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THE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL YOUTH IN A SPANISH IMMERSION  
SCHOOL

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A Dissertation

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## **Dedication**

To my family, especially my late father William Layton, who always encouraged me to embrace my cultural heritage, work hard, and enjoy life.

### **Abstract**

Language immersion schools offer students from diverse backgrounds with an opportunity for language enrichment education, yet more research is needed to understand students' perspectives on writing and multilingualism in immersion schools. The purpose of this study was to explore how four students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were developing writing and multilingual competencies at their Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES). This research investigated children's emerging theories of writing and how school policies afforded and constrained practice; further, this study examined the developmental trajectory of one trilingual student's writing over time.

This qualitative inquiry drew from two research traditions: ethnographic case study and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Case studies of four multilingual youth were constructed from ethnographic data collected during their second and third grade years. Data included field notes, public documents, writing samples, and interviews. Writing policy documents and transcriptions of interviews were analyzed using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Rogers, 2011). Writing samples were analyzed using a holistic multilingual approach to rhetorical analysis (Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla, & Hopewell, 2012; Spence, 2010; Velasco & Garcia, 2014).

The participants developed conflicting notions about the meaning and practice of writing and multilingualism. Their discourse echoed competing ideas originating from the school's language and curriculum policy and the broader academic accountability policy of the state and wider U.S. context. Furthermore, children from different linguistic backgrounds expressed varying orientations toward writing depending on the language

and genre of writing under discussion. Finally, an in-depth analysis of Lilly's (an Ahiskan-Turkish multilingual girl) writing over two years revealed that translanguaging practices contributed to the development of writing competency in her respective languages.

The overarching implication of this study is that writing instruction within culturally and linguistically diverse contexts such as SIES should include learning activities that address writing, language, and identity as interrelated subjects of thought and dialogue. In addition, because language acquisition is a dynamic process, a holistic approach to writing instruction and assessment could better account for early multilingual writing development.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

“I’m tired of writing English...Yo le gusto Ingles”

-Zane<sup>1</sup> a second-grade student at SIES

It was March 2012, and I was teaching second grade English Language Arts at the Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES). We were studying the relationships between people, communities, and other living things and students were learning how to use language to express similarities and differences. I walked around to each table and asked my students to grab a handful of different-colored foam shapes from a big plastic tub. We took a moment to examine our shapes, and I gave a few examples of how my shapes were ‘similar to’ and ‘different from’ each other. Next, I asked students to compare and contrast their shapes and write statements using our key phrases ‘similar to’ and ‘different from.’ Zane, an African-American boy from an English-speaking home, looked at his shapes and wrote:

- *The ovul es difuent ben a cuer Bicas the cuer jas 4 sides.*
- [The oval is different than a square because the square has four sides.]

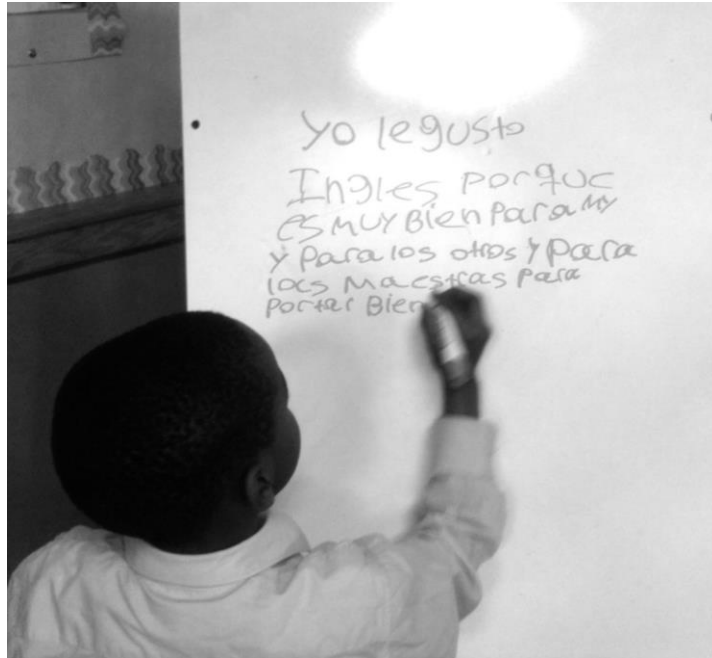
After writing another sentence about how a rain drop was different from an oval, Zane exclaimed, “Ms. Angela I’m tired of writing English!” I asked, “What do you mean?” Zane clarified that he liked English class but writing in English was difficult. Then I asked, “How about writing in Spanish, could you teach me how to write something?” Zane jumped out of his seat in excitement and ran to the meeting area. He

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<sup>1</sup> All participant and place names in this dissertation are pseudonyms

began writing on the dry erase board in Spanish. Then, his classmates and I came over to see what he was writing. Zane wrote:

- *Yo le gusto Ingles porque es muy Bien para my y para los otros y para las Maestras para portas Bien cuidar los cosas que No es tulos I cuando ves a bonche y No Nececita*
- [I like English because it is very good for me and for the others and for the teachers, to behave well, take care of things that (are not yours) and when you see a fight and don't need it].



*Figure 1.* Zane writing in Spanish, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, ELA

As a way to keep Zane engaged in writing, I invited him to write in Spanish about his interests. Zane wrote about how English was a good way to help students and teachers manage social relationships at school such as taking care of school and others' property, behaving nicely, and de-escalating conflicts. This is an example of

*translanguaging pedagogy* or encouraging students to use their linguistic repertoires to keep ideas flowing and maximize communication (Garcia, 2009; Gort, 2015). This moment in time also illustrates the complexities involved in immersion classrooms for both teachers and students. When languages of instruction are separated by official structures of time and space, how can teachers and multilingual students confidently navigate these boundaries in order to best support academic success? At the time, I was excited that Zane took up my invitation to cross the invisible but ever present language boundaries in our classroom, but reflecting back on this moment, I realize that we needed to give students more time to explore their languages and share their interests as writers.

### **Language Immersion Schooling and Multilingual Students**

Much like Zane, there are many children around the world who are growing up with two or more languages simultaneously. In the United States, a significant number of children come from bilingual homes in which at least one parent is foreign born (Passel, 2011). Approximately half of the immigrant children in K-12 schools (more than 5.3 million) are dominant in a minority language and identified as English Learners (ELs) (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). To meet the educational needs of an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student population, new spaces for multilingualism are needed (Hornberger & Link, 2012). More and more school districts across the United States are answering this call and realizing the benefits of bilingualism for both native English speaking students and language minority students (Wilson, 2011). This is evident as the number of documented language immersion programs has increased tenfold from 278 in 2000 to over 1,000 in 2011 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011).



Language immersion programs provide children with the opportunity to acquire a new language and learn academic content simultaneously (Tedick, Christian, & Fortune, 2011). Early or *one-way* immersion programs are generally designed for students from monolingual English-speaking backgrounds and usually offer instruction only in the target language (i.e. Spanish or French) for the first few years of elementary school. Meanwhile, *two-way* immersion programs are intended to serve an equally balanced population of English-dominant students and students from one other language background (i.e. Spanish, Chinese), often providing instruction in English and the target language for equal amounts of time.

The goal of language immersion education is to provide diverse groups of students with a bicultural and bilingual education. Yet immersion programs in the United States face a number of challenges in supporting and sustaining students' development of bilingualism and biliteracy. In the United States, socio-political status differs between English and immersion languages and this can pose difficulties for young students who are learning to negotiate between language, culture, and identity (de Jong & Bearse, 2011; Valdes, 1997). For example, despite being in the process of learning two languages, immersion students' academic abilities are often measured by monolingual English norms as required by the state or local government. In effect, learning English is generally privileged over becoming multilingual.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

New educational spaces for multilingualism shape children's approaches to writing and how they see themselves as writers. With an increasingly transnational society and a need for citizens who are able to communicate across borders, it is

imperative to understand how children in the United States are developing multilingual literacy. Much of the existing research on childhood writing has been conducted with middle-class children or in mainstream school contexts (Rowe, 2008). Only a few recent studies of literacy in immersion schools have focused specifically on writing (e.g. Gort, 2012; Reyes, 2006; Serrano & Howard, 1997; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). This body of research primarily focused on students' written products and the strategies they used during the composition process without attending to children's perspectives on writing and multilingualism. Further, these studies concluded that students from different language backgrounds may need support in different areas of writing in their respective languages. Thus, more information is needed regarding how children from different language backgrounds are learning to write in immersion schools (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2006; Dorner & Layton, 2014; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). To address this gap in the literature, I examined how four multilingual youth from Spanish, English, and Turkish-speaking families were engaging in and thinking about writing at their Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES).

In the remaining portion of Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the theories and research methods that informed this study. Then, the findings of this inquiry are presented as three distinct but related chapters in which the following questions are explored: In Chapter 2, I explore my first Research Question: (RQ 1) How are writers defined in institutional language (i.e. state curriculum and assessments, school curriculum and classroom documents; rubrics and guidelines)? as well as (RQ 2) How do institutional views of writers intersect and compare with students' emerging

understandings? In Chapter 3, I ask (RQ 3) What can children's narratives of literacy tell us about their identities as multilingual writers? and in Chapter 4 I ask (RQ 4) How does one multilingual girl develop agency and competency as a writer in her languages? These four research questions yielded distinct themes and insights that prompted the choice of organizing the findings as three quasi-independent chapters.

### **Theories of Childhood, Development, and Language**

This research is situated within the field of educational psychology. I begin by discussing sociological theories that paved the way for contemporary studies of children and childhood. Next, I briefly review relevant foundational theories from developmental psychology and discuss specifically how socio-cultural perspectives of language, discourse, and identity, view childhood writing. The references that follow have been selected to anchor the present inquiry of children's writing within specific theories of childhood and development. I later review empirical literature from the intersecting fields of writing research and biliteracy studies within each findings chapter.

### **Sociological Perspectives of Childhood**

The historian Philippe Ariès (1965) made the thought-provoking assertion that childhood as an idea has not always been constructed as a special phase distinct from adult life and activities. In *Centuries of Childhood*, Ariès studied the history of medieval European families, particularly through examining paintings, and traced the beginnings of childhood as a distinct social category. Ariès argued that the meaning of childhood as we know it today did not exist in medieval society. Although his methods and conclusions have been criticized, Ariès recognized that childhood is not simply an age-based phase of life, but a contextually dependent construction of social life shaped by culture and

historical place and time. This notion has contributed to the robust and interdisciplinary field of the social science of childhoods (Corsaro, 2005; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998).

In the social sciences, especially education, children have traditionally been studied as “adults-in-the-making” (Thorne, 1993, p. 3). For example, educational research considers *play* as an important activity which scaffolds literacy learning, abstract thinking, and allows children to practice adult-like behaviors. However, for children, playing is “not preparation for life” but part of “life itself” where they explore places, ideas and technology, challenge friends in games and sports, and engage in meaningful social interactions” (Thorne, 1993, p. 3). In the United States, the tendency of adults, educators, and policy makers to think about what children will or should become has offered an extremely limited perspective toward understanding the unique language and learning experiences of multilingual youth (Orellana, 2009). In her work, *Translating Childhoods*, Orellana (2009) studied the translation and language brokering practices of immigrant youth. From a critical stance, she argued that a social science framework should consider “children’s actions, contributions, social relationships and cultures” as “worthy of study in their own right, not only in relation to adult concerns” (p. 16). Research of childhood perspectives is concerned with the well-being and successful development of children. However, this perspective also opens up space for adults and educators to focus on children as beings; active contributors to society and creators of culture (Orellana, 2009). Building from this idea, this study aimed to understand what children are doing and thinking in the here and now as it relates to their writing and identity construction. I argue that in order to design effective educational practices and policies for children, we must take their thoughts, values, and actions into consideration.

## **Psychological Perspectives of Development**

The beginnings of child-centered educational research and much of what we know today about the nature of children's learning emerged from Jean Piaget's influential work in developmental psychology (e.g. 1923/1959; 1928/1951; 1936/1952). Piaget brought forth a new way of thinking about cognitive development that transformed educational research and practice. Flavell (1996) explained that "Piaget helped us to accept the idea that children's cognitive behavior is intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated" which was very different from the behaviorist notion that we learn by reacting to external stimuli (p. 200). Piaget proposed that cognitive development was a natural biological and social process driven by children's intrinsic motivation to explore, interact, and learn from their social and physical environments (1923/1959). His theory of cognitive development proposes a series of stages: the earlier stages focusing on children's lack of reasoning abilities and the later stages focusing on children's acquisition of abstract representation and formal logic.

In his work *The Language and Thought of the Child*, Piaget (1923/1959) and his colleagues studied two six-year old boys at their nursery school using "the clinical method" or observing, listening and taking note of how children talk and think. Their study of children's talk in context set out to explain the functions of child language and in turn intellectual development. From their analyses, Piaget concluded that children's language and thought is initially ego-centric, revolving around their individual activities and somewhat divorced from reality and social life. Gradually, older children develop socialized speech or the ability to speak with an audience in mind.

Piaget's analysis, however, failed to recognize the inseparable connection between social life and child language and behavior that he categorized as ego-centric, such as babbling, gesturing, repetition, pretend play, and talking through one's actions or thinking-aloud. On the other hand, Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet developmental psychologist, recognized the shortcomings with Piaget's theory and proposed a socio-cultural perspective. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) argued that children's thought and language do not begin as ego-centric in their genesis revolving around imaginary play and individual activity. Rather, he viewed the development of higher order human processes as rooted in social interactions mediated by the tool of language; behavior such as mimicry, gesturing, and pretend play directly derive from social experience and culture. The simple act of a baby smiling for example may begin as an involuntary reflex. It is not until the baby receives a smile and words in return from another human that they begin to understand that the action has meaning and a function in a social cultural world.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky believed that children were active constructors of knowledge although Vygotsky emphasized the importance of situated communities of practice in shaping thought and identity to a greater degree. Their research methods and interpretations led to new ways of understanding children's learning and their ideas continue to be relevant in educational practice. The present study also draws from their work and considers that a study of children's writing necessarily involves observing children as they write, asking children questions about their experiences and understandings, and valuing their responses as important sources of information. In the following section, I review Vygotsky's theory in more detail and explain how writing development is situated within social and cultural contexts of language use.

**Writing as a socio-cultural process.** Socio-cultural theory provides a rich and dynamic framework for understanding multilingual children's development as writers. As children learn two languages and writing systems simultaneously, they develop particular world views and literate repertoires which enable them to negotiate competently among multiple discourses. However, we know little about the challenges children face in the process and the strategies and literacy practices that support their biliteracy development. Socio-cultural theory views language and literacy learning as intricately bound to culture and ideology which can help us to describe and identify the strengths and resources children bring to the writing process as well as the difficulties they encounter.

Learning to write is a socially embedded process while at the same time it is intricately bound up in our identities. The foundation for writing, or emergent literacy, begins with oral speech and literate activities, such as shared reading or drawing, that children engage in at home and in their communities (Clay, 1975; Heath, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Often the first thing children learn to read and write is their name (Bloodgood, 1999; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Their first written pieces might be drawings and words about their lives, their families, and things they have seen or experienced. One could say that learning to write begins as a deeply personal activity connected to our social worlds.

Vygotsky (1978) explained that we acquire cultural knowledge such as writing in what he labeled the *zone of proximal development*—where knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction with more knowledgeable others before it is internalized by the individual. To explain further, knowledge acquisition and development take place on two

planes; the *intermental* and *intramental*. Through our experiences with others in a cultural context (intermental functioning) we derive what we can do independently (intramental functioning). Ivanic (1998) applied Vygotsky's theory to writing, and explained that what the individual puts down on paper is a reflection of the intramental function—how one has taken “seeds of cognitive growth” from a social interaction and internalized it (p. 51).

In the zone of proximal development, we learn by engaging in *mediated activity* using *psychological tools* and interpersonal communication (Kozulin, 1986, p. xxiv). Psychological tools are cultural artifacts including language, gestures, symbols, texts, and mathematical formulae that help individuals master higher mental functions like memory, perception, and attention in culturally meaningful ways (Kozulin, 1998). For example, the narrative genre is a powerful psychological tool that helps us organize our thoughts and our realities into meaningful patterns and ways of communicating. For instance, when asking second graders to tell a story, they often begin with the phrase “once upon a time.” They have internalized the notion that the phrase “once upon a time” is how all stories begin. Through reading more varied texts and having discussions about them, their conceptual knowledge about the narrative genre will become more sophisticated and include different ways to begin a story.

Vygotsky (1978) also explained that unlike learning oral speech which is first order symbolism, learning to write, particularly academic writing, involves second order symbolism; it is more abstract and removed from our immediate needs to communicate. The challenge for young writers is to express what they know and are interested in (the concrete) through meaningful modes of representation and communication (the abstract).



For example, in order to write, children must first acquire an understanding of the symbolic nature of language—that abstract symbols represent individual linguistic units. Children’s earliest writing or scribbling demonstrates both *universal features* such as linearity, (making marks in straight lines), discreteness (segmenting symbols), and lack of iconicity (writing units are abstract) as well as *language-specific* features which may vary across writing systems (e.g., English vs. Korean), such as directionality (left to right), symbol shapes, and spacing between words (Puranik & Lonigan, 2011). As children acquire an understanding that abstract symbols represent individual linguistic units, they continue to learn about the visual features of the languages they are exposed to (Puranik & Lonigan, 2011).

While beginning writers are faced with the complex tasks of developing technical spelling and transcription skills, they are at the same time developing socio-cultural knowledge including the sociopragmatic and discursal features of writing in different genres (Gee, 1996; Kellogg, 2008; Street, 1984). Vygotsky was keen to realize that school literacy depended on becoming more and more aware of language as a subject of thought. In his words:

Writing requires deliberate analytical action on the part of the child. In speaking he is hardly conscious of the sounds he pronounces and quite unconscious of the mental operations he performs. In writing, he must take cognizance of the sound structure of each word, dissect it, and reproduce it in alphabetical symbols, which he must have studied and memorized before. (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 182)

This means that teaching writing in the primary years involves helping children develop not only automaticity in spelling and transcription but also metalinguistic awareness: “the

ability to make language forms opaque and attend to them in and for themselves” (Cazden, 1974, p. 13). At school, children acquire writing and a meta-knowledge about the form and functions of written speech through engaging in mediated activity with a wide variety of text types and meaningful dialogue with teachers and peers. As mentioned earlier, mediated activity encompasses the use of psychological and cultural artifacts such as writing prompts, genres, rubrics and institutional expectations. To summarize, from a socio-cultural perspective writing is an iterative activity in which we move back and forth between the culture and the self, the concrete and the abstract, between our own ideas and the ideas of others, and between our own words and the words of others.

**Writing and identity: Practices, narratives, and voice.** I return now to the idea that writing is socially situated but at the same time deeply connected to our personal identities. The question then remains: What is identity? Defining identity for analytical purposes is difficult because we often embody multiple kinds of identities, roles, and subjectivities while at the same time possessing a stable sense of selfhood (Gee, 1996; Ivanic, 1998; Moje & Luke, 2009). The social sciences in general and the New Literacy Studies perspective in particular share a number of common ideas about identity. Drawing from both Canagarajah (2004) and Moje and Luke (2009), I summarize my beliefs about identity especially in relation to literacy:

- Identity is a social construct mediated by history, society, ideology and language.
- Discursive practices including language and other ways of sign-making are the primary means through which we construct a sense of self.

- The self is composed of multiple subject positions which may have unequal status and power in relation to others in society.
- Our sense of self may change or shift depending on the context and power relations within society.
- In constructing a stable sense of self and developing agency, one must negotiate between multiple identities and subject positions across contexts and power relations.

With the above assumptions included, I view identity more specifically through the metaphors of *practices*, *narratives*, and *voice*. The metaphor of *practice* describes identity as an ongoing project (Marsh, 2005). Through our everyday practices and interactions in the world we develop what Bourdieu (1977) described as ‘habitus’ or an internalization of our socially constructed position in life. In this sense, historically situated and socially structured dispositions are ‘durable’ lasting throughout our lives, and ‘transposable’ allowing us “an infinite capacity for generating products, thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55). For example, research attending to children’s literate identities has indicated that relationships and practices in context play significant roles in shaping their approaches to literacy (Marsh, 2005).

The metaphor of identity as *narrative* is interrelated to the notion of identity as practice. The process of “self-making” as Bruner (2004) argued is not an individual activity entirely governed by our personal self-perceptions. Rather, the stories we construct of ourselves are mediated by the interpretations of others and the culturally situated values and practices we have—including ways of thinking, communicating, and perceiving. Bruner (2004) asserted that “culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic

processes” guide the way we tell our life narratives and “achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very ‘events’ of a life” (p. 694). Life stories also reflect the values, practices, theories and “possible lives that are part of one's culture” (p. 694). Similarly, narratives of literacy reflect how schools, families, pop culture and other aspects of our social worlds shape who we are as writers (Kendrick & McKay, 2004; Moje & Luke, 2009; Rogers & Elias, 2012). Moje and Luke (2009) explained, for example, that identities can be viewed as “stories told about and within social interactions—that is, if a student tells a story about her history as a resistant or poor reader, she constructs an identity based on past social experiences” (p. 418).

Another term used to describe identity, especially as it relates to writing, is *voice*. Canagarajah (2004) explained that “voice is a manifestation of one’s agency in discourse through the means of language” (p. 267). He argued that unlike macro-social constructs such as race and nationality which are largely ascribed or imposed upon us, *voice* gives us agency to negotiate aspects of self at the micro-social level. To expand, he wrote “It is at the micro-social level of everyday life and linguistic interactions that one is able to resist, modify, or negotiate the larger social structures” (Canagarajah, 2004, p. 268).

To analyze and locate aspects of writer identity within stories and written texts, Ivanic (1998) described voice in terms of the “discoursal self” and self as “author” (pp. 25-26). For example, voice in terms of the ‘discoursal self’ would be the identity that a writer takes up in a particular text “the way the writer wants to sound” or the character the writer wants to portray in a particular piece (pp. 25-26). Voice in terms of the ‘self as author’ is described as the “writer’s position, opinions, and beliefs” or how people

“establish authority for the content of their writing” and how “they present themselves or others as authoritative” (p. 27). For example, when young children write, their voice, including the way they want to sound and their opinions, may be more foregrounded or back-grounded depending on the kind of writing they are doing, whether it is an assigned topic or a piece of writing that is self-initiated. Much of children’s discourse also echoes (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1988) the utterances heard in cultural spaces and their experiences making sense of this lived life. To review, I consider children’s *practices*, *stories*, and their *voices* within written and spoken texts as representations of their identities and emerging theories about literacy and writing at school.

**Discourses.** The ways of using language that shape literacy learning and how we construct narratives of identity can be viewed as discourses. Bakhtin (1986), a contemporary of Vygotsky’s, developed theories of language and discourse. He proposed that identity development takes place through struggles between our “internally persuasive discourse” the languages, texts and ideas that we value and the “authoritative discourse” of adults, teachers, academic language, and political institutions (p. 342). Bakhtin (1981) viewed authoritative discourse as situated in socio-historical contexts of power, not subject to easily change; institutionalized discourse such as “religious dogma” or “acknowledged scientific truth” or even a foreign language (pp. 342-343). Internally persuasive discourse on the other hand is less powerful. According to Bakhtin, “it is denied all privilege, backed by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society” (p. 342). Bakhtin suggested it is the struggle and “dialogic interrelationship” between these discourses that lead us to new understandings and ideological development (p. 342). In the present study, I look at the relationship between

authoritative discourses of writing at SIES and children's internal discourses of writing. I ask how these discourses might intersect or conflict and how the struggle or meeting of authoritative and internal discourses might relate to children's identity construction as writers.

