (2015) critique that the notion of LTELs oversimplifies the broad categorization of students and ignores their highly varied educational and linguistic backgrounds. To understand this subcategory population, they studied LTELs' lived experiences through the lens of students as emergent bilinguals, students, family/community members and transnational individuals. Data in the study includes interviews with 28 students from 2 secondary schools in New York City and class observations that serve for data contextualization. Countering the discourse of deficiency that is often attached to the LTEL population, the study by Flores et al. (2015) employs the discourses of partiality framework, through which to better understand how these students perceive themselves in a more complex and innovative way. The discourses of partiality are constructed by two interconnected manifestations. One is the discourse of linguistic

partiality, which constructs students who immigrated to the U.S. at a young age as lifelong learners of English because of their partial development of both their home language and English. The other is the discourse of academic partiality, which positions ELs as unprepared learners for academic work because of their limited English language skills (Flores et al., 2015). Flores and colleagues concluded the study by emphasizing that such complexities of these students' experiences in schools must be recognized and addressed through more responsive schooling. Besides, Flores et al. (2015) point out from the study that the label serves more than as a categorization but a racial project, "perpetuating white supremacy through the marginalization of the community of color's language practices" (Flores et al., 2015, p. 6). In the U.S, a monolingual English speaker would not be considered as an EL no matter whether he masters academic discourse in English or not. However, someone who is bilingual must be academically proficient to be considered as fully proficient in the language. What is behind this is a language ideology that's driven by white supremacy, prioritizing English monolingualism and monoculturalism (Flores et al., 2018).

Similarly, Menken (2013) raised the argument that the label causes students to be seen as linguistically deficient even in their home language despite their proficiency likely not being questioned in their home country. Menken (2013) stressed to use the term emergent bilingual instead of long-term English learner, emphasizing students' bilingual language and literacy skills at secondary schools. The following excerpt is an example in which Menken (2013) applied a translanguaging lens to critique her own earlier research about the deficient positioning of emergent bilinguals:

One example is the article entitled "The Long-Term Impact of Subtractive Schooling in the Educational Experiences of Secondary English Language Learners" (Menken & Kleyn, 2010), in which the authors described these challenges in detail while failing to acknowledge the creative and dynamic ways the students actually use language. Taking this further, these students have been termed "non-nons," "clinically disfluent," "languageless," and "semilingual" by educators and linguists (Rosa 2019; Valadez et al., 2000) and are seen as deficient in linguistic knowledge largely due to their failure to become English monolinguals (Menken, 2013, p. 462).

In this example, students are deprived from native speaker status due to their demonstration of low academic literacy skills. LTELs are forcefully positioned in the "dual nonnative speaker" status because of their failure to be monolingual and monocultural. These bilingual speakers, under the category of LTELs, are conceptualized as speakers of nonstandard English or even "languagelessness" (Rosa, 2016, p. 162). So, the label of LTEL is a product constructed by the normalization of monolingualism and idealization of academic English.

Conversation surrounding the label goes beyond words. Labelling students as LTELs also impacts the ways educators read and understand their needs and abilities. In exploring how prolonged classification as LTELs impacts students' opportunity to learn, Brooks (2015) analyzed the "in-school experience with and ideas about academic reading" (p. 386), drawing data from five case studies of LTELs in the ninth grade. Based on classroom observations, Brooks found learning opportunities for LTELs are limited in terms of access to rich literacy practices and structured by the teacher. The teacher determined LTELs' in-school reading experiences with three revolving rules: reading involved more than one person; reading entailed meaning-making aloud; and the teacher provided official interpretation. However, such reading practice does not provide LTELs with the necessary literacy skills needed to increase proficiency as measured by state testing. Brooks' work highlights the fact that current labelling practice with the term LTEL prevents students from getting access to necessary literacy skills and learning opportunities. The label not

only blinds us to students' bilingual abilities, but also blocks students' way to further learning opportunities and success.

Through reviewing literature surrounding the label of LTELs and examining the impacts on students to whom the label is applied, the de facto language policy of labelling reflects an ideology that prioritizes English monolingualism and further disadvantages students who fall within the categorization. Connecting it to the colonial history of the United States, the ideology illustrates a rather contradictory belief expected in democracy as it holds that everyone ought to learn English despite immigration waves (Spolsky, 2004). In fact, discussion around language ideology cannot be disentangled from language practice. Thus, in the next section, I'll review studies that investigate LTELs' language practice and schooling experience.

Services and School Experiences of Long-Term English Learners

Within the theory of language policy, language practices are "the most observable behaviors and choices—what people actually do" (Spolsky, 2009, p. 4). Language practices are also the component that provide the linguistic context for anyone who learns a language (Spolsky, 2004). Overall, researchers in the field have generally reached a consensus that the greatest need of LTELs is to build up academic language and literacy skills to meet the current testing climate (Freeman et al., 2002). However, directed by the popular sink or swim approach in U.S. public schools, adequate language development services are not provided to LTELs throughout their schooling (Menken & Kleyn, 2010). In California, survey data shows that more than one-third of ELs were placed in mainstream classes without language support (Olsen, 2010). Similarly, in New York City, Menken and Kleyn (2010) found that a vast majority of LTELs have not received systematic, consistent language services during their schooling, and more than half of LTELs experienced a complete language gap. In the study, Menken and Kleyn interviewed 29 LTELs, five school administrators, and four teachers of LTELs over three years to learn about the past and present educational experience of LTELs and to what extent the services they received were matched to their specific educational needs. They argue the educational programming that LTELs received in the U.S. has been characterized as subtractive, thereby limiting students' academic literacy skills and negatively impacting their overall academic performance. To counter these subtractive approaches, Menken and Kleyn (2010) suggest focusing on home language literacy and bilingual education in future program development, so that students' educational opportunities can be improved and the resources they bring can be viewed from more of an additive perspective.

In fact, although there is an increasing awareness of the special linguistic and academic needs of LTELs, there are few designated intervention programs and curricular designed to support the student population (e.g., Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2013; Brooks, 2019). According to the Council of Great City Schools (2019), LTELs in secondary schools are typically served in one of the following three placements: (a) an English language support program (e.g., ESL, ESOL) designed for newcomers; (b) reading remedial programs developed for low performing students or students with specific learning disabilities; or (c) mainstream classrooms with limited or no support for English. However, these programs hardly meet LTELs' needs because none are designed for them. To exacerbate the problem, the current education system tends to provide LTELs *a second-class education* because of certain assumptions and low expectations for them. Because they only receive simplified content and basic language skills, it's difficult for LTELs to develop the necessary knowledge to succeed in school.

Callahan and Shifrer (2016) reviewed the policy and placement of ELs in the public high school system that created inequity and segregation. The study found most students identified as

LTELs in high school were placed in courses without discussing with the students what their goals were for the future: whether it was going to college, career technical school, or the workforce. As Callahan and Shifrer (2016) indicated, "poorly implemented programs and policy result in the byproduct of students identified as LTELs" (p. 486), and shifts must occur for students to access courses that prepare them for future academic study or careers. Specifically, Callahan and Shifrer called for local schools to identify and develop programs to meet the needs of their EL population and to improve academic access and equity to content.