In addition to considering discourses both internal and authoritative, *heteroglossia* is an important concept from Bakhtin's (1981) work that applies to studying multilingual children's writing and identity development. Heteroglossia referred to the context which governs the meaning of utterances. In this sense, a word is always uttered in a particular social, historical context and a word uttered in one particular place and time "will have a meaning different that it would have under any other conditions" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428). Bakhtin explained that heteroglossia stresses the precedence of context over text. Thus, an analysis of language should attend more to the person producing an utterance than the code which they are using. Recent work has drawn from Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and other translingual notions of language (Garcia, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Pennycook, 2007) to explain the dynamic language practices of adolescents and youth. The concept of heteroglossia suggests that in addition to language there are multiple layers of meaning that we draw from as we engage in communicative acts. For example, our words are imbued with meanings from both past and immediate present including vernacular speech, formal speech, gendered speech, generational speech, religion, popular culture, national identity, cultural/ethnic identity, globalism, colonialism among other ideologies and discourses.

Connected to the notion of heteroglossia, this study will consider how children understand their textual landscapes—that is how they make sense of texts and text

making across languages and spaces for learning. Drawing from the theories of Volosinov (1986) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Kristeva (1980) introduced the term *intertextuality* to suggest that any text is a ‘mosaic’ of prior or existing texts—that no text is purely original. For literacy educators and researchers, a consideration of intertextuality is central to studying children’s writing development (Bazerman, 2004). As a conceptual tool, Bazerman (2004) described intertextuality as a meta-knowledge of academic discourse and particular kinds of writing and thinking skills needed to not only navigate complex textual worlds but meaningfully write ourselves into them. Bakhtin explained that it is the process of taking words from other contexts and making them our own that leads to agency as writers, speakers and listeners.

Written texts are produced in relation to other texts: we learn how particular genres are structured through our previous experiences with those genres; we write for particular purposes and audiences, and we draw from the knowledge, conventions, and resources made available to us from other texts. Therefore, Bazerman (2004) argued that

enhanced agency as writers grows with our ability to place our utterances in relation to other texts, draw on their resources, represent those texts from our perspective, and assemble new social dramas of textual utterances within which we act through our words. (p. 59)

From this perspective, awareness of the ‘textual landscape’ enhances one’s agency as a writer “by planting literate activity in a richer context, increasing one’s ability to move around within that context and helping one deploy parts of it for one’s own purpose” (Bazerman, 2004, pp. 61-62).

In applying the theories of identity and discourse reviewed above, one could imagine how language and power relations, at home, at school and in the wider society shape multilingual children's literate identities. In forming identities as writers, young children necessarily negotiate between English and Spanish academic language, while at the same time draw from their home languages, peer group interests and pop culture to construct meaning through writing and drawing. In an immersion context, the roles of languages may mix and blend. For example, at times, Spanish may be the authoritative discourse of teacher talk, text books, and all things academic whereas English is the internally persuasive discourse of socializing, media, and play. In summary, multilingual students may shift their ideological orientations towards their respective languages depending on the context.

### **Critical Discourse Studies**

While the theories of discourse discussed above provide a conceptual framework for thinking about language and power relationships, the fields of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2011; Gee, 2011; Kress, 2011; Rogers, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2008, 2000) offer analytical tools for examining the relationships between language, ideology, and culture. Fairclough (1995) described CDA as a systematic way of analyzing language that uncovers the often implicit relationships of structure and agency, between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. Additionally, Fairclough (2011) incorporated a theory of learning into his approach of CDA that is complementary to socio-cultural perspectives. He suggested that



social practices such as teaching and learning are mediated by structures and events and are networked in particular ways through orders of discourse. Orders of discourse are comprised of genres, discourses, and styles or ‘ways of interacting,’ ‘ways of representing,’ and ‘ways of being.’ (Fairclough, 2011, pp. 120-121)

Similarly, theories of multimodality (Kress, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2008, 2001) propose that meaning is expressed through discourses which are essentially “recontextualizations of social practices” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 6). In examining children’s texts, we can “reconstruct” the discourses they draw from and gain insight into their knowledge of social practices such as literacy (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 6). The concept of multimodality suggests that in addition to linguistic resources, children draw from all the semiotic material in their cultural worlds including but not limited to images, gestures, designs, film, music and art to make meaning and create texts (Kress, 2011). Multimodality allows researchers to unpack the potential meanings that children represent as they pursue their interests and text making activities.

### **Summary**

In this study, I examine how students develop as writers and text makers in their various languages. Framed by socio-cultural theories of language and identity and using the tools of critical and multimodal discourse analysis, I extend the literature by carefully attending to the links between writing development and identity; items typically explored separately in studies of biliteracy. In addition, by combining socio-cultural perspectives of language, discourse, and identity with theories of critical discourse, I contribute to methodological approaches within biliteracy research in which children’s texts have

rarely been analyzed through these particular lenses. In the next section, I provide an overview of the research methods used to conduct this study.

### **Research Design and Methods**

This qualitative study draws from the literature on ethnography of language and literacy and critical discourse studies (Rogers, 2003). Working with four case studies of young children, I analyzed data from (1) school documents and student artifacts (writing and drawing from second grade ELA and writing and drawing from third grade Spanish and ELA), (2) reflective journals from five months as students' second grade English Language Arts teacher, and (3) children's literacy narratives elicited through child-centered interviews and activities. Additional data sources included informal interviews/conversations with teachers and parents/caregivers.

Ethnography is an approach to research and data collection that focuses on understanding human activity and culture (Merriam, 2009). In order to study the cultural practices that shape how children come to think of themselves as writers, ethnographic methods offered particularly useful tools (Heath & Street, 2008). Ethnographic work puts the researcher right in the middle of one's question and "often involves a sustained, long-term commitment" to the study with "intense personal involvement by the researcher" (Weisner, 1996, p. 311). As a teacher and participant observer, I was able to engage in social events in the school and with the families of these students, becoming an "active constructor of the data being collected" (Weisner, 1996, p. 311). I selected a group of cases to study because my research questions necessitated an in-depth descriptive approach to understanding how children develop literate identities as they participate in writing activities at school.

I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) within these ethnographic case studies to examine every day literacy practices, literacy events, and narratives for patterns of

discourse across contexts (Rogers, 2003). Combining ethnographic methods with CDA analytic processes allowed me to “examine questions of what counts as learning in a local setting, how and when learning occurs, and how what is learned at one point in time becomes a sociocultural resource for future learning” (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 119).

### **Research Site**

SIES is located in Lafayette, an urban Midwestern city. In general, Lafayette has a relatively small immigrant population. The city’s population is around 50% African-American, 40% White, and 10% Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnicities. Public schools in the urban district serve around 80% African-American students, 14% White students, and 6% other ethnicities including Hispanic and Asian. At the time of the study, SIES was a new school in the Lafayette city district and served a more diverse student body, better reflecting the city’s actual racial/ethnic composition, in comparison to many other schools in the area.

SIES is a one-way foreign language immersion school, where students receive all of their content and literacy instruction in Spanish from kindergarten through the second term of second grade. Each year after second grade, English instructional time gradually increases. At SIES, a majority of the students come from monolingual English speaking homes while 10% of the students speak Spanish or other languages at home. At the time of this study, the school enrolled about 50% African-American, 30% White, 10% Hispanic, and 10% other or multi-racial students; 50% received free or reduced lunches and 10% were classified as English Language Learners. (Percentages are rounded to preserve anonymity of the site.)

### **Position as a Teacher/Researcher and Multilingual Writer**

My experiences at SIES began in the fall of 2009. I began volunteering as an after-school care provider in SIES' English book club and taking observational field notes. As a volunteer in the after-care program I read to students and played different games with them like *Candyland*, *Twister* and *Who's Who?* During the after-care program, I met Zane who was a kindergarten student at the time. I was intrigued at how quickly Zane and his classmates were taking up and using Spanish especially when playing games and naming colors, numbers, and animals. Later, as a research assistant beginning in February, 2011, I helped design an English language support program and worked as a volunteer ESL teacher at SIES. We taught small groups of kindergarten and first-grade students and also worked with one second-grade student. During this time, I met Lilly and Francisco who were first-grade students. In February 2012, I began working at SIES as the English language arts teacher for three second-grade classes. During this time from February through June, 2012, I was a classroom teacher/researcher. With students' and families' consent, my research included video-recording during some of our classroom sessions and making copies of students' written and drawn artifacts. My role as teacher/researcher ended in June, 2012, and for the remainder of the project, from March, 2013-May, 2013 my primary role was as a researcher/participant observer.

My Spanish language experiences include two years of high school and three college courses. Using a self-check list provided by the Council of Europe language proficiency levels (website), I would identify myself as an "Independent User" in comprehending spoken and written Spanish and "Basic User" in speaking and writing; I can speak and understand familiar language encountered in social and school settings and communicate in writing at a basic level. My professional background is in teaching

English as a Second Language and, prior to teaching at SIES, I had five years of teaching experience to young adults and adolescents both in the United States and Turkey.

As my students in this study, I also grew up learning two languages. My mother is from Turkey and my late father was from the United States. I learned to speak English and Turkish at home and especially learned Turkish from my grandmother and relatives when I visited them in Turkey. Also, like my students, I'm a multilingual writer. However, I did not learn to read and write in Turkish during my elementary school years. We had a few books at home in Turkish that I fondly remember exploring. They were mostly history books written for upper elementary and middle school students so I wasn't able to read them well but I enjoyed looking through them and trying to read some of the words I knew. Later, when I was in high school and college, I became interested in learning Turkish literacy and started reading a variety of books starting with books aimed for younger learners. I was able to read in Turkish because the spelling was very regular; meaning that words were spelled the same way they sounded. The main challenge I had was encountering unfamiliar cultural idioms and references. As I came across these kinds of references, I asked my friends and family about them. Reading also supported my writing ability which I developed primarily through playing online games and writing to the other players and also writing to friends and relatives via email and social media. While I can write in a variety of genres and registers in English, my Turkish writing is rather limited to social genres. I can write a formal letter, I can write messages to friends and family as well as informal narratives and poems. However, I would be hard pressed to write an academic paper or an opinion editorial in Turkish. It would take a great deal of study and time for me to acquire the discourse needed to successfully make these kinds

of formal written performances. Thus, I approach my understanding of students' writing development from my own perspective which has been shaped by my multilingual writing experiences.

### **Teaching Approach**

As the second-grade ELA teacher at SIES, I took a multilingual and multimodal approach in designing students' activities and our interactions. During class, I sometimes used Spanish to ease transitions and explain instructions or concepts. Often, children from English speaking homes opposed in a friendly but serious way shouting, "Hey this is English class!" or "You're supposed to be speaking English now!" I believed they wanted a space where English was used academically giving them a chance to feel more relaxed as learning a second language can be cognitively taxing at times. For students from Spanish-speaking homes and Lilly (who was from a Turkish speaking home), on the other hand, my use of Spanish and Turkish were welcomed and appreciated as students built confidence in English literacy.

Our lessons and activities were designed to match the inquiry-based curriculum of the school that organized instruction through interdisciplinary units of inquiry and incorporated the state content standards. The second grade classes completed two units of inquiry that lasted six weeks each: (1) the rights and responsibilities of humans vary around the world, and (2) the natural world provides clues to the past. As part of their inquiry learning, students participated in a range of multimodal literacy activities. I brought in books related to our units of study and we had both shared and individual reading time. We read online books projected onto a white screen when the equipment was available. We watched documentaries, Dr. Seuss cartoons, and web videos with

interactive learning content. We also wrote and created texts across a variety of genres including narratives, poetry, comic strips, letters, lists, and idea maps.

Beginning in March 2012, I set up literacy centers for students on a bi-weekly basis. Students could choose between the reading center, writing and drawing center, and poetry center. The reading center included books related to the unit of inquiry we were studying. I also brought in children's literature and high-interest texts such as *National Geographic* readers and comics. Students were encouraged to bring in books from home that they enjoyed reading. (The reading center was also available when students completed their assignments early). Students who chose to read were asked to fill out reading summary journal. The writing center included vividly illustrated story starters, how-to-draw books, and writing and drawing materials (crayons, markers, pencils, construction paper, etc.). Students could use story cards to help them write or create stories from scratch. The poetry center included examples of poetry and various visual prompts. Students were invited to read the example poems and use the pictures as inspiration or write poems from scratch.

### **A Note about Terminology**

In education literature and policy, the term English Language Learner (ELL) generally refers to a student identified by the school system as requiring language support services in order to better comprehend content area instruction, with the end goal of receiving instruction entirely in English. ELL replaced the previous label of Limited English Proficient (LEP), but still does not recognize children's potential to become bilingual. However, a growing number of scholars have preferred the term "emerging bilingual" to describe children who are developing language and literacy in more than



one language with the support of their school, family and community. Building from the notion of emergent bilingualism, I use the term multilingual to describe the linguistic backgrounds of the four children in this study. The four children in this study were exposed to multiple languages and dialects in their formative years (i.e., Mexican-Spanish and Guatemalan-Spanish), Turkish (Ahiskan-Turkish and Uzbek-Turkish), and English (White-American and African-American Vernacular). Further, at SIES, teachers and staff were from the United States, Mexico, Spain, Peru, Colombia, and other countries, each with their own dialects of Spanish and English, and other languages. In addition previous work at SIES has found that children draw from all of their linguistic resources to create their own unique multilingual speech communities (Dorner & Layton, 2014). Finally, participants in this study were learning academic Spanish and academic English. Thus, the most useful term to describe their linguistic backgrounds is multilingual.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The research questions and design of this inquiry required a purposeful sample of four case study participants, chosen from the ELA classes that I taught. I wanted to “discover, understand, and gain insight” about children’s writing development. Thus, selecting case study participants “from which the most can be learned” required purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Students from different linguistic backgrounds who were previously in my second-grade classes were asked to participate. I first obtained permission from administrators and faculty at SIES to visit classrooms and conduct the study with students. Next, I talked with my former students and told them about the research study. Then I asked if they would like to participate and help me

learn about their writing in two or more languages. After obtaining informal consent from students, I talked with their parents and obtained official consent from both students and parents in which I explained the research study process in more detail.

Four students, Lilly, Zane, Francisco and Carmen agreed to participate in the study. I asked these students to participate for several reasons. First, each of these students came from different linguistic backgrounds and schooling experiences. Secondly, each student expressed difficulty with writing in English. As their teacher, I found ways to help them work through some of their frustrations by encouraging them to draw from their interests and existing knowledge about language. As students progressed to third grade, I wanted to learn more about how to help them with writing and hear their stories about being multilingual writers. I believed that much could be learned from their experiences that might help other students with writing in multilingual contexts. Maximum variety sampling (Merriam, 2009) provided perspectives from students who were from different language and schooling backgrounds. While at the same time these four students had all been my ELA students during their second grade year and were sharing the experience of learning two languages simultaneously at school. I selected these four students for a number of reasons. First, each student expressed having difficulty with writing in second grade English. Second, I chose two girls and two boys so that I could attend to gender differences. Third, I wanted to hear about Zane's experiences as an African-American boy and Lilly's experiences as an Ahiskan-Turkish girl learning to write in English and Spanish at school because little research has been conducted with students from their cultural backgrounds in immersion schools. Finally, I wanted to hear how Carmen and Francisco were learning to write in English and Spanish

because they both had different immigration and schooling backgrounds before attending SIES. Selecting this purposeful group of students allowed me to attend to individual differences as well as commonalities across participants.

In the following sections I introduce the students who participated in this study.



Figure 2. Lilly's Red bird book, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, ESL

**Lilly.** As I mentioned earlier, I met Lilly when she was my ESL student during her first grade year in 2011. She was born in Russia, and then immigrated to the United States when she was around two-years-old. She lived with her mom and two older brothers and spent a great deal of time with her mother's extended family. Before coming to SIES, Lilly attended an English medium Pre-K and, unlike the majority of immigrant students at SIES, her family did not speak Spanish at home, but Turkish (my second language), Uzbek, Russian and English. Thus, Lilly was learning Spanish and English literacy at school, Turkish with her elder relatives, and both Turkish and English with younger relatives and siblings.

During our first-grade ESL classes, Lilly was playful, talkative and energetic, and very interested in drawing and coloring. One of the first books we read was Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. The students, especially Lilly, loved this book and wanted to read it again and again. Lilly and her classmates quickly learned the words and were reading along with me. As one of our first writing assignments, I asked students if they would like to make their own *Brown Bear* books. They enthusiastically began talking about which animals they would draw. While they talked about their books, I invited students to write using the familiar phrases from the book; "Brown bear, brown bear (or another animal) what do you see? I see a \_\_\_\_\_ looking at me." Lilly looked at the book and proceeded to draw a vividly, beautiful red bird just like the illustration in the Eric Carle book (see Figure 2). I was amazed at her artistic ability at such a young age and knew that she had natural talent. Lilly's interest in drawing and artwork would continue to be important as she pursued her education in the coming years. When I learned about Lilly's interest in art, I began taking her to visit the local art museum on occasion where we made arts and crafts and looked around at the artwork displayed. We also went to the library to read, to the park just to spend time, and play.

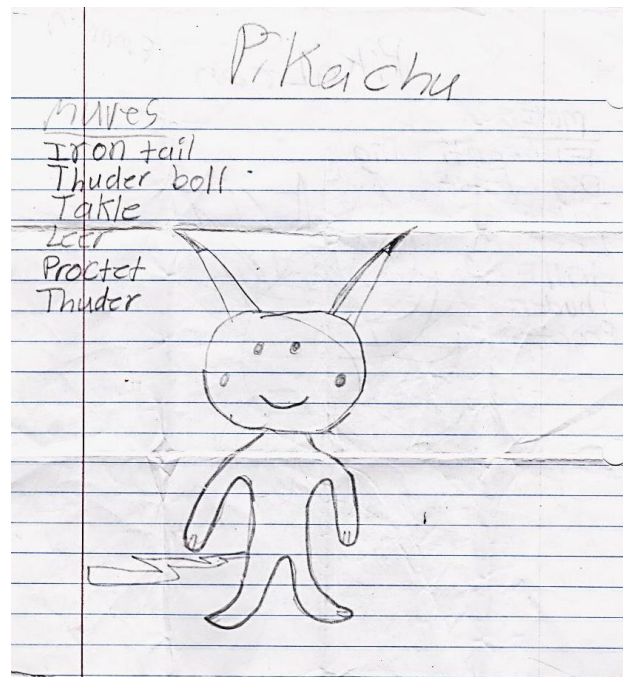
In our second grade English classes, I noticed that Lilly was more shy and reserved than she had been in our first-grade small group classes. In the beginning of second-grade, she was leaving her assignments blank but never asked for help during class. Lilly was creative at finding ways around writing. She chatted with her table mates, fidgeted and played around at her desk, got up to throw something away, sharpened her pencil, got some tape, found an eraser and a million other little things (seemingly anything to avoid writing). During one of our first writing assignments, I

asked students to write a personal narrative. We started by filling out a questionnaire titled 'My story.' The survey asked students to complete sentences like: *I feel happy when...; I feel sad when...; I am good at...etc.* When I checked with Lilly about her story, she was frustrated and said she did not know how to write in English. I asked her first to tell me what she wanted to write and then write the words the way she thought they sounded. I explained that we were just starting to write in English, so we had to do some experimenting and guessing. We tried a few examples together and she seemed ready to write. After a while, I came back to Lilly's table and found that she still had not written anything.

I asked Lilly's friend and table mate Josie if they could work together to fill out the survey and Josie replied, "Ugh, Lilly is so low in spelling." This comment disturbed me for several reasons and most likely upset Lilly. First, Josie was not perfect at spelling. Along with most of my second-grade students, she also made mistakes. Second, Josie was bilingual from a Spanish-English speaking home. However, unlike Lilly, Josie was not identified as needing English language support. At the time the comment was made, I offered a counter statement pointing out that Lilly was not low in spelling that in fact she was learning three languages; Spanish, English, and Turkish. When Josie and a few other classmates heard this, they were impressed to find out that Lilly knew another language in addition to Spanish and English and wanted to hear us speak some Turkish.

By the end of second grade with frequent one-to-one scaffolding and encouragement, Lilly was more excited about writing. Sometimes I asked her if she would like to write in Spanish or Turkish during our class. She began choosing her own

topics to write about and was writing independently for longer periods of time. When I observed Lilly in third grade, she was again having some difficulty with writing. She was writing lengthier passages compared to second grade, but still tried to avoid writing sometimes by drawing, playing and doing other things. In third grade, when I was observing students, they were preparing for the state test in English and Lilly spoke with me several times about her worries that she might not do well on the test.



*Figure 3.* Francisco's Pikachu battling card, 2nd grade, ELA

**Francisco.** I met Francisco when he was a first grade student at SIES. I had the pleasure of getting to know Francisco much better as his second-grade ELA teacher. Francisco was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States when he was around four-years-old. He told me that he spoke primarily Spanish at home and attended an English Pre-K and kindergarten before attending SIES for his first grade year. Francisco was a polite, energetic, and happy boy. He often had a smile on his face, especially when he was playing and talking with his friends. He had some very good friends including

Zane and his best friend Freddie. Francisco and Freddie sat together in class, played together during recess and sat next to each other during lunch. Both Francisco and Freddie's families spoke Spanish at home and the two boys often spoke Spanish with each other during class.

In second grade, Francisco and his friends loved to play battling games with Beyblades (spinning tops with super powers) and Pokémon (magical creatures) cards that they collected or drew themselves. At the end of the day, when our ELA class was finished, Francisco and his friends often battled against each other during free time between packing up and getting ready to go home. They kept Beyblades in their pockets and often took them out during our English lessons. At times, I had to collect the Beyblades because they were distracting from our lessons. Most notably, however, Francisco's interest in playing Beyblades and Pokémon with his friends was an important vehicle for his English language and literacy learning. For example, during our first narrative writing activity, Francisco expressed "not knowing" how to write in English. I could tell he was especially frustrated and upset when he put his pencil down and laid his head on the table. Then I encouraged him by explaining that since he had been writing in Spanish, he already knew a great deal about writing. We would start writing in English by making our best guesses at spelling and using our illustrations to show meaning. As I talked with Francisco and read him the questions, I helped him to write his responses. We reviewed his answers to the survey questions and I asked him what he would like to write about. Francisco shrugged his shoulders and said he did not know. I saw that he had mentioned Beyblades three times in his survey and suggested it would be really neat

to learn more about Beyblades. Francisco's eyes lit up, he smiled and began drawing on his booklet. He told me that his story was going to show me how he plays Beyblades!

As a third grader, Francisco continued to be a happy and playful boy who was excited about school and enthusiastic about writing and drawing. I visited with him during his English class, ESL class and during his after-school English book club. He and his friends no longer played with Beyblades as much but were now focused on drawing Pokémon and collecting their drawings to use in battling games whenever they had some free time.

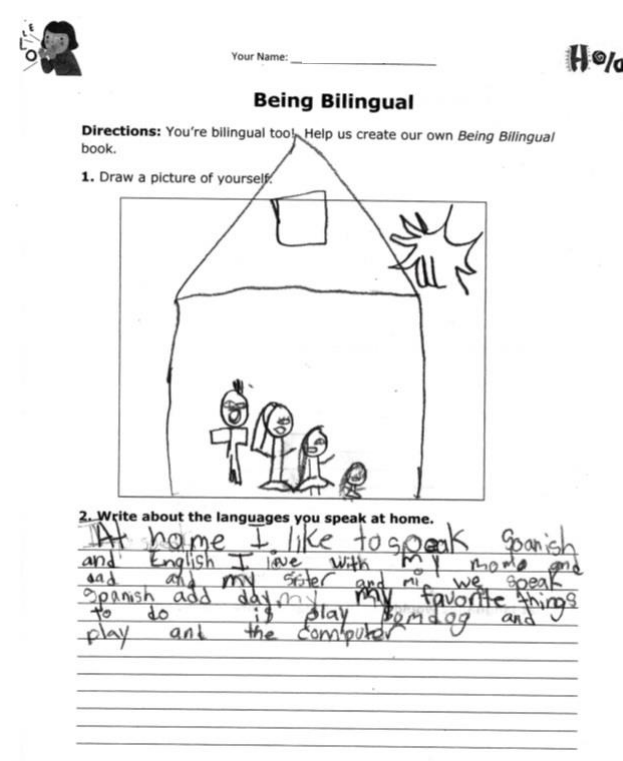


Figure 4. Carmen's Being Bilingual book, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELA

**Carmen.** Carmen was a soft-spoken, bright-eyed, curious, and friendly girl. She attended kindergarten in Mexico and then immigrated to the United States when she was six-years-old. Carmen went to first grade at an English-medium Montessori school



before attending SIES for her second grade year. One day, when Carmen was in second grade, I was reading the class a book about why the dinosaurs went extinct. As we read the book, I asked students to make connections; to think about ideas, experiences, or feelings that the book brought to mind. While reading the book, several students raised their hands and excitedly shared their connections. We finished the book and students worked on writing their own books about dinosaurs. Towards the end of the class, Carmen shyly came up to me and said that she had a connection to the book we read earlier. I asked her to tell me about it and she said the book reminded her of Mexico. She explained that there is a huge asteroid crater in Mexico and some people believe that asteroids may have contributed to the dinosaurs' extinction. I praised her for such an insightful connection and asked her why she did not share it earlier. Carmen explained that she was shy about her English, and that sometimes she did not know how to say things in English. I encouraged her to share her ideas in Spanish or English because the other students and I would enjoy what she had to say regardless of which language she used. As I got to know Carmen, I observed her to be a very enthusiastic student who was passionate about learning and excited to share her ideas. However, I also observed that Carmen was frequently absent from school. I asked her why she was absent so much and she said that sometimes she just did not feel like coming to school or she woke up late and missed the bus. The Spanish classroom teacher and administrative staff talked with Carmen's parents about her frequent absences and tried to resolve the issue. However, Carmen's frequent absenteeism continued into third grade as well. On the days that she was in attendance, she participated eagerly, asked questions, and was kind to me and her fellow classmates. In third grade, Carmen continued to be an interested and enthusiastic

student expressing a genuine enjoyment of learning. She attended an after school English program along with Zane and Francisco and received ESL instruction a few days of the week. Carmen was also involved in her church and played soccer as an extracurricular activity.

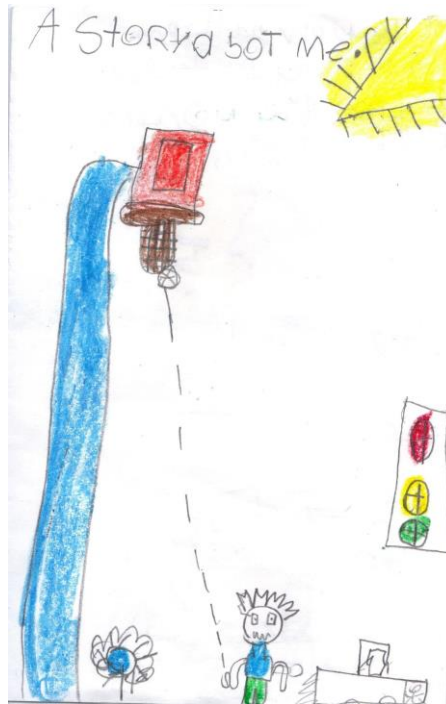


Figure 5. Zane's All About Me book, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, ELA

**Zane.** Zane was born in the United States and began attending SIES as a kindergartener when the school first opened. While Zane was learning Spanish and English at school, his mother spoke English at home. As mentioned previously, I met Zane when he was in kindergarten and quickly became fond of him. Zane was literally like a jumping jelly bean. He had a smile that lit up the room and was often bouncing around the school with his best friend doing flips any chance they could get. As his second grade English teacher, I was excited by his energy and enthusiasm for life and learning. During English activities he and his friends, including Francisco, would race to

see who could complete grammar worksheets the fastest or who could find the most words in a word search. He was excited about the books I brought to class each week for reading time and he enjoyed opportunities for shared reading with his friends. When we began writing narratives and expository pieces, he was also enthusiastic but became frustrated at times. He told me “How can I write a story about myself, I don’t know how to write in English!” (Teaching journal, 2013). I argued that he did know how to write because he was already writing in Spanish. I encouraged him to first talk about his story, then tell his story through drawing, and finally try his best to sound out the words and guess about the spelling. He began his writing journey with some mixed feelings and frustration but was never shy to ask a question and often asked me how to spell each and every word that he was thinking about!

As a third grader, Zane became even more interested in writing in English. He wrote lengthier passages and one of his favorite activities was to write about basketball during his free time. During the afterschool book club, Zane was also an active participant, sharing his thoughts and answering reading comprehension questions. However, since he played basketball with the school team and baseball with a local recreational team, he often missed the afterschool program to attend practice or games.

Maximum variety sampling (Merriam, 2009) provided perspectives from students who were from different language and schooling backgrounds. While at the same time these four students had all been my ELA students during their second grade year and were sharing the experience of learning two languages simultaneously at school. Selecting this purposeful group of students allowed me to attend to individual differences as well as commonalities across participants.

## Data Sources and Collection

The data collection for this study took place over two different time periods. First, as a second grade ELA teacher at SIES, over a five month period, I video-recorded classroom sessions and particular literacy events, wrote reflective teaching journals, collected public school documents, and made copies of students' written and drawn artifacts. Second, during students' third grade year, I was a participant observer for three months in the spring. I observed and helped students during English Language Arts class twice a week. I also observed and helped out during their after-school English book club three times a week and visited/observed several Spanish class sessions. I wrote field notes, collected school documents and classroom materials related to writing (rubrics, writing expectations, tests etc.) as well as students' writing samples. I asked four of my previous students to become co-researchers with me and create different kinds of identity texts to elicit their narratives of literacy. Finally, using their texts as a starting point, I interviewed students about their writing experiences (see Table 1 for a list of data sources). In the sections below, I describe each data source in more detail.

Table 1.

### *Summary of Data Sources*

Data Source	Language	Quantity	Grade
Classroom Video	English (primarily)	23 hours total	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Teaching Journals	English	20 entries	2 <sup>nd</sup>
School and Classroom Documents	English and Spanish	13	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Writing Samples	English	40 per student	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Writing Samples	Spanish	20 per student	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Writing Samples	English	20 per student	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Idea maps	Optional	4	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Timelines	Optional	4	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Self-Portraits	Optional	4	
Bilingual Poems	Spanish-English	3	
Reading & Writing Inventories	English	4	3 <sup>rd</sup>

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**School documents.** In the first year of the study, I collected public school documents including a copy of the school charter that details the school’s vision for writing and literacy instruction. I collected testing criteria based on the school’s internal assessments in English, and the schools’ inquiry curriculum guide. In the second year of the study, I collected classroom materials in Spanish and English (rubrics, writing expectations, and worksheets) that specifically related to writing.

**ELA classroom data.** For five months, during students’ second-grade year, as the ELA teacher, I wrote 20 reflective journal entries with descriptions of the literacy activities we did in class and how I observed and reflected upon students’ participation. I wrote about issues that arose such as classroom management, timing, student questions and frustrations, as well as the ways students demonstrated their learning, creative thinking, and excitement. I also collected video recordings of classroom sessions (67 videos, 23 hours total) as well as students’ writing samples. The combination of video data, reflective journals, and students’ written work, allowed me to construct a “thick description” of children’s second grade ELA experiences and focus on both classroom level and individual processes involved as students engaged in writing.

I taught five days a week Monday through Friday for 40-minute sessions and one 90-minute session per week. I wrote journal entries at the end of each week totaling 20 entries to reflect on my experiences with students. I used video cameras to record classroom interactions from different vantage points, focusing at different times on

individual students, small groups, and the whole class. Video recording allowed me to teach while at the same time keep a detailed record of what was happening. I asked students to be co-researchers with me as I recorded them during writing activities. While I did not analyze the second grade classroom video data in the present study, I did use the video data as an audio/visual record to write my reflective teaching journals.

**Writing samples.** I collected writing samples from three second-grade English Language Arts classes in which I was the teacher. These included personal narratives, fictional narratives, expository essays, poetry, creative writing (i.e. comics and Pokémon games), grammar worksheets, surveys, and brainstorm lists in English. Then, I collected writing samples from case study students' third-grade classes in Spanish, English Language Arts, and English book club. These included personal narratives, expository essays, notebooks and vocabulary study, test preparation essays, and worksheets.

**Participatory interviews and artifacts.** In year two of the study, I asked students to be co-researchers with me during my informal classroom visits. I observed and helped students twice a week during their regular ELA classes and three times a week during their after-school English book club. I also observed their Spanish classes four times during the study. The first few visits were informal; I focused on helping children with their school work, taking observational notes, and having conversations with teachers. As students became familiar with the research project, I began conducting interviews. Students agreed to participate in interviews during their English Language Arts free time and during the time before their after-school program started, so as not to disrupt their regular educational activities.

Prior to each interview, students were asked to create different kinds of artifacts including idea maps, timelines, self-portraits, and bilingual poems. These drawing and writing activities served as a way to spark conversation about writing and elicit children's thoughts and narratives about being multilingual writers. Prior literacy research using participatory methods has asked children to create similar 'maps' (Orellana, 2009; Orellana, Dorner & Pulido, 2003), artifacts (Kendrick & McKay, 2002), and identity texts (Cummins & Early, 2010). In the sections below, I describe each text and the interviews in more detail.

*Idea maps.* Participants were asked to make idea maps of being a multilingual writer. I began by asking participants if they knew what an idea map was or if they had ever created one before and if so to describe what it was like. Then, I explained that an idea map is a collection of drawings, pictures, words, and phrases all connected to the same idea. The students and I generated some examples; "If we make an idea map of X what might be some words, phrases, or experiences that come to mind?" Next, I asked students to make an idea map all about writing in their languages. I suggested that they could start by drawing themselves doing some writing. Afterwards, I encouraged them to use pictures and words in any language or languages they liked to share any ideas that came to mind about being a multilingual writer. I also encouraged them to show the different places they write, the different tools they use, and the different languages they write in.

In our next session, I asked students to tell me about their map. Then I asked the following questions: Tell me about your Spanish classes, what kinds of writing do you do? How do you get your ideas for writing? What are your favorite things to write

about? Tell me about your English class, what kinds of writing do you do? How do you feel when you write: (1) in Spanish/English/Turkish, (2) for a test, and (3) with friends? What do you do when you do not know how to spell a word in English, Spanish, Turkish? Do you ever get stuck with writing? What do you do?

*Timelines.* In our second interview session, we looked at students' second and third grade writing samples together. I began by asking students to look through their folders and find their favorite pieces of writing from second grade English and third grade Spanish and English. I asked them to read their writing and tell me about the pieces. We talked about their writing and I asked what they noticed about their writing. After this conversation, I gave students the following prompts:

- ¿Cómo se aprende a leer y escribir en dos o más idiomas?/How do people learn to read and write in two or more languages?
- Hace dibujos y escribe sobre cómo aprendió a leer y escribir en dos idiomas/Draw pictures and write a story telling how **you** have learned to read and write in two languages.

I asked them to think back to kindergarten and think about what they remembered. I suggested that they could draw themselves in different grades and include some of the important moments they remembered. As they created their timelines, I asked the following questions:

- What do you remember from kindergarten, what were some of the things you did?
- What do you remember from first grade? How were things different from kindergarten?



- What do you remember from second grade?
- What helped you learn to read and write?

*Self-portraits.* For our third interview, I asked students to draw themselves as a writer. When they finished their portraits, I asked them to tell me about it. Then I asked students to complete reading and writing inventories (see Appendix A). Students filled out the surveys and I asked about their responses.

*Bilingual poems.* For our final interview, I asked students if they wanted to write a bilingual poem. Writing bilingual poetry provides students with an opportunity to affirm their linguistic and cultural identities creatively (Cummins & Early, 2010). Further, poetry can be free form and does not have to match a particular style of writing (Parr & Campbell, 2006; Stange & Wyant, 2008). For this activity, I shared my own Spanish/English bilingual poem with students and invited them to use it as a reference or create their own style. Zane, Carmen, and Francisco used my example to write their bilingual poems and Lilly asked to make an origami star and flower instead of writing a poem. Within each subsequent analysis chapter, I discuss data sources and analytical procedures in more detail.

### **Organization of the Study**

Following a style of dissertation more common in the fields of economics and the sciences (Duke & Beck, 1999), this dissertation is organized into three closely related, but distinct topical chapters (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), and I summarize my findings in a conclusion Chapter 5. Accordingly, each chapter is organized around the central question of how children from different linguistic backgrounds develop as writers at their Spanish immersion school. Each chapter aims to answer specific research questions regarding

multilingual writing development and is written similar to a journal article in which I discuss relevant background literature, data analysis and procedures, followed by findings and discussion. I conclude this introductory chapter by summarizing the knowledge gap this research sought to fill and provide a brief overview of each subsequent chapter.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I view writing development as intricately linked to our sense of self which I describe through three metaphors: *discursive practices*, *narratives*, and *voice*. Thus, each chapter focuses on a specific metaphor to understand how students develop as writers. First, Chapter 2 reports the findings from the research questions: (a) How are writers defined in institutional language (i.e. state curriculum and assessments; school curriculum and classroom documents; rubrics and guidelines)? and (b) How do institutional views of writers intersect and compare with students' emerging understandings? It introduces the reader to the socio-political context of writing education at SIES and analyzes *discursive practices* or how definitions of writers were constructed in the language of schooling. Framed by socio-cultural theory and Critical Discourse Studies, I examined how writers were defined at SIES (Spanish Immersion Elementary School) in institutional texts at the state, school, and classroom levels and in turn how students produced definitions what it meant to be a 'good writer.' Analysis revealed that institutional language defined writers in conflicting ways and multilingual language practices were not cited in either of the two overarching definitions. Similarly, students were constructing their definitions of 'good writers' based on criteria they were evaluated for, namely spelling, mechanics, legibility and completing assignments on time. The chapter concludes with considerations of how to address particular ideas about

language, literacy and writing that challenge the goals of multilingual education and children's emerging literate identities.

Second, in Chapter 3, I examined how Lilly, Carmen, Zane, and Francisco were developing identities as multilingual writers through their *narratives* of literacy. I analyzed students' interview responses and identity texts (idea maps, time-lines, poems and self-portraits). Using methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Martin & White, 2005; Rogers & Elias, 2012) and narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2004; Labov, 1972) I asked: (1) What can children's visual, written, and spoken narratives of literacy tell us about their identities as writers? Analyses demonstrated that children's stories of literacy varied across interview transcripts and identity texts. The participants composed multimodal and multilingual identity texts, which focused on their interests and capabilities as writers. The interview responses revealed that students had different views of themselves as writers in particular languages and genres based on their investment in a particular language community (English, Spanish, Turkish). Implications for immersion programs are discussed, specifically the ways in which writing instruction can support students' academic engagement through activities, which encourage positive identity construction and positive relationships with members of their respective language communities.

Next, in Chapter 4, I examined how Lilly, a multilingual girl, developed her *voice* as a writer during her second and third grade years at SIES (Spanish Immersion Elementary School). Drawing from ethnographic data including field notes and writing samples, this research examined the strategies Lilly used over time as well as her emerging authorial voice. Case study data was constructed using qualitative methods

(Merriam, 2009) and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2010) asking: (1) How does a multilingual youth develop agency and competency as a writer in her languages (Spanish, English, and Turkish)? Writing samples were analyzed using a holistic approach to textual/rhetorical analysis (Spence, 2010) and linguistic strategy categorization (Soltero-Gonzalez et al., 2012) asking: (2) How does Lilly use translanguaging and other strategies to demonstrate competencies as a multilingual writer? Analyses demonstrate that some classroom practices and particular genres afforded Lilly with an opportunity to use her multilingual resources and thus develop her voice as an author, while other classroom practices and genres resulted in scripted texts that did not exhibit Lilly's use of different multilingual and rhetorical strategies. Findings discuss the importance of providing opportunities for students to develop agency as writers and the notion that multilingual writing is a dynamic process and should be analyzed from a holistic perspective.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes by considering both the practical and theoretical implications of this research. I explore, specifically, what schools like SIES can do with the findings explicated here and provide recommendations for approaches to multilingual literacy work. In addition, I consider what this study contributes to the larger socio-cultural field of literacy and identity work, and what we (teachers, adults) can learn from inquiries designed and conducted alongside children. I also consider the limitations and future research necessary in this growing area of study.

## **Chapter 2: “Writing It Right”: Authoritative and Internal Discourses of Writing**

**Abstract:** In this chapter, I examine discursive constructions of writers within the language of schooling. Framed by socio-cultural theory and Critical Discourse Studies, I examined how writers were defined at SIES (Spanish Immersion Elementary School) in institutional texts at the state, school, and classroom levels and in turn how students produced definitions of ‘writing’ and what it meant to be a ‘good writer.’ Analyses revealed that institutional language defined writing in two contrasting ways: as a process composed of measurable skills and as meaningful communication for specific purposes and self-expression. Multilingual language practices were not cited in either of the two overarching definitions. Similarly, students were constructing definitions of ‘good writers’ based on criteria they were evaluated on such as spelling correctly and finishing on time. The chapter concludes with considerations of how to address particular ideas about language, literacy, and writing that challenge the goals of multilingual education and children’s emerging literate identities.

### **Introduction**

As introduced earlier, SIES was part of a network of language immersion charter schools in an urban Midwestern city. The school was developed through the hard work of community activists, educators, and families who wanted to offer their children an innovative educational program in an otherwise underserved school district. In their guiding document, the school charter, SIES put forth their mission for children as follows: “The mission of SIES is to position all children for success in local and global economies through holistic, intellectually inspiring language immersion programs” (School charter, p. 4). Further, the school charter also stated that SIES would implement

an intensive two hour per day Reader's/Writer's workshop model in which teachers "help students find good reasons to write" and "students reflect on times in their lives when they have been 'writers' and the goals and direction they have as an 'author'" (School charter, p. 44). These statements are just a few among many which illustrate the school's well-intended mission to not only provide students with equitable language and literacy education but to empower them as writers and creators of social capital. The extent to which SIES was able to carry out their goals for writing instruction was influenced by the national accountability movement and educational policy at the state level, neither of which was intended or designed to serve emerging bilingual students in an immersion school.

I used methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore writing policy documents at the state, school, and classroom levels as well as student interview responses. Research questions included: (a) how are writers defined in institutional language? and (b) how do students' understandings intersect and compare with institutional views? After a brief review of research on bilingual policy discourse and writing policy discourse, I discuss the theoretical frameworks that informed my decision to use critical discourse analysis, followed by an overview of my research methods. Finally, I present key examples of discourse from state, school, and classroom documents followed by examples from students to demonstrate the existence of conflicting definitions of writing across policies and to consider how these definitions might relate to students' development as multilingual writers.

### **Educational Policy and Language Immersion Schools**

One of SIES' primary goals was to help level the educational playing field for students from poor families and immigrant families by offering language enrichment education in an otherwise underserved school district. Much research has pointed to the success of language immersion schools for both minority and majority language students. However, scholars of language education call our attention to a number of challenges that immersion schools face, particularly how the goals of multilingual education in immersion programs are challenged by the power difference between English and the language of instruction (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Dorner & Layton, 2014; Palmer, 2008; Palmer & Snodgrass-Rangel, 2011; Valdés, 1997).

### **Research on Bilingual Policy Discourse**

To begin, studies have found that racial and socioeconomic disparities among students can lead to conflicts in terms of whose academic and linguistic interests are best being met by the school (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). This reflects an early warning from Valdes (1997) who cautioned that placing a powerful group with an oppressed group in the same setting can lead to unfair treatment of the oppressed group. For example, there are often conflicting policy discourses within language immersion schooling that challenge the importance of bilingualism for all students. Dorner and Layton (2014) explored how 'cultural scripts' of *multilingualism* and *accountability* were taken up by stakeholders at LICS (a language immersion charter school). Conversations at public meetings between board members, parents and teachers had shifted from viewing children from Spanish-speaking homes as "knowledgeable and resourceful bilinguals" to a focus on the issue of assessing these students' English language progress

(p. 145). In addition, stakeholders' ideas of good schooling were tied to discourses of accountability and the need to measure and report on *all* students' performance in English on standardized assessments. Little was discussed about documenting students' 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) in their home language.

Meanwhile, other research has documented how mainstream dominant discourses permeate into immersion classrooms as students perpetuate the status difference between languages (Dorner, 2010; Palmer, 2008). For example, in a study of discourse patterns in a second grade two-way immersion program, Palmer (2008) found that students were learning to strongly value English and devalue Spanish. Similarly, Dorner (2010) found that children from immigrant families discussed how their two-way immersion program was helping them to learn English rather than discussing how it was helping them to become bilingual. Dorner (2010) argued that this view is not surprising considering that children were aware of public debates over two-way immersion policy in which English was the politically relevant language and Spanish-dominant students were viewed as "limited-English proficient" (p. 315). Most recently, Cervantes-Soon and colleagues (f2017) provided an extensive review of the inequities that exist in dual language education programs. Their review called for policymakers, educators and researchers to be highly aware of the kinds of inequities that exist and for more research and action that works to address the negative effects of power differences. As of yet, studies of immersion education have not explored the links between writing policies and how they are taken up and understood by children.

### **Discourse on Writing Instruction**



National discourses of education repeatedly discussed a “writing proficiency crisis” among American youth (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 11). Recent results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2011 indicated that students from all backgrounds are struggling with writing. Only 24% of students at both grades 8 and 12 performed at the Proficient level in writing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Fifty-four percent of eighth-graders and 52% of 12th graders performed at the Basic level or partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to write at a proficient level. Finally, only 3% of eighth and 12th graders performed at the Advanced level. Recent Editorials such as “Fixing our National Writing Crisis From the Foundation up” (Graham, 2013) and “The Writing Revolution” (Tyre, 2012) argued that in addition to acquiring proficiency in handwriting, spelling, and grammar, American youth are in need of explicit instruction in how to write for specific audiences and purposes and ample time to receive feedback from their teachers and peers. However, research has found that teachers view a lack of time as one of the most common barriers to providing students with effective writing instruction (Hutchinson & Reinking, 2011; White & Hall, 2014).

In classrooms across the United States, the teaching of writing has been widely conceptualized as a *process* (Boscolo, 2009; Cutler & Graham, 2008). The writing process movement began in the 70s and 80s as an alternative to traditional methods in which teachers had the sole authority over writing instruction. A writing process approach (i.e., Graves, 1983) emphasizes giving greater authority to students over their own work. For example, a process approach suggests that students should have time to think and draft their pieces, select their own topics to write about, receive feedback and guidance from teachers, revise their work, and make decisions about their writing

(Boscolo, 2009). However, critics argued that over the years, educational institutions and teachers have regularized the writing process approach by prescribing a rigid set of steps to follow in a particular order or focusing only on a particular genre such as narrative (Graves, Tuyay & Green, 2004). These and other “orthodoxies” which developed around writing education go against the reality that writers rarely follow such a linear pathway in developing their pieces (Graves et al., 2004, p. 90).

Graves (1983), and other founding educators of the writing process approach found that the term *writing process* may be problematic, wrongly suggesting that “there must be very identifiable steps from first conception to end result” (p. 90). Instead they suggested simply using the term *writing*, which may be interpreted with more flexibility. Scholars of writing education argued that teaching writing should involve much more than rigidly applying a method or process approach. Rather reading and writing instruction go hand in hand with all of the academic subjects. As such, teachers must guide students in reading different text types and model specific strategies and ways of using language to write within particular genres (Bazerman, 2004). Further, good writing instruction involves teachers engaging in writing themselves and responding to students’ interests as well as providing ample time for reflection and guidance (Atwell, 1998; Graves, 1983; Newkirk, 1997). Despite the critique of the writing process approach, it remains the guiding standard nationwide for teachers and students in elementary school classrooms (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006).