Furthermore, LTELs are commonly overrepresented in special education. In New York City, 23% of LTELs were identified as having learning disabilities, compared to the average number of 6.2% for students districtwide (Kieffer & Parker, 2016). Similarly, in California, it's reported that 30% of LTELs are qualified for special education (Thompson, 2017; Umansky et al., 2015). The overrepresentation of LTELs in special education requires careful examination and consideration of the diagnostic criteria. Of course, the linguistic and academic challenges that LTELs are confronting may come from specific learning disability, that "may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004, § 300.8.10). But there is a greater possibility these difficulties are linked with their cultural backgrounds, interrupted education, transnational experiences, or previous subtractive schooling. The misidentification of LTELs in special education is a critical problem because placing students who are not disabled in special education is depriving them from full curricular and learning opportunities.

Recently, there have been experimental studies shining lights on LTELs and attempting to find ways for meeting students' particular needs better. In Krashen's (2018) "Do Libraries and Teacher Librarians Have the Solution to the Long-Term English Learner Problem?" he reviews theory and research to propose the concept of "self-selected pleasure in reading in English" (p. 16). Krashen argues that a focus on direct instruction on academic language is not sufficient to increase LTELs' acquisition of the English language. In his research, Krashen further hypothesizes there are three essential stages to acquire language through the encouragement of reading for pleasure: storytelling and read-aloud; sustained silent reading; and self-directed reading should encourage the "area of special interest" (Krashen, 2018, p. 18). Krashen recommends the development of English proficiency should start from promoting students' habits for reading and giving them access to vast reading materials. In this way, English learners are given freedom to explore the language through the lens of their topic of interest. Krashen states that habits inclusive of self-directed reading allow English learners to acquire the English language fluency in the forms of language required to succeed in school.

Krashen's (2018) study accords with Cummins' (2009) earlier recommended Transformative Multiliteracies Pedagogy framework, where he suggested better service for struggling ELs should be culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically responsive. This framework positions students as intelligent active learners in classroom interaction and enables them to construct knowledge through active language practice. It is important to keep the Transformative Multiliteracies Pedagogy framework in mind while designing language programs and services for LTELs as it emphasizes the language practice of learners and meaningful interactions with teachers.

The literature illustrates the collective impacts of monoglossic language ideologies and the prioritization of standardized testing on students' actual language practices and schooling experiences. As demonstrated above, the de facto language policy of labelling and high-stakes testing creates consequential material conditions that fundamentally marginalize EL learners and

relegate them to a perpetual status of academic and linguistic deficiency. The troubling schooling experiences of LTELs signal the systematic inequalities and injustice as well as linguistic and racial oppression EL learners are constantly faced with. On another note, the complexities within the education language policy regime also put teachers of LTELs in a complicated position. As they try to balance between meeting the needs of bilingual learners and accommodating teaching to the monolingual testing, educators thus become agents of enacting language policy. Considering the teachers' pedagogical struggles, I argue policy making must go beyond the top-down approach and include voices from the ground so as to resist the hegemonic construct in the educational domain and by extension the broader society.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the last part of the paper, I wish to stand back a little and identify some of the broader issues arising from the literature review. This review provides an overview and a critical evaluation of studies around LTELs. By using Spolsky's (2004) multi-dimensional LPP framework, I examine the de facto policy about LTELs from perspectives of the current climate of standardized tests (language management), the label itself (language ideology), and programs and schooling experience of these students (language practice). To answer RQ1, I have shown that the categorical distinction between students who are classified LTELs and other ELs is not fully based on students' language proficiency. Rather, the label orients from a constrained view of "ability" (linguistically and intellectually) that is solely decided by the high-stake standardized test in the contemporary language education realm.

In terms of RQ2, though the test is represented to the public as an objective measurement, my analysis has shown that the washback effects of the ELP test can negatively impact the instructions ELs received, thus causing ELs' learning needs being overshadowed. Through the examination of the current classification and reclassification system, I find ELP tests are problematic because the tests don't differentiate language proficiency from students' knowledge in the content areas, and the standards adopted by each state vary from each other, making the designation procedure messy and vague. Additionally, the state-to-state variability is shaped by state policy context. For example, the English-only instruction law in California was not overturned until 2016, which partially explains the monolingual-driven standards and deficient language adopted in earlier instructional frameworks (e.g., Olsen, 2012). Given these complexities, I suggest that any credible education policy and practices for equity and justice must address issues at the macro and micro level. Specifically, policy reforms should be informed by an awareness of contextual complexities. As Gillborn and Youdell (2000) said, "equality policy statements and target setting at the national level are worthless without mechanisms to translate them into changed activities at the school level" (p. 220). Thus, it is vital for stakeholders to work with researchers in the future to better understand which factors are more importantly associated with rate variations of LTELs.

As I move forward in the analysis, I find the term is not as neutral as it appears to be but demonstrates a monolingual language ideology in the current system. I do not question that the label has drawn the attention of educators and scholars to the special needs of this subgroup population of emergent bilinguals and the well intention to improve students' academic outcomes with the creation of the label. However, the label has socially constructed these students in a deficient way, which on the one hand, ignores students' multilingual and multicultural characteristics and, on the other hand, positions white supremacy as the linguistic and academic capital intentionally. In place of semilingualism or languagelessness, an initial and necessary step

for us to take would be to recognize all ELs have the potential to become fully bilingual and gain comparable academic English skills to their monolingual English-speaking peers. Next, we should be precise and conscious of what the category and label could mean and how the designation can possibly affect minoritized bilingual students' learning and being. In this way, it helps us capture the profound meanings in ways that authorities and institutions may not ever give voice to. Finally, we must acknowledge that acquiring a language, especially acquiring high levels of academic proficiency in a language is indeed a long-term process. Labelling students as LTELs is implicitly calling those who didn't meet people's impatient expectations as slow learners (Cushing-Leubner & King, 2015).

To address RQ3, I pointed out in the last section that the current programs and services for LTELs are inappropriate and underdeveloped. Further consideration of the overrepresentation of LTELs in special education leads me to ask the question—whether special education has become a default intervention approach for LTELs. The fixed, normalized, and yet problematic placement of LTELs reflects the false perception of bilingual learners' intellectuality and reinforces the deeply racialized stereotypes. The lack of appropriate language support and programs is also related to the broader socio-political context, which can never be separated from the colonial history of the nation. Setting English as the *correct* or *standard* language practice in program and curriculum design is a result of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). Researchers, educators, and policy makers must resist the dichotomous framing of language. By enabling students to use their entire linguistic repertoires to demonstrate their meaning making, we are also challenging the monolingual ideologies while embracing the assets of cultural and linguistic knowledge students bring in. With it being said, we need to develop a framework that can help us trace the colonial history of language educational practices. In sum, this review speaks to the stereotypes, struggles, and challenges LTELs are facing and calls for more research studies to be conducted in addressing these problems pedagogically, institutionally, and systematically.

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Supporting Practitioner Inquiry in Teacher Education: Opportunities and Challenges in ESOL Contexts

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Abstract
Formal preparation and professional development with an explicit focus on the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is essential. Thus, teacher preparation programs play a vital role in meeting this pressing need. Practitioner inquiry has the potential to be a powerful anchor in clinical field experiences for teacher candidates working with emergent bilingual/multilingual students (EB). The purpose of this paper is to present practitioner inquiry as a promising pedagogical practice for teacher education, drawing from examples of implementation in an elementary, preservice teacher preparation program that leads to state credentialing in ESOL. Opportunities and challenges related to the use of this practice with teacher candidates, as well as recommendations, are discussed.