### **Theories of Discourse**

While this work begins to analyze the general discourses existing around language immersion education, few studies focus on writing and literacy policies in

particular. Integrated with childhood perspectives reviewed in Chapter 1, Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) offer both theories and methods for examining and explaining these links between language use, ideological struggles, and power relationships (Fairclough, 2001; Martin & White, 2005; Rogers, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2008), from children's perspectives. Fairclough (2001) argued that language is embedded with "common-sense assumptions" or ideologies that work to legitimize and perpetuate existing power relationships in modern society (p. 63). In his explanation, some discourses hold more power than others and those that are dominant tend to become naturalized or viewed as common sense. Similarly, Bakhtin (1986) conceptualized language and power relationships as being either "authoritative discourses" (i.e. the language of adults, academic disciplines, and political institutions) or "internally persuasive discourses" (i.e. the languages, texts and ideas valued by the less powerful individual or group)—attitudes and interpretations of authoritative voices (p. 342). I drew from Fairclough's and Bakhtin's concepts to identify and describe the ideas and values about writing defined in dominant discourses and how these definitions compared with children beliefs about writing.

### **Methods**

Data was collected during students' second and third grade years. Specifically, I examined institutional documents collected at SIES and interviews from two case study students, Lilly and Francisco. Thirteen documents comprising 24 pages of data formed the corpus of institutional texts analyzed. These texts originated from different institutional levels providing a lens into how state level policies were being translated into local school and classroom practices (i.e. state grade-level expectations and writing

assessments, school curriculum, and classroom writing guidelines and rubrics). These particular texts were included in the sample because they were instrumental for SIES teachers in planning, developing, and guiding writing instruction. Further, the selected texts represent beliefs, values, and perspectives on writing and learning at the state, school, and classroom institutional levels. Table 2 lists the documents analyzed at each institutional level.

Table 2.

*Documents Analyzed at Each Institutional Level*

State	School	Classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 2- expectations for writing</li> <li>• Grade 3- expectations for writing</li> <li>• Grade 3- State assessment released writing prompts</li> <li>• Grade 3- State assessment scoring rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIES' school charter</li> <li>• SIES' internal English literacy test- Grade 2 Reference guide</li> <li>• Inquiry curriculum guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 2 ELA- writing center guidelines</li> <li>• Grade 2 ELA- writing rubric</li> <li>• Grade 3 ELA- writing center guidelines</li> <li>• Grade 3 ELA- writing rubric</li> <li>• Grade 3 Spanish- writing center guidelines</li> <li>• Grade 3 Spanish- writing rubric</li> </ul>

To examine student perspectives, I analyzed interview transcripts from two case study participants: Lilly and Francisco. I chose to analyze Lilly and Francisco's first interviews as a sub-set from my case study data. Lilly and Francisco were in different classes at the time of the interviews whereas my other two participants were in the same class with Francisco. Thus, Lilly and Francisco could offer perspectives on writing from

two different classroom contexts. In this chapter, I provide excerpts from students' first interviews, which illustrate their thoughts on writing at school and what it meant to be a good writer.

Analyses focused on 13 institutional texts (24 pages) and 20 pages of transcripts developed from student interviews. In the following sections, I first provide a description of the procedures used for analyzing institutional texts and then describe how I prepared and analyzed student interview transcripts.

### **Document Analysis**

As I collected documents, I created summaries (Rogers, 2003) (see Appendix V) for each item collected. The summaries included when the document was collected, where/how it was collected, the significance of each document, and prevalent themes or issues that arose from the document. For institutional documents, I created document transcripts, segmenting transcripts by Stanzas or groups of complete statements unified by the same topic (Gee, 2011). To examine how *writers* were discursively constructed in institutional texts, I drew from Gee's (2011) theoretical building tasks of CDA, and developed the following analytical questions: (1) How are lexico-grammatical choices being used to privilege or de-privilege particular sign systems, languages (Spanish/English/Multilingualism) and ways of knowing and believing? (2) How do the texts describe/define good writers? and (3) What kinds of identities are privileged/left out?

In the next phase of document analysis, I drew from Fairclough (1995, 2011) looking at aspects of genre, discourse, and style. First, genre is defined as "ways of interacting" or the framework for understanding and producing discourse in a particular

social activity (Fairclough, 1995). In this category, I analyzed the thematic structure of each document and identified recurring ideas and the frequency in which key vocabulary was mentioned (repetition). Next, I looked at the coherence of each text, interpreting how words and phrases (i.e. words that signal emphasis, contrast, alternative views, generalizing, consequence, etc.) were linked together and how these linguistic cues were linked to common-sense assumptions about education, writing, and learning.

Second, discourse is defined as “ways of representing” or how information is presented and produced and from what perspective. For each document, I asked, who were the authors? Who was the intended audience? What is the intended message of the text? How does it relate to other institutional texts and discourses of writing schooling (intertextuality)? What values and ideas are privileged or left out?

Finally, style is defined as “ways of being” or how language is used to construct social identities and relationships and systems of knowledge and belief. I inspected noun phrases paying careful attention to how subjects were named. I looked at how verbs were used to communicate particular processes in relation to the participants of the texts (i.e. verbs that focus on actions and doing, *compose, revise, reread, edit, share* vs. verbs that focus on higher levels of learning processes, *show understanding, know, make critical judgments, use imagery, analyze*) and throughout data analysis, I also referred back to my field notes and journal entries and shared my findings with a multicultural and multilingual group of scholars who conducted educational research at SIES and in other settings.

### **Student Interviews**

Analyses of student interviews began with transcribing the audio-recorded sessions using conventions adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1999) (see Appendix B for transcription conventions). Our interview conversations took place primarily in English and included some Turkish and Spanish dialogue. Thus, dialogue was transcribed in the languages participants used including English, Spanish, and Turkish; English translations are provided in brackets when applicable.

I analyzed the data through repeated readings of the transcripts in which I looked for patterns of discourse (Gee, 2011; Rogers & Wetzel, 2013) that reflected children's ideas about writers and writing. I segmented transcripts by Stanzas or groups of complete statements unified by the same topic (Gee, 2011). I analyzed transcripts looking for moments when students' views of writing re-voiced, resisted, or transformed definitions of writers present in authoritative discourses. Fairclough's (1995, 2001) theoretical categories of genre, discourse, and style and Martin and White's (2005) work on appraisals offered resources for identifying and interpreting the subjective lexicogrammatical features associated with attitude, judgment, appreciation, and the way language users position themselves and others in their written and spoken texts. Transcripts were coded for students' (1) ideas and understandings about writing (i.e. writing process/writing for purposeful communication), (2) evaluations, opinions, and judgments about writing (i.e. What makes a good writer? What makes a good text?), and (3) their emotions and feelings about writing (positive/negative; anxious/confident). Drawing from these analytical lenses, I looked for moments when children expressed their emotions, ideas, and opinions on writing at school and considered whether or not

their responses connected to the belief systems that were present within institutional language.

### **Findings: Multilingual Communication or Monolingual Skills?**

One of the most noticeable findings was that, across institutional texts multilingualism or multilingual writing practices were not referred to in descriptions of competent/proficient writers and writing. Within authoritative discourses of writing there was a tension between the need to develop and measure students' basic literacy skills in Spanish and English and the school's vision for constructivist literacy instruction. Interestingly, Lilly and Francisco's responses revealed that they were beginning to take up the notion that literacy is a set of discrete skills. They evaluated writing based on features such as correct spelling/grammar, neatness, and finishing quickly. Further, both students expressed strong emotions including happiness, pride, and anxiety regarding writing assessments and academic writing.

In the following two sections, I provide examples from institutional documents and student interview responses. The first section examines the ideologies that existed within SIES' institutional discourses of writing through three different excerpts. Excerpt one highlights the state's view of writing as a process that can be taught and learned in an efficient and sequential manner. The second excerpt comes from the school's inquiry curriculum guide, illustrating the school's social-constructivist philosophy toward language. Finally, the third excerpt comes from the teacher-created writing guidelines posted in each third grade Spanish classroom and shows an example of how teachers interpreted state requirements and school curricular guidelines into practice.



The second section discusses students' developing notions of writing and biliteracy particularly for academic purposes. Excerpt four presents Lilly's thoughts on writing in English for the state test. Excerpts five and six present Lilly and Francisco's perspectives on writing in their Spanish classrooms. Finally, excerpts seven and eight illustrate the students' feelings about writing and their opinions about what makes someone a good writer.

### **Authoritative Discourses**

Similar to previous studies of immersion and bilingual programs (Dorner & Layton, 2013; Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014; Palmer & Snodgrass-Rangel, 2011), analyses revealed that SIES' vision for bilingual education was being challenged by the pressure to meet state assessment requirements in English. Within institutional texts, two prominent belief systems about writing existed. First, the notion that writing was a process, a set of steps that could be taught using formulaic structures, and second, the notion that writing was a purposeful means of communication and expression of one's voice. Table 3 (see Appendix H.) summarizes findings from document analysis

**State documents.** Excerpt one below came from the state grade-level expectations for communication arts comprised of 22 total pages (five pages devoted specifically to writing). With the exception of the 40-minute English Language Arts block, teachers at SIES provided all literacy instruction in Spanish, the target language. However, state texts provided no guidance for bilingual literacy instruction. Thus, teachers were adapting state-level texts to a unique context. Teachers used the grade-level expectations as a guide in planning and carrying out language arts instruction

whereas the school's inquiry-based curriculum provided a framework for teaching the criteria listed in the grade-level expectations.

The grade-level expectations were written from a position that assumed authority and expertise over teachers. The authors of the text are unnamed but described as *Educators* and the readers of the text are primarily elementary school teachers. The writing process approach was a prominent and unifying idea across state documents (grade-level expectations, third grade writing assessment, writing assessment rubric, and scoring guide). According to the documents, the writing process involved following a step-by-step approach beginning with pre-writing or brainstorming, followed by composing a draft, editing, and then final revision.

**Excerpt 1: State Grade-level expectations, Grade 2**

**Stanza 1. Communication Arts Grade Level Expectations**

- 1 The Communication Arts Grade Level Expectations document is an updated version of the March, 2004 K-12 Communication Arts Grade Level Expectations.
- 2 Educators from across the state, representing education from the primary grades through the college level, met numerous times to carefully examine the current Grade Level Expectations and make suggestions to update that document.
- 3 This is the result of their discussion and study.
- 4 Please note:
- 5 In several instances, the difference is a change in location, rather than a change in the GLE itself.
- 6 All Communication Arts content may be assessed at the grade level where it appears.
- 7 Teachers are responsible for content up to—and including—that which appears at the grade level they teach.
- 8 This document represents a continuum of instruction, so teachers must be familiar with GLEs leading up to their grade level so that they may scaffold instruction for

students missing requisite skills.

9 The GLE Update and Review Committees addressed only Reading and Writing.

10 An asterisk (\*) is used to indicate GLEs that are locally assessed.

### **Stanza 2. Apply a writing process in composing text**

11 Writing process

12 Follow a writing process to

13 use a simple strategy in prewriting when appropriate

14 compose a draft in written form on student-selected topic

15 reread and revise for audience and purpose, ideas and content, organization and sentence structure, and word choice, with assistance (refer to W2A, W2B, W2C, W2D)

16 edit for conventions (refer to W2E) with assistance

17 share writing

### **Stanza 3. Compose well-developed text**

18 Audience and purpose

19 Compose text showing awareness of audience

20 Ideas and Content

21 Compose text with

22 a clear controlling idea

23 relevant details/examples, with assistance

24 Organization and Sentence Structure

25 Compose text with

26 evidence of beginning, middle and end

27 complete sentences or thoughts (declarative and interrogative)

28 Word Choice

29 Compose text using words that are related to the topic, and some words that are specific and accurate

30 Conventions

31 In written text

32 space correctly between letters and words

33 capitalize days of week, names of towns, cities, states

- 34 use correct ending punctuation in declarative and interrogative sentences, comma in dates, and comma in the greeting and closing of a letter
- 35 correctly use describing words (adjectives) and substitute pronouns for nouns
- 36 spell words with simple patterns and high-frequency words correctly
- 37 use transitional spelling, classroom resources, especially dictionary, and spelling strategies
- 38 write legibly

#### **Stanza 4. Write effectively in various forms and types of writing**

- 1 Forms/Types/Modes of Writing
- 2 Compose
- 3 narrative, descriptive, expository and/or persuasive texts, using appropriate text features  
thank-you notes, friendly letters, lists poems, invitations

The first Stanza offers important information to the reader and contains a number of “common-sense assumptions” about teaching and learning. For example, looking at coherence (how lexical items are linked within the text and how the text connects to ‘the world’) the author(s) have chosen words that are both ambiguous and descriptive. Word choice works to legitimize the authenticity and authority of the text without offering specific details. The italicized and underlined words and phrases in Lines 2 and 3 have been carefully structured to persuade the audience of the validity of the document.

- 2 *Educators from across the state, representing education from the primary grades through the college level, met numerous times to carefully examine the current Grade Level Expectations and make suggestions to update that document.*
- 3 This is the result of *their discussion and study*.

This document was written as an authoritative text. It informs teachers that the grade-level expectations were the result of careful thought, discussion, and study by a group of educators who made the appropriate decisions. First, *Educators* lets us know that more than one person was involved in the creation of the document. Next, *across the state* informs us that those responsible may have been from different backgrounds, perhaps people familiar with urban, suburban, and rural populations. Then, *primary grades through the college level*, informs us that in addition to representing different geographic locations, the educators writing this document came from different experiential backgrounds. Finally, Lines 2 and 3 describe the effort and attention that went into creating the document with the phrases: *numerous times, to carefully examine, make suggestions, discussion, and study*. Although the phrases in Lines 2 and 3 seem descriptive enough they also leave out specific information. We do not know if *Educators* means Language Arts teachers, principals, or researchers or whether it means 5 people, 10 or 20. We do not know if *from across the state* includes educators from different racial and linguistic backgrounds. The aim of the description is to assure teachers that the standards have been decided upon by the right group of people.

The writing expectations for second grade were divided into three main sections: (1) Apply a writing process in composing text, (2) Compose well-developed text, (3) Write effectively in various forms and types of writing. Looking at the ordering of each section in the text, we may consider that ideas are listed in the order of importance. The first idea listed is: follow a writing process in composing text. In Stanza 2, we see a list of actions to be followed. Lines 13-17 list the main steps as (1) prewriting, (2) compose a draft, (3) reread and revise for (a) audience and purpose, (b) ideas and content, (c)

organization and sentence structure, (d) word choice, (4) edit for conventions, and finally (5) share writing. Stanza 2 presents the writing process approach as the main framework for writing instruction. Next, Stanza 3 provides more detail about the criteria needed to compose well developed text while Stanza 4 mentions the various genres that students should write effectively in.

Examining *textual silences*, or “the omission of information that is pertinent to the topic at hand” (Huckin, 2002, p. 348) can offer meaningful insights into the messages and ideas within a given text. In this case, the grade-level expectations include what Huckin (2002) referred to as *presuppositional silences* or omissions that “serve communicative efficiency by not stating what the speaker/writer apparently assumes to be common knowledge” (p. 348). A noticeable omission is that other than Stanza 2 line 14, students or learners are not mentioned in Stanzas 2-4. The expectations are written using subject-less imperative sentences that in effect omit the agents/students who would carry out the writing actions. Leaving out the mention of students as writers makes the text less personal and more so like a checklist of teachable items. This document is meant to guide teachers on the essential writing concepts that students should learn. However, by distancing students/learners from the criteria, it may limit the reader’s view of what should be involved in the successful teaching and learning of writing.

Another example of *presuppositional silence* can be found in Stanzas 2 and 3 of the text. Stanza 2 gives a brief outline of the steps in the writing process while Stanza 3 serves to expand on the steps listed in lines 18-29. However, even in the expanded description of aspects such as *audience and purpose*, there is only one line stating that students should compose text showing audience awareness. The text does not describe

the concepts behind audience awareness. For example, how does one create a sense of audience awareness in their text? Which kinds of texts are written for which kinds of audiences? Learners should be very familiar with different text types and genres in order to craft a piece of writing for specific audiences and purposes. Yet this idea is not mentioned in connection with students demonstrating the ability to write with audience awareness. Another silence can be seen in line 29 in the description of *word choice*; compose text using *words* that are *related to the topic* and some *words* that are *specific* and *accurate*. This section is also vague and does not mention specific ideas behind why writers choose particular words such as sensory words to create imagery, or how word choices could be used to evoke social, cultural, or linguistic contexts. I argue that the structure of this text and the omission of pertinent information may limit the way it is interpreted by readers. This is a very important document that teachers must use in carrying out writing instruction, thus by not saying more about particular aspects of writing, the readers may focus on what *is* emphasized and in this case the most wording and detail is afforded to the section on *conventions* (Stanza 3, lines 31-38) which includes capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

State texts, such as the grade-level expectations above, communicated that the ‘good writer’ should exhibit particular composition skills such as “staying on the topic” of given prompts, using “clear controlling ideas” providing “relevant details and examples” to support their ideas and using “correct spelling and mechanics.” Looking across state documents for words, phrases, and ideas that appeared repeatedly, two prominent themes emerged: (1) the notion that writing is a process that can and should be followed in a formulaic manner, and (2) that good writing includes particular key

elements. Overall, the language used in state documentation for second and third grade writing instruction privileged a regularized interpretation of the writing process as a set of steps that could be broken down and taught as skills. The document did not use language that positioned teachers or students for developing a conceptual understanding of written language and its purposes. In the next section, I examine school documents that also supported the writing process framework but within the context of two conflicting motivations: the goal to develop students as inquisitive communicators and the goal to measure and assess their abilities as discrete skills.

**School documents.** School-level texts included the SIES charter, the school's inquiry curriculum guide, and a reference guide from the school's internal English test. Within the school charter, three sections referred to literacy education: (1) a brief description and rationale for using the Reader's/Writer's Workshop curriculum; (2) a plan for "ending word poverty" among lower and middle-income students; (3) and a section describing how English language learners would be supported. The school charter served as a guiding document outlining SIES' ultimate goals for stakeholders, including board members, parents and teachers. The school charter also discussed the numerous ways students would be assessed which included internal literacy and mathematics tests in English.

SIES conducted internal testing using English assessments designed by a well-known assessment company. They purchased user accounts to access the tests through computers at the school. Students took the tests three times per year and their results were reported to parents, administrators, and the school board. While I was an ELA teacher, the school's curriculum coordinator provided me with the test reference guide to



help prepare students for their assessments. Knowing that the acquisition of academic literacy in two or more languages is a long and complex process that is unique for each learner, I worried that we did not have enough time to prepare students who were just starting their first English literacy class. I also felt a great deal of pressure to help students do well on the English test as the results were used by families to evaluate the performance of the school and teachers.

The school's inquiry curriculum was designed by a well-known educational organization (the name is not provided as to preserve anonymity of the school). Being a relatively new school at the time of the study, teachers were still training and attending professional development workshops in order to implement the inquiry curriculum framework. In an introductory two-day training session, workshop leaders went through the inquiry curriculum guide with teachers and then grade-level teachers met with each other to design a unit of inquiry for the up-coming semester. The inquiry curriculum guide (ICG) consisted of 138 total pages, devoted 14 pages to a section titled *Beliefs and values in language*.

The *Beliefs and values in language* section of the ICG presented a socio-constructivist philosophy toward language learning and teaching. Paying attention to the lexico-grammatical categories that represent interpersonal communication or style in Fairclough's (1995) terms and attitude, judgment and appreciation in Martin and White's (2005) analytical framework, a pattern emerged in which the author(s) clearly awarded appreciation and aesthetic value to their philosophy towards the teaching and learning of written language while critiquing and evaluating the alternative discrete skills approach.

The ICG stated that children learn language through meaningful social interactions that build on their prior knowledge and experience. In addition, the curriculum framework supported bilingualism for schools that chose to offer foreign languages. The document included seven sub-sections: (1) Good language practice; (2) The role of language in the program of inquiry; (3) How language practices are changing; (4) Knowledge and skills in language; (5) Language strands; (6) Key concepts: What do we want students to understand about language?; and (7) Overall expectations in language. The *Beliefs and values in language* section of the ICG defined important aspects of writing in great detail using affective language that painted a picture of writing as much more than a means to produce an effective essay. The format of the text describes what learners know and can do at different developmental phases of learning. Excerpt two comes from Section 7 of the school's curriculum guide: Overall expectations in language.

### **Excerpt 2: School curriculum guide**

#### **Stanza 1. Developmental continuums: Written language—writing**

- 1 Phase 1. Learners show an understanding that writing is a form of expression to be enjoyed.
- 2 They know that how you write and what you write conveys meaning; that writing is a purposeful act, with both individual and collaborative aspects.
- 3 Phase 2. Learners show an understanding that writing is a means of recording, remembering and communicating.

- 4 They know that writing involves the use of codes and symbols to convey meaning to others; that writing and reading uses the same codes and symbols.
- 5 They know that writing can describe the factual or the imagined world.
- 6 Phase 3. Learners show an understanding that writing can be structured in different ways to express different purposes.
- 7 They use imagery in their stories to enhance the meaning and to make it more enjoyable to write and read.
- 8 They understand that writing can produce a variety of responses from readers.
- 9 They can tell a story and create characters in their writing.
- 10 Phase 4. Learners show an understanding of the role of the author and are able to take on the responsibilities of authorship.
- 11 They demonstrate an understanding of story structure and are able to make critical judgments about their writing, and the writing of others.
- 12 They are able to rewrite to improve the quality of their writing.
- 13 Phase 5. Learners show an understanding of the conventions pertaining to writing, in its different forms, that are widely accepted.
- 14 In addition, they demonstrate a high level of integration of the strands of language in order to create meaning in a manner that suits their learning styles.
- 15 They can analyze the writing of others and identify common or recurring themes or issues.

16 They can accept feedback from others.

Grammatical choices offer insight into how writers are discursively constructed in the text. The first sentence of each phase begins with the subject *learners*. Unlike the previous excerpt of grade-level expectations, this text referred to *learners* the actors/agents who will develop knowledge and understanding about written language. For example: *learners* show an understanding that writing is a form of expression to be enjoyed; *learners* show an understanding that writing is a means of recording, remembering and communicating; *they* use imagery, tell a story, make judgments, and analyze texts.

In excerpt two, good writers/learners were described in the following ways: as creative thinkers (lines 7 and 9), storytellers (line 9), authors (line 10), editors (lines 11 and 12), analytical thinkers (lines 11, 14, 15), and communicators able to give and receive feedback (lines 11, 15 and 16). In contrast to the grade-level expectations, the above text presents a more varied perspective of what it means to be a good writer. For example, the text above used cognitive verbs describing depths of knowledge related to writing that students should acquire and demonstrate such as *know*, *understand*, *analyze*, *identify*, and *create* whereas the grade-level expectations used verbs that describe actions in the writing process such as *write*, *follow*, *reread*, *revise*, and *edit*. CDA calls for a careful consideration of word choice in terms of interpreting the values and ideas represented in texts. The language used in the ICG tells us that being a successful writer involves different levels of knowledge from remembering to creating.

SIES' inquiry curriculum guide proposed that in addition to having good command of composition skills and mechanics, strong writers should have a

metacognitive understanding of writing, as well as know how to use writing for achieving different goals and purposes both individually and collaboratively. The document did mention bilingual education; however, there were no specific references to biliteracy or instructional methods for teaching multilingual writers, a point that will be addressed in the discussion that follows.

Across school documents, two contrasting themes emerged. The notion that writing was communicating for a meaningful purpose and self-expression and the notion that writing was a set of measurable skills. The school's inquiry curriculum framework presented a socio-constructivist philosophy toward literacy education that included a detailed description of the knowledge and behaviors that good writers should acquire. The school charter argued for the importance of encouraging children to "reflect on times in their lives when they have been 'writers' and the goals and direction they have as an author" (SIES charter, p. 44). The charter also proposed to devote two hours of class time each day to reader's and writer's workshop instruction in the target language (Spanish). At the same time, the charter proposed a myriad of internal assessments in Spanish literacy and English Language Arts and mathematics. The internal assessment reference guide focused on discrete skills such as proofreading, grammar and punctuation. In summary, school documents including the SIES charter, inquiry curriculum guide, and internal reference guide revealed a tension between providing students with meaningful literacy experiences and measuring their literacy skills.

**Classroom documents.** The final examples representing institutional documents come from the teacher-created writing guidelines displayed in the second grade English and third grade Spanish writing centers. First, I present the guidelines from second grade

English Language Arts and follow with an analysis of the third grade Spanish writing guidelines.

### **Excerpt 3. Second grade ELA writing guidelines**

#### **Stanza 1. What do authors do?**

- 1 Think of an idea using a favorite book or memorable experience as inspiration. Talk about it with another writer before you write.
- 2 Write your idea down and add details.
- 3 Read your draft to another writer. Does he or she have suggestions to make it better?
- 4 Keep writing. Add pictures.
- 5 Check the writing for mistakes. Compose a final copy.
- 6 Share your finished piece with family members and friends.
- 7 Start planning your next piece.

The writing guidelines above were located on a large poster that I brought with me to each class and placed at the front of the room. As the ELA teacher, I introduced students to the writer's workshop framework by reading a book titled *What Do Authors Do?* by Christelow (1995). Using the book as inspiration, I titled our class writing guidelines, *What do authors do?* and used the steps mentioned in the book for each guideline. The book and our guidelines conceptualized writing as a process with identifiable steps. However, this particular document positioned students as authors, writers, and members of a writing community. For example, in line 1, students are invited to think of their own idea for writing based on a 'memorable experience' and share their idea with a peer before writing. Sharing writing with others is mentioned

three times throughout the text while editing mechanics is mentioned only in line 5. The text also encourages students to use pictures in their written work as this allows another means of expression. Although these guidelines break writing down into identifiable steps, it positions students as authors who frequently share their ideas with other authors and write for meaningful purposes.

As the second grade ELA teacher, I felt a strong tension between teaching language arts through the inquiry curriculum theme, creating a writer's workshop environment where students could select their own topics to write about and preparing students for the internal test in English Language Arts. Most of our writing instruction was guided by the inquiry curriculum theme, thus students were not selecting their own topics to write about but rather completing assignments that related to our unit of inquiry such as respecting ourselves and the world around us and the natural world provides clues to the past. Also, the curriculum director at SIES suggested that I use the internal reference guide to complete a practice test question each day with students. This involved students copying the question from the board in their notebooks and then choosing the correct multiple-choice answer. Our class lasted 40 minutes and the question of the day was taking up nearly 20 minutes of our time. While some students quickly copied the question and responded, others took much longer to finish. I found this to be a tedious task that was not enriching students understanding of writing but simply familiarizing them with the test questions and giving them some transcription practice. During literacy centers, which we had once a week, students had opportunities to choose from the reading center, the writing center, or the poetry center. Students who

chose the writing and poetry center were encouraged to select their own topics to write about and share their writing with others.

Reflecting back on our writing activities, I would have liked to spend more time on developing students' experiences with reading and writing in different genres and thoroughly delved into the writer's workshop approach. However, I was overwhelmed by several factors including creating teaching materials from scratch that aligned with the state content and inquiry curriculum framework, acquiring children's books local libraries, and being new to elementary school teaching, new to language immersion teaching, and new to the inquiry curriculum framework. In conversations with the other second grade teachers, I found that they too would have liked to spend more time on writing but were mainly focused on teaching the content required by the state through the inquiry framework.

In the following year, the third grade Spanish teachers continued to focus on teaching the state content through the inquiry framework. Writing instruction revolved around essays or publicaciones regarding each unit of study. Teachers provided questions or writing prompts related to the unit of study and students responded using the five-paragraph essay format. The next excerpt presents the third grade Spanish writing center guidelines posted on the walls. These texts outlined the writing process (proceso de escritura) as well as the sections of an essay (publicación) and what each section should include. The three third-grade Spanish teachers coordinated their instructional activities and all used the same language in their guidelines. An analysis of the Spanish writing guidelines offers an example of how teachers created classroom writing policies.



Stanza 1 describes the writing process while Stanzas 2 and 3 describe how to write a “publicación.”

#### **Excerpt 4. Spanish classroom writing process guidelines**

##### **Stanza 1. Proceso de escritura [The writing process]**

- 1 Pre-escritura-tiempo para pensar [Pre-writing- time for thinking]
- 2 El Borrador-tiempo para escribir y descubrir [The eraser-time for writing and discovering/finding]
- 3 La Revisión-tiempo para mejorar [Revisión- time for improving]
- 4 La Corrección-corregir la mecánica de mi escritura [ Correction- correct the mechanics of my writing]
- 5 Publicación- tiempo para compartir mi escritura [Publication-time for sharing my writing]

##### **Stanza 2. Introducción [Introduction]**

- 6 Poner dos o tres frases que contestan las preguntas [Write two or three sentences that answer the questions]
- 7 Las frases son muy general [The phrases are very general]

##### **Stanza 3. Desarrollo [Development/Body]**

- 8 Dar ejemplos que específicamente contestan las preguntas [Give specific examples that answer the questions]
- 9 Explicar más las frases de la introducción [Explain the statements from the introduction in more detail]

##### **Stanza 4. Conclusión [Conclusion]**

- 10 El resumen, el sumario [The summary]

## 11 Cerrar el documento [Closing]

The Spanish classroom guidelines describe writing as a process that should be carried out in sequential steps. Paying attention to the words teachers chose, *editing* and *revision* were central ideas in this document. The guidelines outlined three different time periods in which students engaged in editing/correction/revision. First, in line 2, El Borrador offers time for students to *write*, *erase*, and *re-write*. As explained by the third grade Spanish teachers, El Borrador was time allotted for trying out ideas after students had given some initial thought to what they would write. Next, in line 3, La Revisión offers students time to *re-write* and *improve* their first drafts. Finally, in line 4, La Corrección, offers students time to *correct* spelling, grammar, and mechanics. This text also invited students to take ownership of their writing. In Stanza 1, lines 5 and 6 refer to *mi escritura*.

Stanzas 2-4 detail the specific parts students needed to have in their publications: an introduction, body, and conclusion. Along with the writing process, the traditional essay format depicted in this text is a familiar script in academic literacy. The writing guidelines served as a visual aid and scaffold for students, reminding them of what good writing should include. The criteria listed in the posters drew more so from the grade-level expectations than from ideas about writing presented in the school's inquiry curriculum framework and writer's workshop proposal in the charter. Teachers seemed compelled to devote the classroom writing guidelines to one particular genre, the academic essay. In sum, the writing guidelines discursively positioned academic essay writing as centrally important, whereas other genres were not given the same status. Further, good writers were positioned as those who were able to demonstrate correct use

of the forms and structures typical of the essay genre. In the next section, we see how students interpreted authoritative discourses and were internalizing particular ideas and values about writing for academic purposes.

### **Multilingual Youth Talk About “Writing it right”**

Now, let us turn to perspectives on writing from two SIES students: Lilly and Francisco. These particular excerpts have been selected because they provide generative insights into the students’ understandings of writing in their Spanish and English classes. From the excerpts provided, we can see that both Francisco and Lilly conceptualized writing based on surface-level features such as finishing the assignment on time, correct spelling and neat handwriting. Table 4 below provides a summary of findings from student interviews.

Table 4.

#### *Summary of Findings From Student Interviews*

Theories of Writing	Examples from Transcripts	
Focus on steps in the process and correct form rather than meaningful communication and purposes for writing	Lilly We start from our eraser paper, we do our idea, then we write it on a paper, our teacher <i>has to</i> correct it... We <i>can't</i> erase so it be perfect...	Francisco Go again read it, if it gots like the wrong I erase and put it correct.
Quality of writing based on criteria such as correct spelling, finishing on time, staying on the topic	If we don't finish, When we finish, If you finish, Some people finish earlier...	Write right, you write right and check if you got it correct.

As mentioned earlier, Lilly was in third grade when I interviewed her. Excerpt four illustrates Lilly's understandings of the publication process in her Spanish class. In the example, Lilly emphasized a number of writing behaviors: 'finishing on time' and writing 'correct' and she talked about the 'police center' a nick-name she and perhaps other students gave to the classroom time and space in which they worked on correcting and editing papers. In Stanza 1, when asked about the different places she writes, Lilly wrote the phrase 'estoy escribiendo en mi clase.' While writing, she sounded out her words in Spanish and English. Then she read her completed phrase aloud in Spanish, following instinctively with the English translation. She demonstrated complex thinking and fluid translation skills while relating her multilingual writing experiences.

#### **Lilly, Excerpt 4. Writing in Spanish class**

##### **Stanza 1. Estoy escribiendo en mi clase!**

- 1 Angela: So where are some of the different places you write?
- 2 Lilly: (*Writing and drawing her idea map*) Estoy, escri, ca, ca, cri...
- 3 I-am-wri-ting-in-my-cla-ss, c-l-a-s-s.
- 4 I'm writing in my class,
- 5 estoy escribiendo en mi clase,
- 6 I'm writing in my class!
- 7 Angela: Mmhmm, good!
- 8 So you write in your Spanish class and do publications?

##### **Stanza 2. Publications**

- 9 Lilly: Yeah we do publications.
- 10 Angela: So how does that work,

- 11 how do you do publications?  
12 Lilly: Umm so when we do a publication we um, we...  
13 Angela: Like how do you start?  
14 Lilly: Like sometimes we start it from our eraser paper.  
15 Um we do our idea,  
16 then we write it on a paper  
17 that, it's not a publication, but we write it on the paper  
18 and our teacher has to correct it.  
19 Then when she corrects it all  
20 and we have to write it on a publication  
21 and we can't erase so it be perfect.

**Stanza 3. Class books**

- 22 Lilly: And we write about things because my teacher she sometimes puts  
all the students in my class publications and my publications in a book.  
23 Every publication that a kid does, she...  
24 like about recycling,  
25 she puts the papers, that we write about recycling together and then make  
a book  
26 and then when we write about something else  
27 she takes everyone's publication, that we write about that thing,  
28 she makes IT into a book.  
29 Angela: That's really neat!

30 So you guys have books with everybody's publications about the same  
topic?

31 Lilly: And it has the names on it so you can know.

32 Angela: And it's in español, wow!

33 So how many publications you think you have done this year?

34 Lilly: Like probably fifteen.

35 Angela: About fifteen, wow!

36 Lilly: And my hands got tired!

#### **Stanza 4. Getting ideas**

37 Angela: And how do you get your ideas to do your publications?

38 where do you...

39 Lilly: Like if we don't finish it, we get two days,

40 if we don't finish it, we get like a homework,

41 first, we do our school work,

42 then we do our homework,

43 then when we finish, we have to bring it back tomorrow,

44 I mean the next day

45 and then if you finish, she takes your publication and make all of our  
publications and put it into a book.

46 But if you don't,

47 like one student don't bring the publication,

48 then she won't make the book until all of us have the publication,

49 cause if we read the book and then we're not in there we might get sad,

50 “How come we’re not in there” and think the wrong thing.

**Stanza 5. Ideas for writing**

51 Angela: Hmm, and how do you get your idea for the topic?

52 Everybody writes about the same topic?

53 Lilly: Mmmm (No) Different.

54 We have to write about what we think about it

55 and what should we do when people throw trash

56 and some people write about they should clean it up.

57 Angela: And if it’s all about recycling,

58 so everybody writes about recycling but they have different stories.

59 Lilly: Yeah.

**Stanza 6. The police center**

60 And each time we go into a center,

61 like in center,

62 like it’s like a center that’s called...

63 Angela: The writing center?

64 Lilly: Yeah the writing center and the police center,

65 it’s not the police, police center it’s just called like that.

66 Um it’s the police center and the writing center.

67 In the police center you have to do your eraser

68 and when you’re done with your eraser,

69 you could, be done right away when you go to the police center

70 but some people they’re just on their first part so they, so they,

- 71 when they're done with their eraser and it's time to clean up and go to the  
different center,
- 72 people like publication there and they finish
- 73 so some people finish earlier.

Looking at Lilly's ideas and understandings about writing, we can see that she has memorized the steps in the writing process as she outlines them in Stanza 2. She explains 'we start it from our eraser paper (pre-writing), 'we do our idea' (drafting), 'our teacher has to correct it' (editing), 'then when she corrects it all and we have to write it on a publication' (final draft). In line 8, Lilly provides an evaluative statement, 'we can't erase so it be perfect' emphasizing the importance of copying the essay with the correct spelling and grammar onto the final publication paper. In Stanza 3, Lilly talked about writing correctly in terms of being evaluated by others. Students' finalized publications were compiled into a class book which was shared with students, parents, researchers (like myself), and administrators. In line 31, Lilly said, "it has the names on it so you can know" referring to the public being able to see who wrote each essay. Thus, having a correct final essay was important as it presented students' work to the public.

When asked how she got her ideas for writing in Stanza 4, Lilly went on to talk about the publication process, and the need to finish on time so that your essay could be published in the class book. In Stanza 5, I asked Lilly again about how she got her ideas for writing. She explained that students needed to develop their own ideas in response to a teacher directed prompt such as, what should people do when disposing of trash? Then in Stanza 6, Lilly emphasized writing efficiently and correctly as important writing behaviors. In lines 65-66, she described the writing center as, "not the police, police-



center it's just called like that...it's the police center and the writing center." Lilly and perhaps some of her other classmates playfully resisted what they viewed as the rigid steps and time frame of the writing center by nicknaming it the police center. In lines 69-70, she went on to explain that some people in the police center "could be done right away" and others could "just be on their first part" and that "some people finish earlier" than others. Lilly's repeated use of phrases that conveyed time revealed her internalization that writing correctly and finishing on time were important writing behaviors.

At the time of the interviews, students were preparing for their state test in English. Excerpt five illustrates Lilly's and perhaps other students' anxieties about writing on the state test in English especially regarding spelling. Throughout the example, Lilly repeatedly used words related to evaluation and judgment such as *right*, *wrong*, *important*, *disqualified*, *zero*, *ten*, *A+*, *perfect*, and *correct*. In lines 7-10, Lilly recalled giving her paper to the teacher and the teacher giving it back saying "I can't check it out because this is the thing you're gonna do on your state test." Then, in lines 12-18 Lilly recounts a conversation between students and the third-grade ELA teacher. Students asked "What happens if you don't get the words right"? Lilly re-voiced the teacher's explanation that students would be "disqualified" and get "a zero" if they misspelled too many entire words or strayed off topic and she understood that "if you write it right or not, but they still could read what you say and get it, they'll give you a ten or A+".

**Lilly, Excerpt 5. Writing for the state test**

**Stanza 1. What happens if you don't get the words right?**

- 1 Angela: So what other pictures and words and phrases could you show
- me about writing in three different languages,
- 2 writing in Spanish, English and Turkish,
- 3 are there different kinds of writing that you do in each language?
- 4 Lilly: Umm there *is* something
- 5 like sometimes, on our state test there's a thing that first you write it,
- 6 when the teacher checks it out,
- 7 no, not the teacher checks it out
- 8 but you're gonna check it out for yourself!
- 9 And the teacher,
- 10 you give it to the teacher and she says, "I can't check it out because this
- is the thing you're gonna do on your state test"
- 11 so she says, "you have to check it out by yourself and see if it's correct."
- 12 And the kids, some of the kids asked, "What happens if you don't get the
- words right"?
- 13 She said, "You don't need to get all the words right.
- 14 It's important if they could read it,
- 15 but if you write the whole word wrong
- 16 and then like they read it wrong
- 17 and they think that you're not writing the right thing
- 18 so they're gonna give you um, um disqualified thing".
- 19 That means um you didn't do it right
- 20 and you didn't write the right words

- 21 and they will give you a zero.
- 22 And if you write it right or not, but they still could read what you say and  
get it,
- 23 so they'll give you a ten or A+

**Stanza 2. English publications**

- 24 Angela: Mmmhmm, I see,
- 25 so in English, you do different kinds of writing.
- 26 Do you guys do publications?
- 27 Lilly: We do.
- 28 Angela: Oh good,
- 29 so tell me about the kinds of writing you do in English?
- 30 Lilly: English we do the same.
- 31 Angela: You do publications?
- 32 Lilly: First we do the eraser
- 33 like you could erase on publication even but the eraser paper like you  
could erase it.
- 34 Angela: Is that the pre-writing?
- 35 Lilly: Yeah, the publication you have to write perfect
- 36 and so the people will understand
- 37 and write the words correctly.
- 38 Angela: And how many publications did you guys do in English class?
- 39 Lilly: Only one.
- 40 A: You mean what you did today?

- 41 L: Yup.
- 42 A: So that was for the state test,  
43 that was like a state test practice,  
44 and it was very similar to the Spanish publication,  
45 the way you guys do Spanish writing?
- 46 Lilly: Yeah.

The excerpt above provides an example of how students were revoicing institutional discourses of literacy, especially the ideas that writing is a process and that good writing involves specific skills such as spelling correctly and staying on the topic. In Stanza 2, I asked Lilly more about the kinds of writing she did in English. She said, “English we do the same” and went on to list the steps in the writing process. She referred to pre-writing as “doing the eraser” and writing her final draft was similar to the “publications” she wrote in her Spanish class. She also noticed a similarity between the practice essay for the state test in English and the publications she wrote for Spanish class.

In the next example, Francisco shared his thoughts on what makes someone a good writer. Francisco was also in third grade at the time of the interview. I had been spending time with him in his Spanish class, his English Language Arts class, and in his after school English support class. I observed that Francisco enjoyed writing; he got excited and smiled when he had the opportunity to come up with a story in his ELA class. As mentioned previously, he and his classmates often raced to see who could copy their definitions first. In his Spanish class, I observed Francisco volunteer to answer questions on many occasions and he proudly showed me some of the writing he had done.

**Francisco, Excerpt 6. A good writer****Stanza 1. Writing right**

- 1 Angela: So, um what do you think makes someone a good writer in Spanish?
- 2 To be a good writer what do you need to do?
- 3 Francisco: I don't know
- 4 A: Can you try and tell me?
- 5 Francisco: (*Sits silently for a moment*) Like how?
- 6 Angela: So, how do you know if someone is a good writer in Spanish,
- 7 how do you know they did a good job?
- 8 Francisco: In Spanish or in English?
- 9 Angela: In Spanish.
- 10 Francisco: I read it and see if I got it correct.
- 11 Angela: Yeah, so what are some important things that you check for on your writing in Spanish?
- 12 To make sure it's correct?
- 13 Francisco: Go again read it,
- 14 if it gets like the wrong,
- 15 I erase and put it correct.
- 16 Angela: Yeah, what about in English,
- 17 what does somebody need to do to be a good writer?
- 18 How do you know if someone is a good writer?
- 19 Francisco: To read,

- 20 to read his, his work.
- 21 Angela: And what are some things you say, “Oh that’s a good story!”
- 22 What are some things you look for to say, “That’s a good writer!”
- 23 Francisco: Because he’s doing all his best and he’s showing his best for they can say he’s good.
- 24 Angela: So what are some things that are important if you want to write a really good paper?
- 25 Francisco: Write good and do your best.
- 26 A: What does it mean to write good,
- 27 tell me a little bit more.
- 28 Francisco: Write right,
- 29 you write right and check if you got it correct.
- 30 Angela: So is spelling important?
- 31 Francisco: Yes.

When asked the question what makes someone a good writer, Francisco thought for a moment and in line 10 replied “I read it and see if I got it correct.” Similar to Lilly, Francisco evaluated the quality of writing based on teacher feedback, which generally corrected aspects of writing such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. In lines 25 and 28-29, he also explained that it was important to “do your best” and “write right and check if you got it correct.” To clarify what he meant by “writing right” I asked if spelling was important and he replied “yes.” In their definitions, Lilly and Francisco did not mention ideas that are highly valued in academia, such as a good writer shares important information or tells an interesting story.

Lilly and Francisco discussed how they felt about writing in their languages and shared their opinions on what makes someone a good writer. Interestingly, their beliefs about writing were also connected to being evaluated by others. When asked about the writing he was most proud of, Francisco said he was most proud of the writing he did for tests in both Spanish and English.

**Francisco, Excerpt 7. Writing for tests**

**Stanza 1. What makes you proud as a writer?**

- 1 Angela: Okay then, are there some things you are really, really proud of that you wrote?
- 2 What's something you wrote in Spanish or English that you were really, really proud of?
- 3 Francisco: The test.
- 4 Angela: Which test?
- 5 Francisco: Like after reading test, writing test, or math test.
- 6 Angela: In Spanish or English?
- 7 Francisco: Yeah
- 8 Angela: Which one?
- 9 Francisco: Spanish.
- 10 Angela: Yeah have you been proud of anything you wrote in the English class?
- 11 Francisco: Yeah during the test of reading and writing.

The above example demonstrates how Francisco was beginning to conceptualize that the writing he did for tests was the most academically valued. His response is not

surprising considering that school writing activities at the time of study centered on preparing for the state test in English Language Arts and mathematics. Francisco could have mentioned some of his favorite pieces of writing such as the publications he did in Spanish class or the Pokémon characters he created during English Language Arts free time, but instead he responded that he was most proud of writing that he did for tests.

The next excerpt provides another example of how students' feelings or attitudes toward writing related to being evaluated by others. Lilly felt more confident about writing in Spanish and Turkish because there were no high stakes evaluations involved. In the excerpt below, she felt happy about writing publications in Spanish because she could "write better in Spanish" and did not need to worry (line 55). She also felt happy about writing in Turkish because she did not have problems as compared to English and no one would know if she made a mistake (lines 59-61).

**Lilly, Excerpt 8. What makes a good writer?**

**Stanza 1. How do you feel about writing?**

- 1 Angela: So we talked about writing on the state test.
- 2 How do you feel when writing your publications for Spanish?
- 3 Lilly: Happy!
- 4 Angela: Tell me about that.
- 5 Lilly: I can write better in Spanish and I don't need to worry.
- 6 Angela: Hmm you feel more comfortable writing in Spanish.
- 7 Pek iyi, Türkçe yazınca nasıl hissediyorsun? [Alright, how about writing in Turkish, how do you feel?]
- 8 Lilly: Happy!



- 9 Angela: Niye? [Why?]
- 10 Lilly: Because I don't have problems and no one knows how to read in Turkish except for my Angela teacher!
- 11 Angela: So it's just fun, you get to write for fun.
- 12 Lilly: Yup, and no one knows what I write even if I make a mistake, no one could read it
- 13 and they won't even laugh.
- 14 Angela: Mmhmm. Who laughs when you make a mistake?
- 15 Lilly: No one but someone might laugh.
- 16 Angela: Hmm. But do you think it is okay to make mistakes sometimes?
- 17 Lilly: Uh huh, if you won't make mistakes each time.

## Stanza 2. What makes a good writer?

- 18 Angela: Pek iyi, one last question.
- 19 What do you think makes someone a good writer in Spanish?
- 20 L: Practice, pay attention to your teacher, and sound the words out.
- 21 A: Hmm, and what makes someone a good writer in English?
- 22 L: The same things. Practice, listen, and sound the words out.
- 23 A: Sound the words out,
- 24 so being a good speller that's important,
- 25 what else is important?
- 26 Lilly: That's all.
- 27 Angela: Okay, and how do you know that makes someone a good writer?
- 28 Lilly: **Because I'm like that!**

29 Angela: You are good!

In Stanza 2 above, Lilly provided a list of things that she thought made someone a good writer; practice, listen and sound the words out. When asked how she knew, Lilly replied, “Because I’m like that!” Those were the writing behaviors that Lilly associated with being a good writer. I had hoped to find that Lilly and Francisco mentioned ideas such as a good writer tells an interesting story or a good writer can explain their ideas in two languages. Thus, their responses reveal a need to engage in deeper discussions about multilingual writing.