Keywords
practitioner inquiry, professional development, teacher education, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), bilingual/multilingual students

Background

As the cultural and linguistic diversity of the K–12 education system increases, the need for well-prepared teachers for emergent bi-/multilingual (EB) students has never been greater (Castro, 2010; Coady et al., 2011). In recent decades, Georgia has seen rapid growth in immigration (Hooker et al., 2014), and consistent with nationwide trends (Loeffer, 2007), its growing population of EBs in K–12 schools outpaces general student enrollment. According to the Georgia State Department of Education, EBs currently make up approximately 8% of the state's PK–12 student population (Sugarman & Geary, 2018).

Both nationwide and in Georgia, wide and alarming gaps have been reported between EBs and their peers in both achievement and graduation rates (Sugarman & Geary, 2018) despite increased accountability and performance monitoring under federal regulations described in the Every Student Succeeds Act (Callahan et al., 2020). To remediate these gaps, formal preparation

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and professional development to develop expertise for teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is essential for all teachers, especially given widespread efforts toward inclusion in general education classrooms (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). To this end, all teacher preparation programs must have a strategic and intentional focus on the academic, linguistic, instructional, and socio-environmental needs of EBs.

Teacher Preparation Programs
As the first phase of the teacher development continuum, teacher preparation programs play a vital role in the educator pipeline (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Strong teacher preparation programs support teacher candidates in developing the knowledge, disposition, and pedagogical skills to effectively meet the needs of EBs in terms of language development and content acquisition (Coady et al., 2011; Torres et al., 2019). Effectively prepared teachers are also better positioned to serve as advocates for and with EBs and their families (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2008; Linville, 2020). Effective teacher preparation programs also challenge misunderstandings around multiculturalism and social justice in order to foster the critical consciousness necessary to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse settings (Castro, 2010). Likewise, Smolcic and Katunich (2017) emphasized that practice-oriented programs (i.e., those that utilize field experience opportunities) are a necessary pathway for developing educators who are prepared to work effectively across cultures. However, a "pivotal dilemma of teacher education" (p. 354) is determining how to fully prepare educators to meet the nuanced and varied needs of EBs within a short period of time (Reeves, 2010).

Field experiences are a frequently used approach in teacher preparation programs to develop teacher candidates' pedagogical skills. These experiences can provide teacher candidates the opportunity to work directly with EBs and the teachers who support them. Field experiences offer an opportunity to provide deeper connections between coursework and the practical realities and daily experiences of EBs in local classrooms (Reeves, 2010). These experiences, combined with a strong framework for content and language learning embedded within coursework, can contribute to teacher candidates' perception of general preparedness to support EBs (Coady et al., 2011) as well as the overall quality of their pedagogical practice (Bollin, 2007). However, teacher educators need to be intentional in the design and implementation of field experiences for teacher candidates to maximize their effectiveness. Careful attention needs to be given to where teacher candidates are placed, with whom, and the expectations once assigned to their placements.

Practitioner Inquiry
Practitioner inquiry, defined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) as "systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers" (p. 3), is increasingly being used as an anchor for field experiences. As an umbrella term that sometimes encompasses related approaches such as teacher research, action research, and self-study (Dana, 2015), this type of disciplined inquiry blurs the lines between research and practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). It positions teacher candidates as reflective practitioners and natural inquirers (Delane et al., 2017), and therefore, can be both a valuable learning tool and an ideal professional stance.

According to Ginns and colleagues (2001), practitioner inquiry is particularly well suited for use with teacher candidates because it can "empower teachers to examine their own beliefs, explore their own understandings of practice, foster critical reflection, and develop decision making capabilities that would enhance their teaching" (p. 129). In this way, engaging in practitioner inquiry can help dismantle deficit perspectives and stereotypes of EBs commonly held

by teacher candidates that impede the likelihood of student success (Castro, 2010; Schroeder, 2020). By providing teacher candidates with a greater and more nuanced insight into the varied ways that EBs experience the social, academic, and environmental dynamics of a specific classroom (Nguyen et al., 2019), practitioner inquiry helps teacher candidates to be more responsive to the unique needs of their students. It also allows them to use their own voice by sharing their experiences through "insider stories of learning to teach" as they develop and study their practice simultaneously (Phillips & Carr, 2009, p. 223).

Athanases and colleagues (2015) noted that inquiry often emerges from problems of practice identified by teachers. These problems are sometimes characterized as "felt difficulties" (Ma et al., 2018, p. 17) or something puzzling that occurs in daily practice. When coaching to use the process of practitioner inquiry with teacher candidates, they are often simply asked to reflect on burning questions they have. These initial wonderings are the catalyst for short, iterative inquiry cycles embedded within the classroom's natural rhythm and occur regularly over time (Dana, 2015). The goal of engagement in these cycles is improved classroom practice that supports students' learning and development (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2019).

Dana (2013) put forth a five-stage cycle that serves as the backbone of the practitioner inquiry process (see Figure 1). The five stages are: (a) develop a wondering (i.e., a burning question about practice), (b) develop a plan to collect data (e.g., field notes, documents, interviews, quantitative measures of student achievement), (c) analyze data (i.e., carefully examining the data to identify its story), (d) take action (i.e., make adjustments to your practice), and (e) share with others. It is important to note this process is neither linear nor fixed; in other words, inquirers move back and forth between stages as needed rather than through a prescriptive and restrictive progression from one stage to the next (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2019). That is to say, the process is intentionally iterative to account for the complexities and ebbs and flows of daily classroom practice and lends itself to implementation that is recurring over time (Dana et al., 2011).

Figure 1
Inquiry Cycle (adapted from Dana et al., 2011)

We agree with the argument by Schroeder and Currin (2019) that to be most effective, practitioner inquiry must always start with teacher candidates, regardless of the context. Therefore, in this paper, we present practitioner inquiry as a promising pedagogical practice for developing

teacher candidates who are effectively prepared to support EBs within and beyond the ESOL classroom. We first provide an overview of practitioner inquiry within a teacher preparation program and then describe the experiences of two teacher candidates who engaged in the process. Next, we use insights from these experiences to share opportunities and challenges learned. Finally, we conclude with recommendations for teacher educators to embed practitioner inquiry into their teacher preparation programs.

Insights from Implementation

Here, we share the implementation experiences of two former teacher candidates, Kimberly and Shauna (pseudonyms), in order to discuss both opportunities and challenges when using practitioner inquiry with teacher candidates. At the time of implementation, they were enrolled in a formal teacher preparation program that grants certification in Elementary Education (K–6), as well as endorsements in both Reading (K–12) and ESOL (K–12). Like many other programs of its kind, theoretical and pedagogical knowledge specific to ESOL is taught through two standalone courses in addition to content infusion across eleven different courses (e.g., reading methods, teaching strategies) in the program.

Each semester of the program is also teamed with a field experience of varied intensity, duration, and focus. The program's initial field experience occurs in a rural setting with an emphasis on ESOL. However, typically, students have had infrequent opportunities to engage with EBs in their subsequent field experiences. In the advanced field experience (i.e., practicum) that occurs during the program's final semester, teacher candidates work alongside their assigned mentor teachers (MT) for three full days per week. They also attend a weekly seminar, focused on supporting teacher candidates to process and reflect on their field experience, while simultaneously completing their remaining program coursework. The seminar is led in small groups by an interdisciplinary team of university supervisors who also provide direct observations and feedback to students during their placements. Practitioner inquiry is a central feature of the advanced practicum. The process as defined by Dana et al. (2011) is used to explicitly teach students each component of the inquiry cycle. They are also expected to engage in at least one inquiry cycle during their placement while being coached through the process by their supervisor. Each student presents the findings of their inquiry at the end of the semester.