A CDA of Lilly and Francisco’s interview responses revealed that students were re-voicing authoritative discourses as they constructed their definitions of effective writers. Lilly repeated the steps in the writing process and discussed the need to finish on time and spell correctly or “get the words right” as important writing behaviors. Francisco described a good writer as someone who could do his or her best and “write right” or spell correctly. Both Lilly and Francisco had strong emotions regarding writing that was evaluated by others. Francisco was most proud of the writing he did for tests while Lilly felt more confident and at ease about Spanish and Turkish especially because these languages were not part of the high stakes testing taking place in English at the time of the interview. When I asked about the qualities that makes someone a good writer Lilly and Francisco did not mention characteristics such as, a good writer can tell an interesting, funny or scary story, or a good writer can make you imagine that you are in the story. Further, they did not refer to the purposes of writing such as to make an argument or to explain how something works.

Their emerging definitions of writing are similar to what Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) termed as “knowledge telling” or writing to fulfill the assignment by listing one’s knowledge in a linear fashion. According to Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987), the goal of the novice writer is to move from knowledge telling to “knowledge transforming” or understanding how to use one’s knowledge to accomplish a particular rhetorical goal. Lilly and Francisco described writing as a sequence of steps in which they write their idea, get feedback from the teacher and then write their final draft.

### **Discussion**

Public schools like SIES are political places that play a fundamental role in children’s social, emotional, academic, and civic development. As political sites, hierarchies of power are inherent in public schools governing how knowledge is produced and distributed through educational practices and policies (Rogers, 2003, 2011). Likewise, these hierarchies of power are carried over into the language of schooling, within texts both spoken and written. The texts produced by the state, school, and classroom teachers, each have differential power status—the state often having the most authority followed by the school/administration and classroom teacher. Student texts on the other hand have the least authority seemingly contradicting the very goal of schools to educate and empower youth. In the following sub-sections, I address findings related to each research question of this chapter, specifically: how writers are defined in institutional language and how these views compared with students’ emerging understandings about writing.

### **Definitions of Writers and Writing at SIES**

In order to understand the socio-political context that shaped writing instruction at SIES, I examined policy documents at the state, school, and classroom levels. Using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis, I analyzed *discursive practices* (Gee, 1996, 2011) or how language was used to construct ideas, values, and conventions that guided writing instruction. Analysis revealed that state, school, and classroom documents defined writers in contrasting ways. The state writing policies conceptualized writing as a process of teachable steps as evident in the format and language used to produce the grade-level expectations, writing assessments, and rubric/scoring guides. Further, state documents were vague in terms of the concepts and knowledge that student writers should learn and be able to produce. The expectations and assessments presented in state policy for language arts were not designed or intended for multilingual students and thus did not reflect any considerations for bilingual/multilingual writing instruction.

School documents presented two conflicting views of writers. First, the school charter conceptualized writing as both a purposeful means of communication and a set of skills that could be assessed frequently. The charter proposed a two hour reader's and writer's workshop approach to language arts instruction in which students could explore their interests as readers and authors, while at the same time discussed the myriad ways in which students would be assessed in their English-language skills. Then, the school's inquiry curriculum guide provided an in depth description of writing as a purposeful means of communication for specific audiences and defined writers as creative thinkers, storytellers, authors, editor,s and analytical thinkers who should be able to write for both learning and enjoyment.

Finally, teachers synthesized writing policies from the state and school documents to develop guidelines for writers, writing rubrics, and writing assignments in their classrooms. The language used in classroom documents defined writing as a process that should be carried out in sequential steps. While the second grade ELA writing guidelines positioned students as authors and writers as evident in the title of the document “What do authors do?” it also compartmentalized writing into a set of sequential steps. The second grade ELA writing guidelines included less focus on revision and more focus on writing as an activity to be shared with teachers, peers, and family. However, in third grade classroom documents, editing and revision were the central writing behaviors valued. Third grade Spanish teachers chose to devote much of the writing to one particular genre, the academic essay. Similarly, the third grade English Language Arts teacher aligned guidelines and rubrics directly to the state expectations and had students writing essays in preparation for the state test. In sum, the third-grade Spanish and English writing guidelines discursively positioned academic essay writing as centrally important, whereas other genres were not given the same status. Further, good writers were positioned as those who were able to demonstrate correct use of the forms and structures typical of the essay genre.

In summary, institutional policies defined successful writers as those who could follow formulaic steps in a process to produce rather generic responses to academic essay prompts while using correct conventions and staying on the topic of the assigned prompt. This view was in stark contrast to the goals of writing instruction most likely intended by the state grade-level expectations and the school’s constructivist inquiry curriculum which aimed to teach children how to write well for specific audiences, purposes, and

genres. Further, institutional policies failed to include goals that successful multilingual writers could aspire to achieve. As institutional policies valued writers who were successful at following the steps and producing writing in a contrived genre, students also were beginning to understand that writing for testing was more important than writing to accomplish multilingual communication.

### **Student Interpretations of Authoritative Discourse**

A critical discourse analysis of students' interview responses revealed that Lilly and Francisco were beginning to develop a narrow view of the types of writing and writing behaviors that were most valued at school. They defined writing based on technical aspects such as spelling correctly, writing neatly, and finishing on time rather than defining writing as communication for enjoyment and specific purposes such as telling a story, sharing information, or making an argument. For example, Lilly described the writing center as synonymous with "the police center" and instead of talking about the content of the publications/essays she wrote, she focused on the steps in the process, planning/writing/correcting/publication and the time frame for completing a publication. Also, Lilly considered the publications she wrote in Spanish class as very similar to the practice essays for the state test that she wrote in English class. Similarly, when asked about the writing he was most proud of Francisco replied that he was most proud of the writing he did for tests.

### **Implications for Writing Policy in Immersion Classrooms**

The findings reviewed above raise a number of important issues regarding the nature of writing instruction and practice within a language immersion setting. The first issue concerns the nature of writing policy documents at the state and school level and

the need for administrators and faculty in immersion schools to examine these documents critically as they plan literacy activities. As the findings suggest, policies that were not intended for or designed for multilingual students, constrained the way writing policies were carried out and interpreted by teachers. I argue that despite the monolingual policies and required standardized testing in English, teachers can develop writing guidelines that are tailored to multilingual students while at the same time meet the grade-level expectations for language arts. For example, Soltero-Gonzales et al. (2012), proposed a holistic bilingual approach to writing instruction. Their research suggested that teachers need training in order to understand children's writing in terms of a bilingual developmental trajectory. This means designing writing guidelines and classroom routines that facilitate cross-language skills and metalinguistic awareness. The findings also reflect a need to reconsider the writing process approach. While it is a useful heuristic for guiding inexperienced writers, it should not be the focus of writing instruction such that students view the most important aspect of writing as following each step. Rather, teachers should model and communicate the values associated with well-written texts for specific purposes.

### **Summary**

The goal of this chapter was to examine the language of schooling around writing and bring to the forefront ideologies that may otherwise have become opaque. I have shown how the intended writing policies of a multilingual school were inhibited by the expectations and objectives of state literacy policies intended for monolingual English-speaking students and the national accountability movement. Contextual complexities in immersion schools need a more nuanced approach to assessment of developmental

trajectories in literacy. As texts represent systems of thought, values, and ideologies tied to the discourse of a social group or institution, what messages about writing did the state send to teachers and ultimately to students at SIES? This chapter illustrated that even within an innovative language immersion school, monolingual perspectives of learning and skills-based conceptions of writing pose challenges for educators in supporting children's multilingual literacy development. In the next chapter, I explore a broader range of children's multilingual writing experiences by examining their narratives of literacy across visual, written and spoken texts.



### **Chapter 3: Writing in Their “Languajes”**

**Abstract:** This comparative case study investigates the emerging concepts of writing and multilingualism of four third-grade students at their Spanish Immersion Elementary School. Data included interview transcripts, and students’ written and visual ‘identity texts’ (idea maps, time-lines, poems and self-portraits). Data were analyzed using methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Martin & White, 2004; Rogers & Elias, 2012) and narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2004; Labov, 1972) asking: (1) What can children’s visual, written, and spoken narratives of literacy tell us about their identities as writers? Analyses demonstrate that children’s stories of literacy varied across interview transcripts and identity texts. The participants composed multimodal and multilingual identity texts, that focused on their interests and capabilities as writers supporting a dynamic view of multilingualism, whereas their interview responses revealed that they needed more opportunities to explore their interests and inter-language abilities in their writing at school. Implications for immersion programs are discussed, specifically the ways in which writing instruction can enhance children’s opportunities to fully draw from their linguistic and meaning-making repertoires.

#### **Introduction**

Language immersion programs in the United States face a number of challenges in supporting and sustaining students’ bilingualism and biliteracy as they negotiate between the societal power differences between English and the target language (Dorner & Layton, 2013; Palmer, 2008; Valdes, 1997). For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, immersion schools’ curriculum may be influenced by the state requirement to measure

students' academic knowledge and literacy skills on standardized tests designed for monolingual-English speakers. In effect, academic focus shifts from multilingualism to English competency. With these challenges in mind, we know little about how children in immersion programs are developing as readers and writers (Dorner & Layton, 2014; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Orellana & D'warte, 2010; Reyes, 2012).

Much of the research on biliteracy during the school years focuses on the outcomes of multilingualism and academic achievement, to the neglect of examining children's writing development and writer identities (Cervantes et al., 2017; Reyes, 2012; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). An important issue in the early writing development of mono- or multilingual children is to understand their early beliefs about writing and support a positive disposition towards writing (Boscolo, 2008). In this chapter, I draw particularly from child-centered interview methodology (cf. Kendrick & McKay, 2002, 2004; Orellana, 2009; Rogers & Elias, 2012) asking, how do children conceptualize *writing* and *multilingualism* across their visual, written, and spoken narratives of literacy? To investigate this issue, my conceptual framework draws from literacy-and-identity studies and positioning theory.

### **Literacy and Identity Studies**

Theories of language and literacy development suggest that students' achievement in schools and their attainment of academic literacy is influenced by societal power relations (e.g. Cummins, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Norton, 1995, 2000). For example, as Cummins (2012) explained, "power relations ensure that curriculum, assessment, and teacher education will tend to reflect the values and experiences of dominant groups in society" (p. 1983). Thus, students' achievement and their

engagement at school is linked to how well they can negotiate between their own socio-cultural identities and the implicit power relations within schools to develop positive attitudes about themselves as academically competent (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Cummins, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Norton, 2000).

### **Multilingual Academic Identities**

To explain the link between societal power relations and a language learner's academic engagement with their respective languages, Norton (1995, 2000) developed the construct of *investment*. Norton (1995) described investment as the “symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of [the learner's] cultural capital” (p. 17). Further, Norton and Toohey (2011) theorized that individuals learning a new language are establishing themselves as part of an *imagined community* in which power differences often exist between learners and native language speakers. If individuals have meaningful relationships with speakers of the target language community and an investment in the language and literacy practices of the community, they are more likely to construct identities that enhance opportunities for acquiring the new language (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Recent studies of language and literacy draw from positioning theory (Harre, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009) to understand how individuals construct identities as readers, writers and language users (Martin-Beltran, 2013; Rogers & Elias, 2012). Positioning theory considers identities as “story-lines” unfolding within a particular context of rights, duties, expectations, and access (Harre et al., 2009). Moje and Luke (2009) explained, for example, that identities can be viewed as “stories told about and within social interactions—that is, if a student tells a story about her history as

a resistant or poor reader, she constructs an identity based on past social experiences” (p. 418). Although the literate identities of youth have been explored in a variety of contexts (i.e. Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Mahiri, 2004; Martinez-Roldan & Malave, 2004), we still have little information about children in the primary years (Collier, 2010; Rogers & Elias, 2012). As Rogers and Elias, (2012) discussed, adults and adolescents have acquired “deeply enmeshed theories of themselves as literate people” (p. 3) while young children are just beginning to work through their ideas about literacy. Further, elementary students are new writers; they are developing transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) while at the same time learning about genres and the textual features of various genres. Therefore, students’ knowledge of writing and their self-concepts as writers cannot be fully measured by looking at writing samples alone (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Kendrick & McKay, 2002, 2004).

**Literacy Narratives and Identity Texts.** Literacy narratives are first-hand accounts of how individuals use and make sense of reading and writing in their lives (Kendrick & McKay, 2002). Similarly, “identity texts” are texts that purposefully relate individual and social experience to academic content and academic practices. Cummins (2011) contended that students from marginalized social groups are often constructed as problems in mainstream educational discourse. However, asking students to focus on identity offers an alternative discourse. From this perspective, students can create texts to generate and present the identities they want to be recognized for (Cummins, 2011). Further, identity texts are pedagogical tools that enable students to deepen their knowledge and metalinguistic awareness by attending to language as a subject of thought

(Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne, & Pfitscher, 2013; Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera & Cummins, 2015).

Building from the literature discussed above, I contend that literacy narratives and identity texts offer educators with tools for understanding students' academic identity investment. Through creating identity texts and sharing their narratives of learning and literacy, children can shift the teacher/student power dynamic because they become the experts from which teachers and peers learn. In this chapter, I look at a range of different multimodal texts that asked students to write, draw, talk, and reflect on their experiences learning literacy in two languages. For emergent writers and second language learners, drawing and other forms of visual representation are particularly important tools for meaning making because they allow one to express realities and complex understandings that may otherwise be too difficult to convey in spoken or written speech (Kendrick & McKay, 2004). When children's drawings are coupled with their written and spoken thoughts, we are provided with further insight into their literacy development.

### **Methods**

Data for this chapter was collected in students' third grade year. I asked students to become co-researchers with me and think about their experiences learning to write in two or more languages. I asked each student to create an idea map of writing in their languages, a timeline of their literacy experiences, a self-portrait, and a bilingual poem or another form of artwork/personal expression. For the idea map activity, I asked students to create a collection of pictures and words about being a writer in their languages. Then I followed up with interview questions (see Appendix A). Next for the timeline interview, I asked students to look through their writing portfolios (writing samples from

second grade English and third grade Spanish and English) and select some of their favorite pieces of writing. I asked them to tell me about the pieces they selected, what they remembered (if anything) and why they liked them. I asked students to recall their memories from kindergarten, first grade and second grade. Then students made a timeline about what they remembered from previous grades. For the self-portraits, I asked students to draw themselves as writers and tell me about their drawings. Finally, I asked students if they would like to write a bilingual poem or create another form of art to share their interests. I also asked students to complete reading and writing inventories about their interests, habits and strategies (Appendix A). I took field notes while students created their artifacts and audio-recorded our interview sessions. In the next two sections, I first describe each participant and then follow with a description of data analysis.

### **Participants**

Each participant in the study came from a different language and schooling background. Carmen was born in Mexico and that is where she spent the first the first six years of her life. She attended kindergarten in Mexico and after staying with her grandfather for some time, she reunited with her mother and father who were living in the U.S. Then, Carmen attended first-grade at an English-medium Montessori school and began attending SIES in her second grade year. In terms of language background, Carmen was a sequential bilingual; she acquired her native language Spanish first and then began learning English when she was around seven-years-old. At the time of the study, Carmen was classified as an English learner based on state required language assessments and received English support instruction once or twice a week in addition to

her regular English Language Arts classes. She also attended the after school English support program which met three times a week and focused on vocabulary, mathematics, reading comprehension, and essay writing in English.

Lilly was born in Russia and that is where she spent the first four years of her life. She and her family were ethnically Ahiska-Turkish, and her elder family members spoke Ahiskan-Turkish, Russian, and Uzbek at home. After experiencing human and civil rights abuse in Russia, Lilly and her family escaped to the United States as refugees and settled in Lafayette. Then, Lilly began attending an English-medium preschool. Lilly's mother and elder relatives spoke primarily Turkish with her at home; then she began learning English and Spanish at school. Lilly was also labeled as an ELL and received English support instruction once or twice a week in addition to her regular English Language Arts classes. She previously attended the after-school English program but at the time of the study was not enrolled based on the administration's decision that she no longer needed that support.

Zane is an African-American boy who grew up in Lafayette and lived with his mother and two younger siblings. Zane and his family spoke English at home and prior to attending SIES he went to a local English-medium preschool. He began attending SIES as a kindergarten student. From kindergarten through the second term of second grade, Zane received literacy instruction primarily in Spanish. Then in second grade, Zane was my ELA student. He also attended the after-school English program at SIES.

Finally, Francisco's mother was from Guatemala and his father from Mexico. Francisco was born in Mexico and moved to Lafayette when he was around four-years-old. He lived with his mother and two younger siblings and his family spoke primarily

Spanish at home. Francisco and his younger brother attended an English-medium preschool and kindergarten in Lafayette before attending SIES. Francisco was labeled as an ELL and received English support instruction once or twice a week in addition to attending his regular ELA classes. He also attended the after-school English program.

### **Analytical Procedures**

The data analyzed in this chapter were students' interview transcripts and their identity texts (145 pages of transcripts total). Interviews were transcribed using Jefferson notation adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1999) (see Appendix B.). Next, I segmented each interview transcript into Stanzas, stretches of speech in which students discussed a specific event or experience (Gee, 2011). Then, I created multimodal transcripts of children's identity texts adapting conventions from Norris (2004) (Appendix B; see Appendix D for examples of multimodal transcripts). Data analysis was guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Gee, 2011; Kress, 2011; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Rogers & Elias, 2012) and narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2004; Gee, 1996; Labov, 1972).

I considered each identity text as one narrative (16 total=4 from each student) because students created them in response to a particular prompt that asked them to reflect on their multilingual writing experiences (Labov, 1972). Next, I read through the interview transcripts and began to identify narratives that fit my coding criteria and shared common themes. These themes included (1) narratives of past experiences (pre-K-second grade) and (2) narratives of current experiences (third grade) in which students discussed writing in their respective languages (Spanish, English, Turkish, and Multilingual). Based on these criteria, I selected five narratives from each participant's



transcripts (20 total). The narratives that were selected for analysis occurred over several ‘takes’ (Bamberg, 2004) or across different interviews at different times and fit the criteria for what Bamberg (2004) termed as “small stories.” Bamberg (2004) explained that small stories may or may not fulfill the typical personal narrative evaluative criteria; containing a clearly identifiable orientation, complicating action, resolution and coda (Labov, 1972). Rather, they are ‘real-life’ stories situated in social interaction and provide insight into how participants are constructing a sense of identity and agency within a particular moment or event (p. 3).

Finally, to understand how students were constructing identities as writers, I conducted a micro-analysis across identity texts and small stories. I drew from Martin-Beltran’s (2013) work on positioning in bilingual speech acts and Fairclough’s (1995, 2011) theory of genre discourse and style asking: How did students construct identities as writers? I used the following resources from CDA to develop my analyses:

- Genre- Ways of interacting
  - Design elements; images, motifs, characters, and storylines
  - Repetition
- Discourse-Ways of representing
  - Intertextuality; connections students made between literacy and their personal/social worlds
- Style-Ways of being
  - Affective language- (i.e. competencies vs. shortcomings, inclusion/exclusion; knowing/not knowing; acceptance/disapproval)

- Language awareness; attending to ways of using language and reflecting on learning

### **Findings: Small Stories and Big Ideas About Language**

This chapter asked the question: What can multilingual children's narratives of literacy tell us about their identities as writers? In line with previous studies on young children's literate identities (Dorner & Layton, 2014; Rogers & Elias, 2012), I found that students were engaging in complex identity work about themselves as multilingual writers. First, an analysis of identity texts revealed that students composed multilingual and multimodal texts in which they focused on their interests and capabilities as writers. However, there were also differences across genders. For example, Carmen and Lilly presented images of themselves writing at school, at the library, and writing to family via online and mobile devices, while Zane's and Francisco's images focused on their personal interests and peer group culture (i.e. basketball, soccer, playing with friends, Pokémon, and Ninjago). These findings support previous work suggesting that identity texts (Cummins & Early, 2010; Naqvi et al., 2013) and visual literacy narratives (Kendrick & McKay, 2002, 2004), can be used to engage students in constructing positive academic and linguistic identities. Table 5 presents patterns of discursive positioning across identity texts.

Table 5:

*Discursive Positioning Across Identity Texts*

Student	Genre	Discourse	Style
Carmen	<p><b>Idea map:</b> Carmen texting to her family in Spanish, writing at school in español and ingles, taking trips to the zoo and city's famous landmark</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Carmen's kindergarten teacher in Mexico, Carmen doing math problems in kindergarten. First grade Montessori classroom in the U.S., learning English, doing science projects. Second grade at SIES, learning math and doing inquiry, and watching dinosaur movie in second grade</p> <p><b>Self-Portrait:</b> Reading and writing about dinosaurs</p> <p><b>Bilingual Poem:</b> Carmen with her family, draws herself as a dentist.</p>	<p><i>Roles/Identities:</i> Daughter, sister, student, teacher, reader/writer, inquirer, dreams about becoming a dentist.</p> <p><i>Intertextuality:</i> Family life, Texting-Mobile literacy, Mathematics, Science-projects, Inquiry learning, School, Field trips, Dinosaurs-books, movies, writing</p>	<p><i>Multilingual:</i> Uses English and Spanish for Idea Map, Timeline and Bilingual Poem. Uses English for Self-Portrait.</p> <p><i>Language awareness:</i> Reflects on learning processes and literacy events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Mi mamá me enseñó como escribir'</li> <li>• 'I learn about different things when I'm on a trip'</li> <li>• 'Centros de matemáticas, indagación'</li> <li>• 'Mirando la película de los dinosaurios en Ingles con Ms. Angela'</li> </ul>
Lilly	<p><b>Idea map:</b> Lilly drawing a picture for the project with me, typing messages in Turkish to family on Facebook, writing in Spanish in her classroom, playing games on Y8.com in English, heart shape to represent feeling happy and sad, colorful flowers and motifs</p>	<p><i>Roles/Identities:</i> Artist, student, reader/writer</p> <p><i>Intertextuality:</i> Family life, School, Digital literacy (Facebook, Y8.com), Artistic expression/Origami, Science, Mathematics, Field trips, Expository writing; recycling, diet, bullying, butterflies, bugs, hummingbirds</p>	<p><i>Multilingual:</i> Uses English, Spanish, and Turkish for Idea map. Uses mostly English and some Spanish for Timeline. Uses English to describe self-portrait about writing a story in Spanish. Speaks in English while making her origami flower.</p> <p><i>Language awareness:</i> Reflects on literacy events</p>

	<p><b>Time line:</b> Lilly making artwork in kindergarten, learning math in first grade, with her classmates, and writing hummingbird books in second grade, writing about butterflies and bugs in third grade</p> <p><b>Self-Portrait:</b> Lilly writing a story in Spanish</p> <p><b>Bilingual Poem:</b> Made origami star and flower</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I am in kindergarten making art work’</li> <li>• ‘Math’</li> <li>• ‘We went to the zoo and looked at animals’ (first grade)</li> <li>• ‘We made hummingbird books’ (second grade)</li> <li>• ‘Learning about Catapillars, Mosca y Mariposas’ (third grade)</li> </ul>
Zane	<p><b>Idea map:</b> Draws himself as a basketball player, uses comic/cartoon style for personal appearance and colorful speech bubbles, Writes about writing and learning in English and Spanish</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Draws his teachers, uses comic/cartoon style, draws himself dressed as a ninja for party in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, uses Spanish and English to describe literacy events</p> <p><b>Self-Portrait:</b> Draws himself as a basketball player</p> <p><b>Bilingual Poem:</b> Action/Comic story with friends, uses Spanish and English</p>	<p><i>Roles/Identities:</i> Basketball player, friend, student, reader/writer</p> <p><i>Intertextuality:</i> Basketball, Sports, Friends, School, Poetry, Art/drawing, Ninjago, Pokémon, Comics/Cartoons, Movies, Video games, His city</p>	<p><i>Multilingual:</i> Uses English for Idea Map, English and Spanish for Timeline and Bilingual poem.</p> <p><i>Language awareness:</i> Reflects on language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I speak two languajes’</li> <li>• ‘I love English class’</li> <li>• ‘I learn about Spanish’</li> </ul> <p>Evaluates abilities and language practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I had sloppy hand writing’</li> <li>• ‘I speak more Spanish and better handwriting’</li> <li>• ‘I have more English teachers’</li> </ul> <p>Reflects on literacy events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Play games and learned colors (in Kindergarten)’</li> </ul>

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Francisco	<p><b>Idea map:</b> Action/Comic story with friends at city's famous landmark</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> Francisco drawing Pokémon at home, playing soccer at school with friends, writing and reading at school</p> <p><b>Self-Portrait:</b> Draws himself in Pokémon character style, draws a Pokémon</p> <p><b>Bilingual Poem:</b> Draws himself as a soldier, playing soccer with friends, playing Pokémon with friends, draws a Pokémon</p>	<p><i>Roles/Identities:</i> Artist, student, reader/writer, wants to be a soldier when he grows up.</p> <p><i>Intertextuality:</i> Drawing and Battling with Pokémon, Soccer, Playing with Friends, Reading, His City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I did poems about characters' (First grade)</li> </ul>
			<p><i>Multilingual:</i> Uses English for Idea Map, Spanish for Timeline, Spanish and English to write Bilingual Poem.</p> <p><i>Language awareness:</i> Reflects on learning processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Yo aprendí a escribir cuando estaba en segundo y yo aprendí a leer Español cuando yo estaba en primero'</li> <li>• Yo aprendí a leer cuando leí mucho diferente libro'</li> </ul> <p>Reflects on literacy events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I like to draw Pokémon'</li> <li>• I like to play Pokémon a lot</li> <li>• Me gusta jugar Pokémon mucho</li> <li>• 'Yo estoy en mi casa dibujando Pokémon' (Third grade)</li> </ul>

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Second, an analysis of interview transcripts revealed that the way children thought about themselves as writers was linked to their investment in each language—that is how they were positioned within a community of language users. This finding suggests that children from different language and schooling backgrounds in immersion programs may have differing opportunities to develop their authorial voices in the target language and English. In the sections that follow, I present data from each case that exemplifies how Carmen, Lilly, Zane, and Francisco took up different identity positions toward writing. The examples demonstrate how students’ identity positions may affect their opportunities to practice writing in their languages at school. Table 6 provides examples of identity positions from students’ narratives. In the following sections, I will provide a summary of findings from each student followed by representative examples from their transcripts and identity texts in which they express their beliefs about writing and language.