Kimberly and Shauna were advanced practicum students at Parkside Elementary (pseudonym), the district's only elementary school designated as a formal ESOL center. In addition to being a neighborhood school, the district also provides transportation to the school for EBs from across the county so that students have access to specially trained teachers and staff with expertise and experience in ESOL. The four most represented languages in the school are Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, and Korean; however, the school has rich linguistic diversity with more than 20 languages spoken by its staff, students, and families.

Kimberly's Inquiry

Kimberly's advanced field experience placement was in a second grade English Language Arts (ELA) class. A White female from out of state, Kimberly was interested in becoming an ESOL teacher after graduation and enjoyed studying Spanish as a second language. She was pursuing elementary certification but hoped to pursue further her expertise in ESOL in graduate school after completing her initial program. Kimberly's MT was a monolingual English speaker and the ESOL lead on the grade level team. Nearly half of the students in her assigned general education

classroom were identified as EB. Their English proficiency levels varied widely, and many received formal ESOL services via a pull-out model during the ELA block.

Kimberly's practitioner inquiry emerged from observations of her students' daily interactions within and beyond the classroom. Broadly, she was puzzled by the limited engagement of EBs in class activities and discussions and wondered how she could be more intentional in her practice to support positive and frequent verbal interactions among students. At the same time, she was attuned to patterns of language use among her students. More specifically, the EBs appeared to reserve use of their first language (L1) to non-academic settings (e.g., during lunch, at the playground) and were expected to interact entirely in English during class time. From these observations, she wondered if and how adoption of a translanguaging pedagogy (García, 2009), an approach she learned through her ESOL coursework and further explored in the practitioner literature, would facilitate more positive interactions for the EBs in the class by encouraging them to draw from the entirety of their linguistic repertoires (Kleyn & García, 2019). Translanguaging pedagogy encourages fluid languaging practices of EBs and is a teaching method that promotes equity, valuing language policies in schools that do not position students' language as singular processes (Sánchez et al., 2018).

Shauna's Inquiry

Shauna's advanced field experience placement was in an ESOL classroom where she, alongside her MT, supported EBs in second and third grade in a pull-out model. She was a White female who had recently improved her ability to communicate in Spanish after living abroad for an extended period prior to the start of the semester. She explicitly requested an ESOL placement for her advanced field experience upon returning to the United States and her program. Shauna's MT was a bilingual Latina, and Spanish and English were frequently used interchangeably in the classroom among the adults and students. Their classroom was also supported part-time by a paraprofessional who was bilingual in English and Mandarin. Among the students in the class, six languages were spoken. However, more than half of the students were Spanish speakers.

Shauna and her MT's frequent use of Spanish in their classroom is what initially triggered her inquiry. She recalled a puzzling encounter with a student whose primary language was Arabic. He greeted her one morning in Spanish and then stated that he wished he could speak Spanish. This interaction made Shauna wonder how students who did not speak Spanish experienced its frequent use in their classroom, especially because of her inability to communicate in the other students' L1. She believed that this discrepancy was likely a common dilemma for teachers supporting linguistically diverse students, though she had not previously considered how to approach it. Shauna wondered how she could provide more L1 support for students whose primary language she could not speak, and like Kimberly, drew from practitioner literature and resources on translanguaging pedagogy (e.g., a translanguaging guide for educators; Celic & Seltzer, 2013) as a guide to her practice.

Closely examining the inquiry experiences of Kimberly and Shauna provided important insight related to understanding the implementation of this practice to support EBs. Several exciting opportunities emerged, both for the teacher candidate as well as for the MT. However, the use of practitioner inquiry to support teacher candidates to develop effective practice for EBs is not without challenges. These opportunities and challenges center around: (a) bridging coursework and practice through the inquiry process, (b) the teacher candidates' preparedness to implement practitioner inquiry, and (c) the frequency of practitioner inquiry's use in practice.

Bridging Coursework and Practice

One of the most exciting opportunities related to practitioner inquiry is the teacher candidates' ability to build on the knowledge gained in their formal ESOL coursework. Practitioner inquiry allows teacher candidates to strategically "try out" practices from their coursework in order to determine what works and for whom. Through the inquiry process, Kimberly found that she initially had misconceptions about adopting a translanguaging pedagogy in her classroom. For example, she believed translanguaging necessitated a common spoken language between teacher and student. With support from her supervisor, using the practitioner literature base as a data source and useful resource helped her identify and remediate these misconceptions in ways that extended her knowledge and ability to implement in practice with all EBs regardless of language background. Shauna, too, drew heavily from her prior ESOL coursework in conceptualizing her research action plan and potential data collection sources, a part of the process that effectively provided her with insight into her wondering (Dana, 2015). Through their respective inquiries, both teacher candidates demonstrated "critical competencies of a professional educator as they practice a cycle of assessment, planning, and implementation based upon data collected in the classroom" (p. 208).

However, because the students' inquiry experiences were formally tied to participation in a practicum and its corresponding seminar course, it was easy for some students to equate inquiry with an assignment or project rather than as "stance" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). While Kimberly and Shauna appeared to embrace this notion in their written and oral reflections, Schroeder (2020) advised all teacher preparation programs to make this distinction an explicit goal of the inquiry process. The seminar supervisor is an integral part in meeting this need. Supervisors must be aware of this potential misconception to combat it. Streamlining expectations—focusing on the process rather than compliance—and fostering ongoing and reflective dialogue can help students to differentiate a course assignment from an approach to practice (Schroeder, 2020).

Another potential challenge relates to power dynamics and decision-making, resulting from the teacher candidates' unique positioning as guests within the classroom space (Phillips & Carr, 2009). While this challenge did not affect Shauna's inquiry experience, Kimberly found herself making decisions about her own practice that were at times contradictory to the preferences of her MT. These disagreements centered on the MTs preference to uphold a traditional, English-only approach in the classroom space versus Kimberly's insistence on a translanguaging pedagogy. This discrepancy reflected broader shifts in language pedagogy and policy and illustrated Kimberly's ability to disrupt monolingual approaches that she is likely to encounter again in the field (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Likewise, the high-stakes accountability context can pose similar barriers to implementation (Schroeder, 2020), something experienced by Shauna when working with her third-grade students. She encountered a heavy emphasis on test preparation and supporting EBs in developing strategies to navigate the state assessment when the content is incomprehensible.

Preparedness to Implement

Embedding practitioner inquiry within advanced field experiences in formal teacher preparation programs equips teacher candidates with a highly specialized and useful skillset that they can utilize across their career span. Done well, teacher candidates enter the field as reflective educators equipped to systematically use data to inform and enhance their practice. Practitioner inquiry can serve teacher candidates as a professional learning tool as they continue to develop their practice. Building a cadre of reflective educators who are prepared to adopt inquiry as a stance also

necessitates well-prepared faculty who can facilitate and coach this process. In this way, the practitioner inquiry experience builds a community of practice not just among teacher candidates engaging in the process, but among teacher candidates coaching it as well.

At the same time, several researchers (e.g., Phillips & Carr, 2009; Schroeder, 2020) have raised critical questions about the effectiveness and trustworthiness of practitioner inquiry among preservice teachers. They raise crucial questions about teacher candidates' preparedness to implement systematic and intentional inquiry that improves academic outcomes for students, including EBs. While the supervisor is intended to scaffold the process, it is worth noting that often supervisory teams are interdisciplinary. While they may be well-equipped to coach the inquiry process, they may have less expertise in particular disciplines (e.g., ESOL, special education) or content areas that would enhance their ability to offer suggestions about best pedagogical practice. Collaboration within and among the supervision team must play a central role in rectifying these gaps.

Frequency of Use in Practice

While many teachers do not frequently engage in practitioner inquiry in the classroom (Cole, 2020), Shauna's engagement in the inquiry process served as an invitation for her MT to do the same. Though Shauna initiated the process through the identification of an initial wondering, the two collaboratively used what they were learning about their students to make data-informed decisions (Cole, 2020). On the one hand, their collaborative approach speaks to the potential spread of the practice within classrooms partnered with university field experiences. At the same time, their dynamic was unique in that Shauna's MT was a graduate of the same teacher preparation program and was therefore somewhat familiar with the practice from the start. A bigger question arises, then, as to why the MT did not choose to continue engaging in practitioner inquiry as a professional learning tool. It is also not clear if changes to the support provided to teacher candidates in using practitioner inquiry would have increased the frequency of use in practice by Shauna's MT and other earlier graduates of the program.

There are often logistical challenges (e.g., time, training support; Cole, 2020) to the implementation of practitioner inquiry among practicing teachers, especially when considering the varied and numerous demands and expectations placed on teachers. Some teachers may also be under the misconception that research activities are irrelevant to their practice (Kezar, 2000) or feel unprepared. As a result, MTs are often not prepared to support the inquiry process with their students. In Kimberly's case, her MT took a hands-off approach to the inquiry process. Kimberly engaged in the inquiry cycle nearly independently within the classroom, instead drawing from her peers and supervisor during meetings and when attending seminar. It is unclear if the MT was unwilling or unable to support Kimberly through the implementation of practitioner inquiry within the classroom.

Recommendations

All teachers must accept the responsibility for creating and sustaining learning environments that foster success for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and EBs in particular. Thus, teacher educators play a critical role in preparing teacher candidates who are equity minded (Bensimon, 2012). Practitioner inquiry can be a useful tool in teacher education in that it provides structured opportunities for teacher candidates to reflect on their role in disrupting educational disparities and inequities for EBs (Ching, 2018). Even more promising, practitioner inquiry provides an avenue for teacher candidates to reflect critically and intentionally on the extent to which their current

practices effectively meet the unique and nuanced needs of the EBs in their classroom. Considering the opportunities and challenges presented, we conclude with three recommendations for teacher educators looking to implement practitioner inquiry with their preservice teacher candidates in ESOL placements.

First, we recommend providing multiple opportunities for collaboration centered on inquiry and best practice for EBs. This collaboration should be facilitated amongst and between varied stakeholders (e.g., supervisor to supervisor, peer to peer, teacher candidate to MT, teacher candidate to supervisor). Collaboration between the supervisor and MT centered on practitioner inquiry may also be particularly useful. This type of collaboration can help build school-university partnerships and bring practitioner inquiry into more classrooms as an equity-driven professional development tool that centers the experiences of EBs in the classroom. It can also leverage the specific content and pedagogical expertise of the MT (e.g., in ESOL pedagogy) to guide pedagogically sound practice that is reflective of the home languages and cultural backgrounds of the students in the classroom (Baker, 2019). In exchange, the supervisor serves as a support for practitioner inquiry and coaching its implementation in the classroom.

Second, it may be helpful to provide teacher candidates with structured support to guide the implementation and documentation processes by providing a structured journal for students to reflect on initial wonderings, field notes, pictures of student artifacts, and relevant literature from their coursework. The journal can also house additional guidance (e.g., reminders related to data analysis procedures, expectations related to timelines, visuals of the inquiry cycle) and other resources on both the inquiry process (e.g., embedded links and videos, examples from previous semesters) as well as best practices in ESOL taught in program coursework. Using a shared, virtual platform like those available in the Google Suite (e.g., Google Slides, Google Docs) integrated within an existing Learning Management System (e.g., Canvas) allows supervisors to monitor the implementation process and provide asynchronous feedback to students using comment features, an ideal space to pose questions or seek clarification related to students' entries. This asynchronous feedback can be teamed with ongoing, synchronous discussion and professional development that may occur through field experience seminars or other relevant meetings in order to provide robust and comprehensive support for the teacher candidates on practitioner inquiry and ESOL pedagogy. These discussions and opportunities for feedback are crucial in ensuring teacher candidates are engaging in practitioner inquiry from an asset-oriented (Schroeder, 2020) view of diversity, bilingualism, and EBs (Baker, 2019).

Finally, we encourage other teacher educators to engage in their own practitioner inquiry cycles, echoing Campbell's (2013) call to lead by example. Campbell (2013) noted the "unique position of teacher educators to address the research/practice divide" (p. 3), highlighting the power teacher educators hold in preparing teacher candidates who are equipped to do the same. Likewise, through studying their own practice, teacher educators can model how they identify and respond to challenges they encounter (e.g., providing pedagogical support and feedback in areas outside of their primary expertise). In this way, teacher educators can make visible and transparent what it means to engage in equity-minded (Ching, 2018) risk taking and reflection that is the core of the practitioner inquiry process. We encourage other teacher educators to develop inter- and intra-institution communities of collaborative practice centered on practitioner inquiry to support EBs, fostering the collaboration we hope that teacher candidates will emulate in their own practice.

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(Re)Imagining Multilingual Learners: Using Photo Stories to Honor Students' Strengths, Interests, and Experiences

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Abstract
The labeling of students has the potential to result in deficit thinking, which can cause classrooms to become sites of limitation instead of places of limitless opportunity for students. This article discusses the literacy strategy of creating photo stories and shares the steps involved in inviting students to create personal photo stories that honor students' lived experiences. The author shares how these photo stories have the potential to promote critical and productive dialogue among educators and students to help them celebrate the diverse languages, cultures, interests, and life experiences that are present in their classrooms.

Keywords
labels, deficit thinking, multilingual learners, photo story

Background

Schools typically use labels to identify or categorize students. While labeling enables collective understanding and can be positive and productive, some labels imply beliefs that can impose limitations on students (Castellano & Diaz, 2002; Lee & Anderson, 2009; Umansky, 2016). These labels often carry with them assumptions that influence the way educators perceive students and thus inform how they teach. For instance, the label "English language learner" (ELL), commonly used in public school settings to represent multilingual learners, can bring about associations of deficiency because it highlights students' academic abilities in relation to speaking or not speaking English (Lee & Anderson, 2009; Martínez, 2018). When educators overlook the varied strengths, interests, capabilities, and experiences that multilingual learners bring to the classroom, teachers may find themselves inadvertently focusing on and remediating students' perceived weaknesses rather than exploring and cultivating strengths (Baldwin, 2003; Ford & Grantham, 2003). Thus, schools can become sites of struggle for multilingual learners instead of sites of boundless opportunities (Lee & Anderson, 2009).