Table 6.

*Examples of Discursive Positioning*

Identity Position	Description	Examples
Multilingual language user	Discusses multilingual competencies and specific multilingual literacy events.  Uses two or more languages to compose multilingual text.	“If I don’t know the word in English I just read, go and read the word in Spanish”
Confident/capable language user	Discusses academic/language competencies. Uses affective language to express positive self-evaluation.	“I always know how to spell all the words in Spanish”
Unsure learner	Notices and discusses academic/language gaps Uses affective language to express negative self-evaluation.	“I don’t know how to read in English a lot”

### **Investment in Writing and Power Differences**

First, Carmen's case illustrates how she was working through different linguistic identity positions (Gort, 2015). On one hand, she took up a monoglossic view toward her languages as separate systems. When discussing writing in Spanish, Carmen described herself as a native speaker, a confident and capable writer and someone who belonged to a community of Spanish speakers. However, she discussed writing in English in terms of learning, not knowing, and needing to improve. The other identity position that Carmen took up was a dynamic view of bilingualism (Garcia, 2009; Grosjean, 1989). She expressed her desire to write bilingual books one day and used both Spanish and English to create her identity texts.

**Carmen.** From Carmen's interviews, I selected five narratives for analysis:

Narrative 1. *From Mexico to the United States*; Narrative 2. *Spanish class*; Narrative 3.

*English class*; Narrative 4. *Writing strategies*; and Narrative 5. *Helping others*. In four

out of the five narratives that I analyzed, she discussed her Spanish language

competencies on one hand and referred to English in terms of learning and improving.

Excerpt 1 below from Carmen's timeline interview illustrates this position. As we looked

through her writing from second-grade English and third-grade Spanish and English, I

asked her to tell me if she noticed any changes in her writing. In the transcript below,

Carmen's speech is in italics.

**Excerpt 1. Carmen: Narrative 1. *From Mexico to the U.S. (Timeline)***

**Stanza 1: Orientation**

- 1 Angela (A): So what do you notice about your writing from second grade?
- 2 What do you notice about how things change?
- 3 You were telling me earlier.
- 4 Carmen (C): *So like in Spanish, when I was in Mexico, I was getting it cause I was little,*
- 5 *when I was like four when my mom was showing me how to write,*
- 6 *and then she said, "You're getting better and better."*
- 7 *"And when you go to third grade, you're going to write more better and better."*
- 8 *and I passed first grade, kinder,*
- 9 *but then in Mexico I was in kindergarten,*
- 10 *then it was Mexico, kindergarten,*
- 11 *then here (USA), I was in a school called \_\_\_\_ Montessori, I was in first grade,*
- 12 *then I went to second grade here (SIES),*
- 13 *and now I'm in third grade here (SIES).*

**Stanza 2: Kindergarten (Mexico)**

- 14 A: What about the kinds of writing you did in kindergarten?
- 15 How was it different from the kind of writing you might do in first or second grade?
- 16 C: *I didn't write nothing in English, in kindergarten because they were just telling me "What's this?" and "What number comes after this?"*
- 17 *and then in Spanish, they didn't do nothing in English because they were all Mexicans there.*
- 18 A: I mean in your Spanish school did you guys do writing in kindergarten?
- 19 C: *Um, they were all different writing.*
- 20 A: Like did they teach you how to hold a pencil or what did you guys do?
- 21 C: *Yeah, that was my mom, like before I went to school she showed me.*

**Stanza 3: First grade Montessori (USA)**

- 22 *And then I was writing in Spanish when I was in my other school of English (Montessori),*
- 23 *I was writing in Spanish and the teacher said "What did you write?"*



24 A: Oh?

25 C: *And then another girl told me, “You have to write this!”, “You have to write this!”*

26 *and then I wrote it,*

27 *and then in English she accidentally wrote letters so I can copy,*

28 *so that way she helped me a lot.*

29 *She was like Veronica! (Friend at SIES)*

30 A: Yeah, so you had a good friend to help you.

**Stanza 4: Second grade SIES (USA)**

31 C: *But then she left and I couldn't get it*

32 *and then my mom had to move me to this school.*

33 A: So this is really good that you were able to come to this school,

34 I think so you can keep learning both languages.

35 C: *Mhmm.*

In the example above, we see how Carmen identifies with Spanish and English differently. First, in Stanza 1, Carmen describes how she learned to write in Spanish. Her mother began teaching her even before kindergarten and in Carmen's own words (line 4) she was 'getting it' because she was little. Then, in Stanza 2, when asked about the kinds of writing she did in kindergarten, Carmen focused on the fact that she did not do any writing in English. Finally, in Stanzas 3 and 4, Carmen describes a difficult transition. As a first-grade student in a new country, learning a new language, Carmen's Spanish language skills were not recognized at school and she had to rely on help from a classmate who translated instructions for her.

In this small story, Carmen shared a significant experience in which she discussed the natural and easy way she began learning to write in Spanish in Mexico compared to feeling unsure and less confident about learning to write in English in the United States.

Carmen's story illustrates feelings about language and learning that many immigrant children likely experience in U.S. schools as they are not viewed as potential bilinguals but English Language Learners (Soltero-Gonzalez et al., 2012).

The next example comes from Carmen's idea map interview. The purpose of the idea map interview was to elicit students' thoughts about the writing they were doing as third graders. In the following excerpt, I asked Carmen how she felt when writing in Spanish and English and I asked about some of the strategies she used when writing in her languages.

**Excerpt 2. Carmen: Narrative 4. Writing Strategies (Idea map)**

**Stanza 1: Orientation**

- 1 A: And let's see for example, how do you feel when you write in Spanish?
- 2 C: *Well, I feel great that I'm learning more Spanish and more English*
- 3 *and I'm glad that we have English class because people keep talking in*
- 4 *English, English,*
- 5 *and maybe they got an idea to make English.*
- 6 *And I loved second grade, I loved you in second grade.*
- 6 A: Aww, you're so sweet, I love you guys too.
- 7 So you feel great when writing in Spanish, and what about in English?
- 8 C: *I feel too, because I learn new stuff, like words and you know?*

**Stanza 2: Writing for tests**

- 9 A: Yeah, and what about when you're writing for a test in Spanish?
- 10 C: *Oh, I will write a lot in Spanish and I'll read directions.*
- 11 A: And how do you feel when writing for a test in English?
- 12 C: *Sometimes it looks hard, because sometimes,*
- 13 *that's why Professora Linda shows you a lot of words and says, "You have to*
- 14 *do good on this test!"*
- 15 *and she shows us a lot of work and Ms. Angela too.*
- 15 A: Yeah!

**Stanza 3: Spelling strategies**

16 A: So what happens if like you're writing in Spanish and you don't how to spell a word,

17 what do you do?

18 C: *I always know how to spell all the words in Spanish.*

19 A: You do?

20 How is that?

21 C: *Because when I was little, my mom, (taught me) how to talk Spanish*

22 *like when I was three and four she showed me that's why I know so fast.*

23 A: Oh nice,

24 and what about when you're writing in English and you don't know how to spell a word,

25 what do you do?

26 C: *Sometimes I look in the dictionary,*

27 *that's my important thing to my mom, the dictionary to find words and stuff.*

28 A: Yeah, do you ever ask your friends and teachers how to spell?

29 C: *Mmm hmm.*

**Stanza 4: Writing strategies**

30 A: What if you get stuck with writing,

31 you know, you get this topic and they say you're going to write about this topic,

32 have you ever gotten stuck before,

33 like "hmm I don't know what to write about?"

34 C: *Sometimes I think too much, sometimes I say, "Oh what do I write, write, write?"*

35 *And then the teacher says "Five minutes" and then I write very fast!*

36 A: Yes, sometimes you need time to think about it.

37 C: *Yeah.*

In Excerpt 2, Carmen again identifies with Spanish and English differently. First in Stanza 1, rather than talking more about her feelings regarding Spanish, Carmen

quickly moved on to her concern regarding the increasing amount of English instruction at her school. Then, in line 8, Carmen described learning ‘new stuff’ and ‘new words’ in English, whereas in line 10, Carmen described being able to write ‘a lot’ in Spanish and ‘read directions’ independently. Further, in lines 18 and 21-22, she explained that she ‘always’ knew how to spell ‘all the words in Spanish’ because she learned at a young age. Interestingly, although Carmen did misspell words in Spanish, she viewed herself as a native speaker or expert who knew all the words. This attitude reflected her confidence as someone who wrote in Spanish without being intimidated by spelling. However, in lines 12-14, Carmen talked about how English tests sometimes looked ‘hard’ and that is why her English teachers showed her ‘a lot of words’ and ‘a lot of work.’ She also echoed her ESL teacher’s words, “you have to do good on this test.”

The third example in Carmen’s case comes from an identity text that she created for our idea map interview. In the picture (Figure 3) and transcript (Excerpt 3), is Carmen’s idea map about writing in her *languajes*. I asked her to use pictures and words to show the kinds of writing she did, the different places she wrote, and the topics of her writing. In her map, we see Carmen texting on her phone in Spanish to her family, writing in Spanish and English at school, and going on a trip to the zoo with her class.

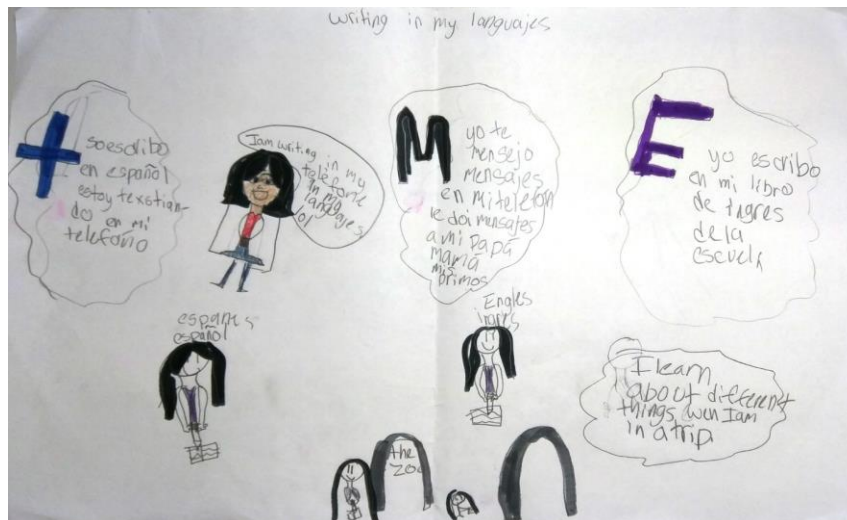


Figure 6. Carmen’s idea map, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

The images and language Carmen used in her idea map reflect her multilingual identity and a dynamic view of bilingualism. For example, to express her first idea, Carmen drew a –t for *textiando* and wrote in Spanish ‘Yo escribo en español estoy *textiando* en mi teléfono’ [I write in Spanish I am texting on my phone]. Carmen used the word ‘*textiando*,’ which is the English verb *to text* conjugated with the Spanish present progressive ending *-ando*. Then, she drew a picture of herself texting on her phone and inside a speech bubble wrote, ‘I am writing in my teléfono in my lenguajes lol.’ Carmen also drew two pictures of herself writing and labeled them bilingually; ‘Espanes/Español’ and ‘Engles/Ingles.’

### Excerpt 3. Carmen’s idea map

Original writing	English gloss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>t- yo escribo en español estoy <i>textiando</i> en mi teléfono</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I write in Spanish I am texting on my telephone</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am writing in my <i>teléfono</i> in my <i>lenguajes</i> lol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am writing on my phone, in my languages lol</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M- yo te <i>mensejo</i> mensajes en mi <i>teléfono</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I message messages on my phone</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>le doi mensajes a mi Papá Mamá Mis primos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I send messages to my father, mother, and cousins</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E- yo escribo en mi libro de ingles de la escuela</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I write in my English notebook of the school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>espanes/español</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engles/<i>ingles</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I learn about different things wen</li> </ul>	

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I am in a trip

- the zoo

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Carmen's idea map is noteworthy for several reasons. First, her use of both Spanish and English to construct her text illustrate that she expressed meaning in a way that is unique to multilingual writers. Carmen's images and written speech support the notion that young bilinguals select features from both of their languages to engage in writing and that practice is part of what it means to be bilingual/multilingual (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). For example, in her idea map Carmen engaged in translanguaging to share the different kinds of writing she did in particular contexts. She wrote two sentences about texting to her family and both sentences used Spanish and English vocabulary. In her other artifacts (timeline, self-portrait, bilingual poem), Carmen also composed multilingual texts. Second, the ideas she shared about writing reflect her inner representations of what it means to be a bilingual writer. She engaged in metalinguistic awareness as she wrote *about* language as a subject of thought and expressed her ideas both visually and bilingually.

The three examples above demonstrate how Carmen was working through different identity positions toward writing and multilingualism. In the other narratives that I analyzed from Carmen's case, Narrative 2 (*Spanish class*) for example, Carmen discussed how she had been enjoying writing in Spanish prior to the focus on preparing for the state test in English. She described her third-grade Spanish class as a 'fun' place where she wrote book summaries, friendly letters, opinion letters, and expository publications. Carmen explained that in Spanish class, they recently switched from writing expository publications in Spanish to preparing for the state test in English. When I asked about how she got her ideas for writing in Spanish class, Carmen replied:

“Because the teacher says, ‘Write this to somebody, or something like, how do you do this? Like make a hamburger’” re-voicing her teacher’s instructions and language from test-prep prompts in English.

In Narrative 3 (*English class*) Carmen discussed her English abilities in terms of improving; learning new words that she did not know, learning how to spell, and doing a great deal of homework. When I asked Carmen if she ever got to write stories about her life or things that she was interested in, she replied: “It was a long time ago, it was like in second grade.” This again reflects the current focus on preparing for the state test in English rather than exploring her voice as an author and choosing her own writing topics. Finally, Carmen referred to bilingual writing in only one of the five small stories (Narrative 5. *Helping others*). In this narrative, Carmen discussed her opinion of bilingual authors and mentioned her interest to write bilingual books one day.

**Lilly.** Next, Lilly’s case also demonstrates how she was taking up different identity positions toward her languages and how investment in learning another language related to the imagined community of speakers to which one belongs. However, unlike Carmen, Lilly was a native speaker of neither Spanish nor English; rather she acquired Turkish at home before attending an English-medium preschool and then began attending kindergarten at SIES the following year. Thus, before Lilly had the chance to acquire academic English, she transitioned to literacy instruction in Spanish. From Lilly’s interviews, it became clear that although she felt somewhat more knowledgeable about Spanish than English, she was insecure about writing in both languages. When creating her identity texts however, like Carmen, Lilly drew from all of her languages and focused on her interests and capabilities rather than her shortcomings.

The five narratives that I analyzed from Lilly's interview transcripts are labeled as follows: Narrative 1. *Preschool*; Narrative 2. *Kindergarten*; Narrative 3. *Y8.com*; Narrative 4. *Reading aloud*; Narrative 5. *The Little Mermaid*. In four out of five small stories about writing and multilingualism, Lilly positioned herself as unsure about her capabilities in her respective languages. In Narrative 1, (*Preschool*), however, Lilly remembered how her brothers taught her English and quoted them saying, "Mom, look! Lilly can speak English now!" and how she enjoyed coloring, playing games and doing projects at her English-medium preschool. Then, in Narrative 2, (*Kindergarten*) Lilly talked about not wanting to participate in the boy-girl dance at school. In Narrative 3, (*Y8.com*), Lilly discussed not knowing how to read in English but also revealed an important opportunity to build from her multilingual capabilities. Then in Narrative 4, (*Reading aloud*), Lilly expressed her mixed feelings about sharing her writing in Spanish class. She explained that although she would like to read aloud in class and share her work, she was reluctant do so at the risk of being made fun of by her peers for not writing a word 'right.' Finally, in Narrative 5, (*The Little Mermaid*), Lilly discussed her favorite book and her capabilities as a multilingual reader.

The next two excerpts demonstrate how Lilly was developing attitudes about writing in her languages. Excerpt 3 below comes from Lilly's timeline interview. I asked her to tell me about her preschool and what she remembered from kindergarten at SIES. Lilly began to tell me about a vivid memory of students dancing at SIES. As I thought this was off the subject, I tried to re-direct her to my question about the literacy activities in kindergarten and the following exchange took place:

**Excerpt 3. Lilly: Narrative 2. *Kindergarten* (Timeline)**



**Stanza 1: Orientation**

- 1 Angela (A): Like what did you think when you started kindergarten and it was all Spanish and your teachers were speaking in Spanish,
- 2 because your preschool was in English right?
- 3 Lilly (L): *Yeah, I had no idea what they were saying.*
- 4 *First, they were dancing and when I came in the class, uh, uh...*
- 5 A: Like what did you guys usually do when you were in kindergarten?
- 6 What was your routine?
- 7 Like when you came in the morning, what did you do?
- 8 L: *Sing a song.*
- 9 A: Sing a song.
- 10 L: *"Buenas dias buenas dias" used to be our song.*

**Stanza 2: Dancing with a boy**

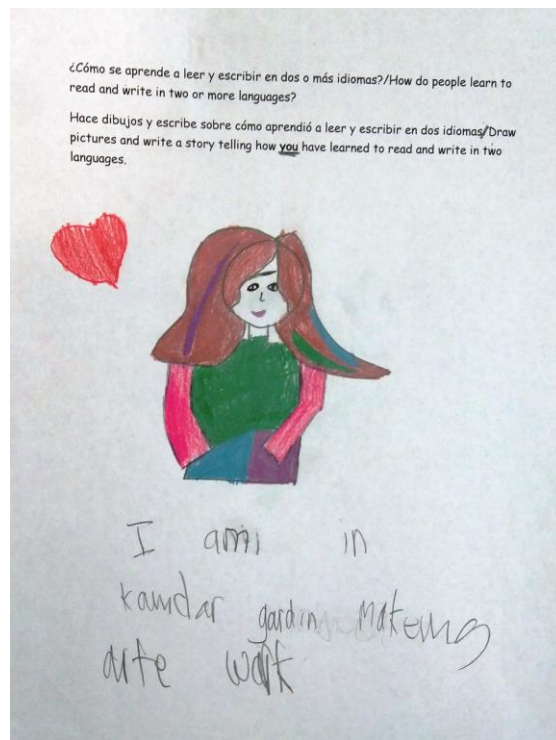
- 11 A: I like that, what else did you guys do?
- 12 L: *The first time I came into the school,*
- 13 *like me, um I had to dance with a boy and I didn't want to!*
- 14 A: You did?
- 15 L: *Yes, they made me dance with a boy and I didn't want to!*
- 16 *I was freaked out and I said to my teacher, "I don't want to dance!"*
- 17 *And the teacher said "But you have to, don't you want to enjoy?"*
- 18 *and I said "Ah aaa no waay!"*

**Stanza 3: Drawing**

- 19 *And then she said, "If you wanna you can sit down."*
- 20 *Then when they finish dancing, she said, "Do you wanna draw?"*
- 21 *And I said, "Okay," and that's when I started to draw a lot.*

Initially, I thought Lilly's story about dancing in kindergarten was unrelated to her writing development and wanted to re-direct the conversation. However, at a closer look, I realized she shared a powerful memory in which she began to use drawing and artwork to manage an uncomfortable situation. In the narrative above, Lilly discursively

positioned herself as an outsider to the activities taking place at school. She exclaimed that she was “freaked out!” and repeatedly mentioned that she did not want to dance with a boy. She may not have wanted to dance with a boy because it was not a cultural norm for her. In Ahiska-Turkish culture, boys and girls often dance separately or next to each other unless they are married. After some protesting, Lilly and her teacher negotiated a compromise in which Lilly could draw and color while her classmates participated in the dance sessions. As she mentioned in line 21, this was an important point in her academic career when she began to find comfort and enjoyment in drawing and artwork.



*Figure 7.* Lilly’s timeline, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

Excerpt 4 from Lilly’s idea map interview also illustrates Lilly’s conflicting identity positions. I asked her to tell me about the different places she liked to write, for

example, in a journal, diary or on the computer. Lilly then told me about a gaming website that she frequented called Y8.com.