Teacher perceptions are critical to developing students' potential (Szymanski & Lynch, 2020). Photo stories are one strategy Paynter and Arnett (2018) briefly mentioned in an article previously published in *GATESOL in Action Journal* that teachers can use to counteract deficit thinking. Photo stories provide multilingual learners with a means for sharing their (counter)stories (Delgado, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling involves sharing the stories of marginalized people whose experiences are often untold and therefore unheard (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Using these stories in the classroom can help teachers—and students—expand their views of students in order to see that students' diverse home languages, cultures, interests, and

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strengths are assets that promote learning as opposed to obstacles that may impede it (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Nieto, 2002).

Photographs and images can be useful tools for promoting acceptance of diversity in schools by prompting educators and students to view situations from different perspectives, to bridge connections, and to develop an understanding of differences (Cook & Quigley, 2013; Lintner, 2005; Lykes, 2011; Serriere, 2010). Additionally, stories provide avenues for understanding ourselves and others. Therefore, the use of storytelling can encourage curiosity about the lived experiences of others and interrupt complacency by helping listeners and speakers construct new understandings and sort through false and constraining perceptions of individuals and cultures (Clarke, 2020; Delgado, 2011; Espinoza & Harris, 1998). Thus, if teachers can incorporate meaningful classroom community dialogue around students' personal photo stories, the result can be an experience that can engage, educate, and inspire students and educators in a powerful way (Allen, 2016; Cook & Quigley, 2013; Griffin et al., 2020). The stories students tell through their visual images and narratives have the potential to yield productive conversations that help educators shift from deficit thinking to capitalizing on the strengths and interests of multilingual learners that often lie hidden behind the labels and language competencies.

Steps for Implementing Digital Photo Stories
The remainder of this article will share the steps for inviting students to use personal photographs and storytelling. Such an activity provides potential to open doors to critical and productive dialogue among educators and students to help them celebrate the diverse languages, cultures, interests, and life experiences that are present in their classrooms. The author implemented this strategy with fidelity with elementary students but accentuates its possible use with middle grades and secondary students as well.

Step 1: Study Mentor Texts & Model
While students are often familiar with narrative writing, many have little experience writing photo stories. Mentor texts work beautifully to familiarize students with this writing format, and they build excitement about the upcoming writing project (Shubitz, 2016). Mentor texts serve as a guide for helping students make discoveries about the structures and writing crafts often used in this type of writing. The mentor texts that follow work well with elementary learners, but they may be useful with middle and secondary students as well:

- *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me*, by Maya Angelou and Margaret Courtney-Clarke
- *Daddy and Me: A Photostory of Arthur Ashe and His Daughter Camera*, by Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe
- *Mom Can't See Me*, by Sally Hobart Alexander and George Ancona
- *Can we Help?: Kids Volunteering to Help their Communities,* by George Ancona
- *Big Sister, Little Sister,* by Marci Curtis

After students have read and studied photo stories as a format and have developed sufficient background knowledge about the genre, they are ready to begin exploring the process of writing their own. Instructionally, teachers should model this exploration process by writing about their own personal photos. When teachers model this process with authentic photos and think aloud as photos are organized and the text is developed, students learn the photo sequencing process as well as how the images work together with the writing to tell the story.

Step 2: Take Photos

The key to creating a meaningful photo story involves photography. For this step to be most productive, educators should inform students and parents or caregivers of the purpose of the project as well as the need for meaningful photos. For this aspect of the project, it is helpful to send an informational letter to parents suggesting that they help their student think of things they would like to share with their teachers and classmates, such as specific hobbies, interests, strengths, ways they help out at home or in their community, and the like. Then, give students and parents a few weeks to take 3–5 photos of their student engaged in an activity or experience of interest or one that requires skill, concentration, commitment, motivation, and/or hard work. Parents can use smart phones or other devices to take pictures. In the informational letter, it is helpful to invite parents to initiate discussions with their students about the photographs taken so that the students will have ideas for what to write about when they begin drafting their stories. Families can submit printed copies of the photographs to teachers or send them in digital form via text or email, so teachers can save them, print them, and upload them into a digital media platform such as VoiceThread for digital storytelling purposes.

Step 3: Facilitate Paired Discussions

Using students' printed photos, invite students to work in pairs to share their photos with peers. Encourage students to describe what each photo depicts. This discussion gives students a chance to articulate their thinking, which provides a scaffolded opportunity for storytelling, helping students organize their thoughts and elaborate on their writing (Calkins, 1994; Ray & Laminack, 2001; Winn & Johnson, 2011). In addition to developing students' writing skills, these paired discussions also provide safe spaces for students to develop their listening and speaking skills. It is helpful to suggest possible questions that students can use to prompt their discussion, such as the following:

- *Who is pictured in the photo? Who isn't pictured but is an important part of the image?*
- *Where/when did the photo take place?*
- *What activities are occurring in the photos?*
- *What story is being told in this photo?*
- *What does this picture say about you?*
- *Why is this photo important?*

Step 4: Use a Storyboard to Scaffold the Writing Process

Provide students with a storyboard graphic organizer to use to organize their photos and compose the text. Facilitate conferences with students while they draft and revise, and encourage students to confer with their peers as they continue to engage recursively in the writing process by (re)considering the sequencing of their photos, drafting, revising, and editing their photo stories. Design mini-lessons and small group instruction, using mentor texts and modeling, to lift the level of writing as students work to compose their photo stories. If students are literate in their native language, encourage them to write bilingual photo stories using a fusion of both English and their native language to describe the photos. Students' authentic and scaffolded use of the writing process not only serves to meet curricular language and writing standards, but it also supports their growth as language learners and as writers.

Step 5: Publish Photo Story

Provide students with lined index cards to publish the text of their photo stories. Students can glue their photos and text onto large pieces of construction paper so that each photo is aligned with its accompanying text to create a traditional photo story (see Figures 1 and 2). Some teachers and students, such as those at the middle and secondary levels, may prefer to forego the printed version of the photo story and move directly to step 6, the creation of a digital photo story.
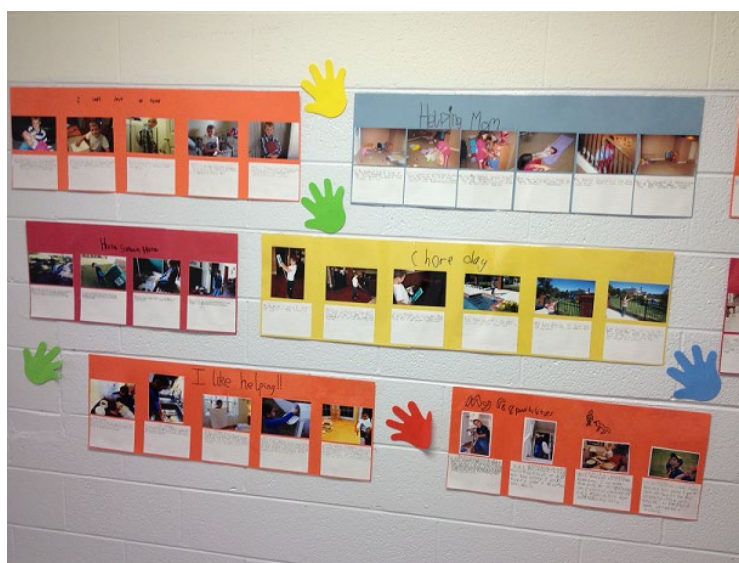
Figure 1
A Traditional Photo Story

Note. A second-grade writer publishes his traditional photo story with printed images and index cards.

Figure 2
Student-Created Photo Stories

Note. A hallway display showcases the photo stories written by second-grade writers.

Step 6: Create Digital Version
Invite students to rehearse their photo story to prepare to record it into a digital platform. While students rehearse, upload their images into the digital platform of choice, such as VoiceThread. When students are ready, meet with them one-on-one in a quiet location to record the narration of their photo story. It may be helpful to invite a volunteer or two to help with this step.

Step 7: Share Digital Photo Stories
Invite students to share their photo stories. As students share their photo stories with the class, teachers can facilitate critical discussions to dive deeper into the experiences brought to light through the students' photo stories. Teachers can ask students to share what they learned from listening to the photo stories as well as how their perceptions about students may have changed. While the storytellers gain a deeper understanding of themselves, the listeners develop empathy for their peers, resulting in collective affirmations of diversity. It is important for students to understand that misperceptions are common. However, students—and teachers—can learn more about one another and exchange our misperceptions for more holistic, dynamic, and accurate perceptions that capture students as whole learners, not simply language learners, and position them as people with unique and valuable life experiences.

Closing Thoughts
Through photography, storytelling, and critical discussions, teachers and students can hear individual and collective stories and become more adept at noticing the gifts, talents, and interests of multilingual learners that might otherwise remain overshadowed by language, ethnic, or cultural barriers. This increased mindfulness helps teachers and students shift their deficit thinking to at promise thinking (Swadener & Niles, 1991) or dynamic thinking (Ford & Grantham, 2003), which helps them engage with students in a way that capitalizes on their backgrounds, strengths, and interests and unlocks their true potential.

While the photo story approach is particularly useful for disrupting assumptions teachers and students may have about multilingual learners, using photo stories and collaborative discussions can also be useful for helping teachers and students truly see the strengths, interests, and experiences *all* students bring to the classroom. This is true for students of low socio-economic status, students with exceptionalities, as well as students of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Creating photo stories is a successful and culturally relevant practice to use with elementary writers, but its use can also extend beyond the elementary level and into middle and secondary classrooms. Thoughtfully engaging students of all levels and backgrounds in storytelling and respectful dialogue about differences creates more equitable learning spaces that position diversity as a resource for learning instead of a barrier that impedes it (Lee & Anderson, 2009). This, in turn, privileges students' unique lived experiences, affirms their identities, and ultimately results in improved educational opportunities for them.

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Enhancing Intensive English Program Reading and Writing Courses through Integrated-Skill Activities

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Abstract

In an increasingly competitive global Intensive English Programs (IEPs) environment (Benshoff, 2018), developing courses that efficiently meet student needs and equip students with skills essential for university success is paramount. Many IEPs develop reading and writing (RW) courses around one textbook for reading and another for writing, essentially separating RW skills from listening and speaking skills (Oxford, 2001). However, our university foundation-year program has started to integrate listening and speaking skills with instruction and assessment into RW courses. Instructors have observed what appear to be increased gains in learning when students pre-read, read, discuss, listen to related lectures, present, and then write about academic topics. Students' writing reveals greater voice as they seem to understand topics more deeply and have developed greater fluency with ideas and terminology and an increased ability to paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize, aligning with findings in related literature (e.g., Horowitz, 1986). This integrated-skill approach also more closely resembles university tasks than the segregated-skill approach does. This article explains the integrated-skill approach, examines its impact on revitalizing IEP RW instruction, and showcases some sample activities.

Keywords

reading and writing (RW), extensive reading, integrated-skill approach (ISA), student success, Intensive English Programs (IEPs)

Background

Although the concept of the integrated-skill approach (ISA) is not new to Intensive English Programs (IEPs; Brauer, n.d.), there seems to be little agreement among IEP instructors regarding which specific components should be included in reading and writing (RW) courses. Some programs employ a segregated-skill approach to language instruction, where the mastery of discrete language skills (e.g., reading or speaking) is deemed paramount to successful learning (Oxford, 2001). However, many scholars have described the effectiveness and merits of ISA (Bentahar, 2021; Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Gautam, 2019; Lee, 2006; Mitrofanova & Chemezov, 2011; Su, 2007), where several of the four main skills, as well as related or associated skills (e.g.,

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spelling, vocabulary, and syntax), are "interwoven during instruction," leading to "optimal ESL/EFL communication" (Oxford, 2001, p. 2).

ISA is an effective teaching approach that "focuses on [the] mastery of meaning, fluency and communication as a whole language system" (Gautam, 2019, p. 106). In Taiwan, for example, 90% of the student participants recommended continuing ISA after 65 English as a foreign language (EFL) students were exposed to authentic materials and realistic activities through ISA, enhancing seamless interaction with texts and classmates (Su, 2007). ISA has also been associated with enthusiastic student attitudes (Mitrofanova & Chemezov, 2011) and greater language proficiency when compared to instruction with content organized and delivered with the intent to teach grammar (Alptekin et al., 2007). While ISA has been linked to natural language production by students (Sanchez, 2000), it has also positively influenced student writing performance when reading, listening, and writing are integrated (Heffernan, 2006). One final note worth sharing is that the sequencing of the activities used in a lesson or series of lessons should begin with receptive skills before proceeding to productive ones (McDonough et al., 2013).

Impact of ISA Informed by the Classroom

The new credit-bearing foundation-year program at our university successfully uses an ISA to RW instruction and assessment. Using ISA, classroom activities combine several skills to equip low-advanced level international students, predominantly from China and Saudi Arabia, with the competencies and knowledge they need to succeed with university reading and writing tasks. Prior to 2017, our program taught pre-university courses following the segregated-skill approach, with listening and speaking skills being minimized in RW instruction. In transitioning from the segregated-skill approach to ISA, and having taught RW using both approaches, we have observed several positive changes after implementing ISA in the classroom.

We have observed that students more confidently use vocabulary acquired through reading and discussion in their summary, response, and synthesis writing. Moreover, the students seem to enjoy freer and more natural discussion leading to more appropriate language in writing using ISA. One student who took the same course twice, once in an RW-only manner, and once by ISA, even voluntarily reported on three occasions the ISA course was considerably more enjoyable. Considering these observations, it is our view that learning gains increase and are likely more permanent, and activities are more affectively appealing when several learning tasks and skills are integrated. More satisfactory levels of student engagement and grasp of content were also manifest in the students' speaking and writing performances. Based on classroom observations, we agree with Kebede (2013) that ISA increases purpose for learning, brings variety and authenticity, improves transfer of knowledge to other areas, develops overall communicative competence, and enhances analysis and synthesis better than segregated-skill courses do.

Amidst declining student populations in schools and plummeting enrollments in IEPs, which suffered 26% loss of enrollment in 2016 and 2017 at the national level (Benshoff, 2018), perhaps the advantages of ISA are noteworthy. College students, both domestic and international, are consistently required to write or speak about what they hear in lectures or read in textbooks or other sources; therefore, IEP RW instruction that requires the integration of all skill areas aims to match university requirements and to equip students to be successful at processing the information they are expected to master. The goal is the effective and economical acquisition of multiple skills simultaneously.

Sample Integrated-Skill Activities from the Language Classroom
What follows are several typical assignments used in ISA classes in our IEP. While the focus of this article is on reading-based techniques integrating other language skills, not all ISA activities have to begin with reading, so sharing one activity involving listening as the basis of integration is worthwhile.

Listening-Oriented Activity
One integrated-skill activity is for ESL/EFL students to listen to a lecture and take notes. Pre-teaching the techniques of effective note-taking before students engage in this activity is vital. Some of these techniques include using outline-style organization with relationships displayed by indentation with dashes, abbreviating, telegramming ideas without worrying about grammar, employing symbols, and noting spoken details in addition to information on slides. Then, they use their notes to answer discussion questions in small groups. Each group can eventually collaboratively write a summary of the lecture based on its answers to those questions. Many researchers (e.g., Khazaal, 2019; Oxford, 2001) agree that summarizing or analyzing text, including auditory text, in written form helps ESL/EFL students activate their writing skills. This activity incorporates listening, note-taking, speaking, and writing, building a wide variety of skills necessary for university study.

Reading Comprehension Activity
One textbook unit deals with health. After completing pre-reading and reading activities associated with four key texts in the unit, students also listen to and watch a video created by the second author of this article, while taking notes they will use for discussion. After the discussion, they write a synthesis paper using ideas from at least two textbook readings, the video, their discussion, and a supplemental source of their choosing, all cited in APA format. This assignment helps students learn content knowledge on the topic of health with targeted reading and vocabulary development and assessment. It also consolidates their ideas orally and culminates with a synthesis paper where the students demonstrate essential skills of paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing. Overall, this entire process weaves in and out among reading, listening, speaking, and various forms of writing. Similar progressions may be followed in textbook units dealing with any topic that is applicable to ESL/EFL students.

Another typical ISA task is for ESL/EFL students to read an article and to highlight the main ideas while they are reading it. After reading and highlighting, they create a list of bullet points summarizing the main ideas of the text to share in a small or large group discussion; the group must then discuss the significance of each bullet point. This activity integrates reading, short-form writing by creating the bullet points, speaking, and listening. The condensation of a text into bullet points and subsequent re-expansion of those points in group discussion is an effective way for students to acquire the language and ideas of a text while still activating their writing skills (Oxford, 2001).

A third integrated-skill activity involves students reading an article, processing it, and answering comprehension questions and vocabulary exercises. After checking the text comprehension, the instructor dictates a short (20–50 words) passage from that article, and students write down the passage as dictated. Then, they can compare what they wrote to the actual text in the source and discuss what parts of the dictation they missed and why. This self-assessment and "languaging" by the students about their own strengths and weaknesses in listening helps them notice peculiarities in the language and consider strategies to apply for personal improvement. If

the results are presented to the class, the entire class becomes more aware of the subtleties and challenges of listening, such as catching word endings, reductions, and vocabulary that they recognize visually but not aurally. This activity integrates listening, writing, discussing, presenting, and using metacognitive skills.

Extended Reading Activity

One method of integrating skills requires the incorporation of extensive or extended reading into speaking or writing learning activities. Fields (2017) noted that extensive reading is long reading that is at or below level, freely read, and unassessed (Day & Bamford, 1998), while extended reading uses relatively long articles that are above level, assigned, and assessed. He also found extended reading an effective alternative to extensive reading. In the context of our university academic transitions program, the aim of which is to enable students to bridge the gap between reading at perhaps a 9th-grade level and being able to read college textbooks, a 200+ page book that may be above student reading levels is used. For example, one book presents findings of a major scientific study related to longevity, so it has a Lexile level of 11th to 12th grade. Students read this extended reading book over the course of the semester, at a pace of a chapter with approximately 20 pages per week. This pace might approximate a few articles similar to those described by Fields (2017). Students are instructed to highlight the main ideas and note unknown vocabulary from their assigned pages.

During discussion, students present that vocabulary to the class, teaching each other vocabulary from their own annotations. Then, in small groups, they discuss comprehension questions prepared by the instructor. Each group then presents its answers to a set of questions to the class. Finally, each student writes a summary of the chapter, properly emphasizing the most important point of the chapter and including the main idea(s) of each section of the chapter. Students are also instructed to include a small quotation from the chapter with the proper citations and references per APA format. Alternatively, they may write a reflective response to the chapter with similar citation instructions. This activity integrates reading, vocabulary building, discussing, presenting, writing, and academic citing.

An additional method for integrating skills can be employed when the extended reading book is related to a theme or themes from the reading textbook because, as Sedita (2018) posited, readers' knowledge about a given topic can lead to improved reading comprehension. After building knowledge through longer and deeper reading, students can compare and contrast the ideas from the extended reading book and the reading textbook in small or large group discussion (see Table 1). This discussion can then be the springboard for writing assignments such as a compare-and-contrast essay (see Figure 1). The processing and re-processing of material fosters students' understanding of language and content, as well as voice in their writing. Simultaneously, such work cultivates students' essential university-level skills, such as paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, thinking critically, and using varied sources.

Another effective exercise is for the instructors to use a National Public Radio interview with the authors of the longevity book, wherein the students hear the authors' voices and responses to callers' questions and/or comments. This exercise is well integrated because the students connect what they have read over several weeks with what they are hearing. In addition, instructors provide group discussion questions, with each group member responsible for answering 2-3 questions, synthesizing information from the interview and the book and connecting this information with the students' own culture.

Table 1

Results of Discussion Comparing Textbook with Extended Reading

Factor	Textbook	Extended Reader
Sanitation	*Very important*	*More important than medicine*
Vaccines	*May help eradicate malaria*	*One of the strengths of medicine*
Medicine	*Extend life but expensive; access not equal*	*Overmedicalization is a problem*
Education	*Key to future increases*	*Education per se not important; conscientiousness and success much more so*
Diet	*Important*	*U.S. obesity has increased with greater public attention to diet (since 1960s)*
Personality factors	*Not addressed*	*Conscientiousness extremely important; catastrophizing deadly*
Social factors	*Not addressed*	*Social networks, altruism and steady marriage important*
Career success	*Not addressed*	*Important, but conscientiousness is underlying factor*

Note. This figure demonstrates results of discussion where the students compared content from the textbook unit readings(s) and the extended reading

Figure 1

Basic Instructions for the Compare-Contrast Essay Assignment

Your reading textbook and your extended reader both shared views on factors that influence longevity. Sometimes they were similar, but sometimes they were quite different. Compare and contrast the claims of the two sources in a compare and/or contrast essay. Begin with a definition of longevity. Then assert that similarities and/or differences exist between the two sources and mention three points you will discuss (This all will be in your introduction.) Then continue to explain those similarities and/or differences in the following paragraphs, and wrap up your essay with a conclusion.

- You must cite the textbook and the extended reader.
- The table you filled out in your group discussion will be of great use to you.
- Citations and a reference list must be properly formatted
- Include one quotation and cite it properly.
- Use academic language.

Note. This figure demonstrates an assignment where the students compare and/or contrast longevity factors using two sources, the textbook unit and the extended reading.

Conclusion

The core strength of the aforementioned activities within the course is that students not only read and write, but they also listen, discuss, and present content. Per our observations and student feedback, the integrated-skill approach (ISA) to reading and writing (RW) instruction and assessment seems to be more effective than teaching skills in an isolated manner. While we have observed the expediency and feasibility of this approach to teaching RW in language institutions and have informally evaluated its effectiveness merely through anecdotal evidence, future empirical research using mixed-method designs is needed to further support student perceptions of their learning outcomes using ISA.

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