**Excerpt 4. Lilly: Narrative 3. Y8.com**

**Stanza 1: Orientation**

- 1 Angela (A): Do you ever get to write on the computer?
- 2 Lilly (L): *Yup.*
- 3 A: What kinds of things do you write?
- 4 L: *We really don't write on the computer, we search for things on the computer.*
- 5 A: At school you don't do writing on the computer you do searches for things on the computer?
- 6 L: *Yeah.*

**Stanza 2: Y8.com**

- 7 A: At home do you write on the computer?
- 8 L: *I play Y-8.*
- 9 A: You play what?
- 10 L: *Y-8.*
- 11 A: Y-8, what is that?
- 12 L: *It's a place where you play games and you write it like this (writes on her idea map) Y-8.com.*
- 13 *And all the games you want!*
- 14 A: How did you learn about Y-8?
- 15 L: *My brother.*
- 16 *(Writes and sounds out) Dot com, c-o-m.*

**Stanza 3: Language choice**

- 17 A: What do you do on Y-8, is it English?
- 18 L: *Yup, you can change the language.*
- 19 A: Do you ever change it?
- 20 L: *No, because I have to learn how to read in English and I really don't know how to read in English.*
- 21 *There's like a lot of words I don't know in English,*

22 *so I have to put it in English so I can learn.*

23 *Like there's different words on there that I don't know how to read.*

**Stanza 4: Different games**

24 *Then if like there's something they don't have on there, you can just write the name of the game you want to play and it just comes out.*

25 *Like you can write Barack Obama games and they come out!*

26 A: Oh my gosh!

27 L: *Sometimes I write dress up games, sometimes I write princess games, sometimes I write dinosaur games, snake games.*

28 A: So they have all kinds of games, very cool!

In Stanza 3, Lilly explained that she could play games in different languages but she usually played in English because she felt compelled to improve her reading ability. Similar to prior research with immersion students (Dorner, 2010), this example illustrates two important ideas about Lilly's emerging academic and linguistic identity. First, Lilly's experiences at home and at school as a multilingual child likely attuned her to the idea that playing online games could support language learning. Second, Lilly was aware of the power differences between English, Spanish, and Turkish. Although Lilly knew about the option to change languages, she chose to play in English because as she stated in lines 20-23: "I have to learn how to read in English and I really don't know how to read in English." In this example, Lilly discussed her perceived knowledge gap in English literacy and her ability as a *multilingual language user* someone who *could* use Spanish or Turkish on the site but chose to play games in English as a learning tool. This example highlights how Lilly was working through different identity positions toward her languages.

To review, across her narratives, Lilly discussed writing in Spanish and English in terms of making mistakes, not knowing, and not wanting to share her work for fear of being made fun of. However, she was comfortable writing in Turkish because it was not being evaluated. In contrast, Lilly took on a different tone in her identity texts; one which focused on her interests as an artist and capabilities across languages rather than her insecurities.

### **Investment in Writing and Peer Group Culture**

Zane and Francisco were two boys from different language backgrounds, but both of their cases demonstrate how their investment in writing Spanish related to their interests in popular culture and their peer group language community. Previous research has documented the diglossic nature of one-way immersion speech communities; when children increasingly reserve the target language for academic purposes, and use English for socializing, play, and peer interaction (Broner, 2001; Tarone & Swain, 1995). Zane and Francisco's motivation for writing in Spanish and English were beginning to reflect this phenomenon. Zane, who spoke English at home, was developing a stronger level of investment in English writing because he belonged to a community of English language speakers with shared interests. Francisco, who spoke Spanish at home, was developing a more balanced level of investment in writing across languages because he belonged to both language communities. However, his desire to play and interact with his friends around their shared interests motivated his writing in English.

While Carmen and Lilly confided in me about some of their concerns and perceived language gaps, Zane and Francisco presented themselves as confident writers. They also used Spanish and English when creating their identity texts but the images they

drew depicted action and their personal interests in sports and peer group culture (i.e. playing with friends, basketball, soccer, Pokémon and Ninjago). Thus, both Zane and Francisco's cases highlight the possibilities of connecting writing instruction to children's interests in order to help students develop balanced levels of competency across languages.

**Zane.** The next two examples demonstrate how Zane was beginning to develop a stronger level of investment in English, compared to Spanish. Across Zane's interviews, I identified five small stories in which he engaged in identity work regarding the themes of writing and multilingualism: Narrative 1. *Kindergarten, and First grade*; Narrative 2. *Second grade English*; Narrative 3. *Third grade Spanish and English*; Narrative 4. *Basketball stories*; Narrative 5. *As a reader I'm good at sports*. In four out of five of his narratives, Zane positioned himself as a *confident capable* writer and language user in both Spanish and English. For example, in Narrative 1, Zane recalled reading 'a lot of Spanish books,' writing 'poems about characters' and 'playing Pokémon in Spanish.' However, he described writing in contrasting ways depending on genre and domain. Interestingly, he discussed his multilingual capabilities within self-initiated writing activities. For example, in Narrative 1, Zane recalled playing Pokémon with Francisco and his friends in Spanish and English during free time. Then in Narrative 3 (*Third grade Spanish and English*), when talking about writing publications in Spanish, he described writing as a set of steps in a process, re-voicing teacher instructions, and the writing process script. Whereas, in the second part of Narrative 3 and in Narratives 4 and 5, when describing creative writing and topics that were self-selected, especially in

English, Zane referred to his background knowledge, rhetorical concepts, and ways of engaging the reader.



Figure 8. Zane's self-portrait, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

Excerpt 5 below is from our idea map interview. When asked about the kinds of writing he did in English class Zane explained that he “normally writes about sports” and that he gets to write about basketball “all day.” However, as an observer in his classes and as his former teacher, I knew that Zane was usually busy writing other things.

**Excerpt 5. Zane: Narrative 4. *Basketball stories* (Idea map)**

**Stanza 1: Orientation**

- 1 Angela (A): So what about, what are the kinds of things you write in English?
- 2 Zane (Z): *When I write in English, I write,*
- 3 *Ms. Kelly, she'll put two stories that you have to make,*

- 4 *but I normally just write about sports.*  
5 *I really don't write about anything else.*  
6 A: So that is your favorite topic.  
7 Z: *Yup, that is my childhood!*  
8 A: *(Laughs), That's awesome!*

**Stanza 2: Notebook**

- 9 So for example in English class, what do you write in your notebook?  
10 Z: *In my notebook, we have to do spelling words*  
11 *and we have to look them up in the dictionary,*  
12 *write the definition like we do in book club,*  
13 *but we have more words.*

**Stanza 3: Basketball stories**

- 14 A: Yeah, so when do you get to do your basketball stories?  
15 Z: *My basketball stories, I get to do it almost all day.*  
16 A: All day?  
17 How can you do basketball stories all day with all the other work?  
18 Do you find extra time to do your basketball stories?  
19 Z: *If I can finish all my work, I get to do it.*  
20 *I can do whatever I want.*  
21 A: So you're a really good writer and you could make a whole book about  
basketball stories!  
22 Z: *Yes, that's what I want to do!*  
23 *Because I know how it started off.*  
24 A: What do you mean by that?  
25 Z: *What I mean is that, I know who played in the league and how other people got*  
*into it.*  
26 *They played as rookies.*  
27 *They played the rookie game*  
28 *and the people, the coaches from different teams, went into their locker room and*  
*asked them questions.*  
29 *And then they decide what team they're gonna be on.*



- 30 A: Oh wow,  
 31 so you know how the whole recruiting process works,  
 32 where they started as rookies, and how they became professionals.  
 33 Z: *Yeah because it's gonna take me a whole year to try and do it on my own  
 game.*  
 34 A: Cool!

In excerpt 5 above, Zane used affective language reflecting differences in attitude towards writing that was teacher directed and writing that was self-selected. In Stanza 1, line 3 and Stanza 2, lines 10-11, Zane used the modal verb 'have to' to express teacher directed writing as an obligation. However in Stanza, lines 4-5 Zane used adverbs 'normally,' 'just,' and 'really' to describe writing preferences that expressed his genuine interest in basketball. Further, in line 7, Zane explained that he liked to write about sports because that *was* his 'childhood.' In Stanza 2, lines 19-20, Zane clarified that he does not in fact get to write about basketball all day but on the condition that he finishes his assigned work. Stanza 3 highlights Zane's passion for writing about basketball, his knowledge of the recruitment process and his understanding of how players progressed in their careers.

The next example comes from our timeline interview when I asked Zane to choose some of his favorite pieces of writing and tell me about them. Zane discussed some of his favorite pieces from third grade; an expository essay from Spanish about the plant cycle and a creative story he wrote in English class.

**Excerpt 6. Zane: Narrative 3. *Third grade Spanish and English (Timeline)***

**Stanza 1. Orientation**

- 1 A: What about this one, you picked from third grade (Spanish)?  
 2 Z: *Ciclas de las plantas: empieza con una semilla.* [The plant cycle: begins with a

seed.]

3 *Después crece las partes de las plantas* [Then the parts of the plants grow]

4 A: So how did you guys in third grade start this kind of writing?

5 Z: *You write it,*

6 *then you correct it*

7 *and you publish it*

8 *and color it*

9 *and hang it up.*

### Stanza 2. Creative story

10 A: What about these from English,

11 let's see, can you read it?

12 Z: *You are the tiny animal in the jungle.*

13 *While seeking food, a predator is after you.*

14 *What happens?*

15 *You run away for three years and never found his way back home.*

16 *The tiger's name was Aliya.*

17 *She went to find the eagle,*

18 *almost died by tiger snapped Francisco but the eagle survived...*

19 A: Good job, the eagle survived the attack!

20 Z: *Then Francisco got revenge on the tiger*

21 *he snack, snuck in their lair where they sleep and eat.*

22 *The Tigers went out to go fetch their food.*

23 *The eagle ate their only baby.*

24 A: So how did you start this piece of writing?

25 Z: *I started a story about animals,*

26 *I put revenge in it*

27 *and then I put Francisco in it by getting captured by a Lion and almost died,*

28 *but he survived!*

In Stanza 1, lines 5-9, Zane describes writing an expository text in terms of the steps in the writing process—(1) write it, (2) correct it, (3) publish it, (4) color it, and (5)

hang it up. The content of the essay was brief; it provided two ideas about the plant cycle and Zane did not discuss why he chose those ideas for his essay. In his essay, he did not include a specific example of a plant's life cycle. For instance, he could have written about the life cycle of an apple tree or another fruit bearing plant. When talking about the essay, he did not mention any rhetorical strategies related to writing an expository text such as writing to inform, explain, or present facts about a subject.

In Stanza 2 however, Zane read a creative story he wrote during English class. In this story, Zane used specific and rich vocabulary reflecting his knowledge of a tiger's life such as 'lair,' 'fetch,' and 'snapped.' Also, Zane used words and phrases to create a suspenseful atmosphere in his story: 'run away,' 'almost died,' 'tiger snapped,' 'the eagle survived,' 'revenge,' 'snuck in.' To describe this kind of writing, in lines 25-28, Zane referred to the story's plot and how he created the mood of the story through the theme of revenge and the character's actions. In writing and describing his creative story, Zane explored literary concepts such as mood, setting, and theme, which are important tools that writers use to invoke a particular feeling from their audience and express their own voices and attitudes in their writing.

**Francisco.** Finally, the last examples in this section demonstrate how Francisco had a more balanced investment in writing across languages. He described being proud of his Spanish expository writing, while at the same time was very invested in writing, drawing and playing in English, especially during his free time. Across Francisco's interviews, I identified five small stories regarding the themes of writing and multilingualism: Narrative 1. *Pre-school*; Narrative 2. *Favorite topics*; Narrative 3. *English class*; Narrative 4. *Favorite pieces of writing*; Narrative 5. *Spanish compositions*

and English notebook. Although Francisco was more confident in his Spanish writing, he was at the same time highly invested in English. For example, in Narrative 1. Francisco recalled his experiences at an English medium preschool. He said, “At first, I didn’t know how to talk English but then I started learning more and more.” Then in Narrative 2, Francisco listed that his favorite topics to write about were Pokémon and T.V. shows and that he wrote about these topics especially in English.

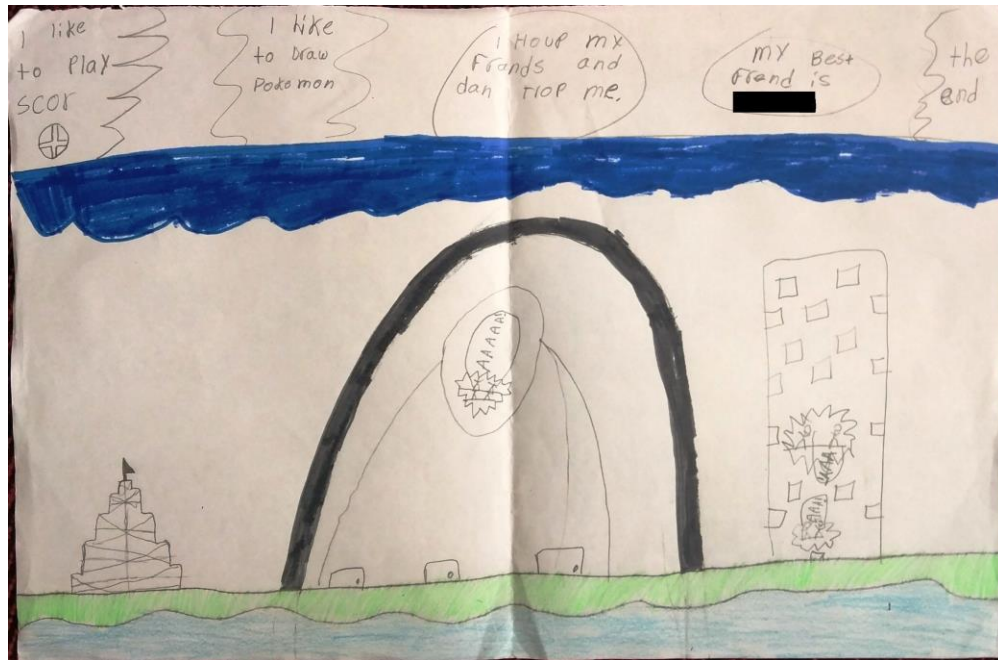


Figure 9. Francisco’s idea map, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

Excerpt 7 comes from our timeline interview. In this example, Francisco reflects on two different pieces of writing from third grade. I asked him to look through his third grade Spanish and English writing samples and choose some of his favorite pieces. From Spanish class, Francisco selected an expository essay on agriculture and the food chain. Then from English class, Francisco selected a Pokémon game he created during free time.

**Excerpt 7. Francisco: Narrative 4. *Favorite pieces of writing (Timeline)*****Stanza 1. Orientation**

- 1 A: Okay now, I'm going to look at a couple of pieces that you selected and tell me why you chose it as one of your favorites?
- 2 So read it to me and then tell me why it's your favorite?
- 3 F: *La agricultura es la actividad más importante del mundo.*
- 4 *Todo lo que comemos, comemos*
- 5 A: Comemos, maybe?
- 6 F: *Como, yeah comemos se cultiva en granja.*
- 7 *La granja de trigo produce el maíz.*
- 8 *Con esto podemos comer pan y tortillas para hacer sandwich.*
- 9 A: Yeah tell me about this.
- 10 F: *We was talking of animals and we why we need those animals*
- 11 *and why we kill them and so we can eat*
- 12 *and even if we don't got any animals we couldn't eat.*
- 13 A: Yeah and so why do you think that was one of your favorite things that you wrote about?
- 14 F: *Because I never knew about those animals.*
- 15 A: Oh, because you learned all about how the food chain works?
- 16 F: *Yeah.*

**Stanza 2 English free time**

- 17 A: Okay, tell me about one of your favorite English writings in third grade.
- 18 Did you do this during your free time,
- 19 or did the teacher ask you?
- 20 F: *Yeah, in my free time.*
- 21 A: Okay tell me what's going on in these pieces and why it's one of your favorites.
- 22 F: *Cause I'm learning how to draw better and I want to be an artist*
- 23 *so I'm training all the time to draw and make stuff.*
- 24 A: Very nice,

- 25 so tell me what's happening in here it says one, two, three...
- 26 F: *It's like in a game you need to play with them*
- 27 *and you use moves to fight*  
*and after they get stronger they evolve,*
- 28 *they change to a different,*
- 29 *then he can change again but only two times or three times.*
- 30 A: Hmm, I see,
- 31 so then this guy changed and then this guy,
- 32 what about this one?
- 33 Is that somebody you created or is that a Pokémon?
- 34 F: *I created.*
- 35 A: Does he have a name?
- 36 He's a cool character.
- 37 F: *Like after eighty, he evolves and then after a hundred it take a long to be a*  
*hundred*
- 38 *and then he can evolve.*
- 39 A: And this is the same guy right?
- 40 He is changing again,

In the example above, we see that Francisco chose two different genres of writing from Spanish and English as his favorite pieces. He explained his rationale behind choosing each piece. The first piece was an expository essay on agriculture. In his essay, Francisco presented an argument that agriculture is one of the most important activities in the world because everything we eat originates from farming. He provides a specific example with the cultivation of corn and resulting products. Francisco read his essay to me in Spanish and in lines 10-12 used his multilingual skills to describe what the essay was about in English. Francisco chose this essay as one of his favorite pieces because of his academic interest; he enjoyed learning about animals and where our food comes from.

The second piece was a Pokémon battle card that Francisco drew during English class free time. Francisco described his reasoning for choosing this piece as it related to his personal interests in becoming an artist and playing with his friends. In lines 26-29, Francisco used complex vocabulary and phrases to describe the Pokémon character and game; “you use moves to fight” and “after they get stronger they evolve.” This example illustrates some interesting ideas for writing instruction in immersion classrooms.

Throughout his narratives, Francisco primarily referred to his interest in Spanish as academic while his interest in English writing reflected his desire to play and socialize with his friends. Although Francisco was developing a balanced investment across languages, his motivation for writing in each language was beginning to reflect a diglossia between using Spanish for academic purposes and English increasingly for social interaction and play (Broner, 2001; Broner & Tedick, 2011; Potowski, 2007).

### **Discussion**

Writing instruction in language immersion programs can be an opportunity for students to enhance their linguistic and academic capabilities across languages. For example, Gort (2012) found students consciously drew from both of their languages to analyze and revise their work while Broner & Tedick (2011) found that writing activities promoted immersion students’ use of the target language. From the comparative case study above, we saw how monoglossic ideologies of language were being perpetuated in the curriculum at SIES while at the same time, students were engaging in dynamic and rich multilingual practices during their free time and also expressed the desire to further explore their multilingual capabilities. Velasco and Garcia (2014) wondered why so few of the writing samples from their study exhibited translanguaging. The stories of my

students suggest that curricular practices and writing policies may have inhibited children's bridging of languages during writing activities. As discussed in chapter 2, writing policies at SIES privileged writers who could write well monolingually in Spanish or English in academic genres specific to school literacy more so than writers who could use their languages to accomplish meaningful communicative goals.

To review, Carmen and Lilly were working through conflicting views of multilingualism. On one hand, Carmen and Lilly shared stories in which they felt like outsiders of their imagined language communities. Carmen primarily positioned herself as a confident capable writer in Spanish and as an improving learner of English. Perhaps Carmen felt this way because she was labelled as an English learner and was not encouraged to engage in multilingual writing as part of the academic curriculum. Similarly, Lilly felt unsure about her Spanish and English writing, at school and confident about writing in Turkish (her home language) because it wasn't evaluated at school.

While some curricular practices may have supported monoglossic views of writing at school, Carmen and Lilly also mentioned their interest in reading bilingual books at school. Carmen explained that she enjoyed reading bilingual books and that she would like to write her own bilingual books one day. This statement reflects the fact that she was not writing bilingual texts as part of the curriculum but desired to do so. Lilly also explained that she enjoyed reading bilingual books because if she didn't know a word in one language, she could refer to the other language and vice versa. In contrast, in their identity texts done for the research project (not part of the school's official curriculum). Carmen and Lilly used more than one language to compose their texts and



images of themselves writing in their languages in various contexts. Their stories revealed why they might have differing levels of investment across their languages and thus differing opportunities to practice writing in their languages.

Like Carmen and Lilly, Zane and Francisco's interview responses also revealed how their investment in writing was linked to their imagined language communities. However, unlike Carmen and Lilly, Zane and Francisco did not express feelings of being outsiders. Zane was beginning to become more invested in writing in English because he could express his personal interests and authorial voice in English more adequately. Francisco on the other hand had a more balanced investment in both Spanish and English. He discussed writing expository texts in Spanish with enthusiasm and was also highly motivated to write and play in English with his friends. These findings suggest that students from different language backgrounds in immersion programs may need different kinds of support to practice writing in their languages in both academic and social registers.

While all students were acquiring academic and social discourse in English and Spanish at school, they had different kinds of support at home and at school to develop these registers in written speech. For example, Francisco had already developed communicative competency in vernacular speech in Spanish and was applying this knowledge to acquire academic discourse in Spanish. He also had many opportunities to socialize and play in English at school and in his community as English is the dominant language in society. Zane on the other hand was acquiring both academic and social registers of Spanish at school and did not have Spanish language reinforcement at home or in his surrounding community. Thus, in order for Zane to become more invested in

writing Spanish he may need more opportunities to play and socialize in Spanish at school. Zane and Francisco reported playing and writing in both Spanish and English during their free time with their group of friends. This play time reinforced the boys' use and practice of social language in Spanish and English and could be extended and supported further by classroom activities that encouraged children's multilingual play. Also, like Carmen and Lilly, Zane and Francisco composed multilingual identity texts. However, the images of literacy they presented were more centered on peer group relationships and their interests in popular culture (Ninjas, Pokémon, Basketball, Soccer, etc.). Their images of literacy also support the notion that students' investments in writing were linked to their peer group interests and speech communities.

When I asked my students to reflect on their writing experiences and use which ever language/s they wanted, they did just so. Out of 16 identity texts, there were a total of 11 that were multilingual. Listening to children's perspectives made evident strengths from which to build upon as well as important issues that require critique. Above all, children's stories indicated that there is a need to explicitly talk about language, writing and identity in the immersion classroom in order to help students develop views of their languages as equally important and thus balanced levels of writing competency across languages. Further, students need more opportunities within the official curriculum to express their own ideas and make choices about the languages they use and the mediums of expression whether through art, play, creating games, story-telling or other ways. Careful consideration of these issues can provide insights into how educators can support children's development of agency as multilingual writers.

### **Summary**

A critical discourse analysis of students' narratives found that children from different linguistic backgrounds in immersion programs may have varying opportunities to develop their voices as writers in the target language and in English. In second grade English language arts class, students had opportunities to engage in multilingual play and writing as part of our class activities. In third grade, students were expected to write in Spanish during Spanish class and write in English during English class regardless of their language background and needs. However, they engaged in multilingual writing as part of our research project and also reported multilingual writing and play during their free time at school and at home.

Further, students' interests and strengths influenced their orientations towards writing in different languages and genres. These findings suggest that in an immersion context, it is particularly important to consider how language, genre and topic selection may limit or support children's development as writers. Thus, the more opportunities children have to use their inner voices as writers and meaning makers in the target language and English, the deeper their understanding of writing as purposeful communication will be. This very issue is explored in more detail in the next chapter 4, which focuses on an in-depth case study of Lilly.

### **Chapter 4: The Writing Development of a Multilingual Youth**

**Abstract:** This chapter examined how Lilly, a multilingual girl, developed as a writer during her second and third grade years at SIES (Spanish Immersion Elementary School). Drawing from ethnographic data including field notes and writing samples, this research examined the strategies Lilly used over time as well as her emerging authorial voice. Case study data was constructed using qualitative methods (Merriam, 2009) and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2010) asking: (1) How does a multilingual youth develop agency and competency as a writer in her languages (Spanish, English and Turkish)? Writing samples were analyzed using a holistic multilingual approach to textual/rhetorical analysis (Soltero-Gonzalez et al., 2012; Spence 2010; Velasco & Garcia, 2014) asking: (2) How does Lilly use translanguaging and other strategies to demonstrate competencies as a multilingual writer? Analyses demonstrate that Lilly used different multilingual and rhetorical strategies to develop agency as a writer, supporting the notion that multilingual writing is a dynamic process and should be analyzed from a holistic perspective.

#### **Introduction**

In the early elementary years, emerging bilingual and multilingual writers are engaged in the complex processes of learning transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) across languages. At the same time, these writers are learning about different text types and how to express ideas within different genres. Their knowledge about writing comes from their ‘textual landscapes’ or every-day experiences with languages and culture in their social worlds (Bazerman, 2004; Clay, 1975; Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

Despite strong evidence that bilinguals and multilinguals communicate through an integrated linguistic network, the design of bilingual educational programming still tends to separate language instruction by time or space (Gort, 2015; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). In effect, this overlooks potential ways for students to “meet higher standards, specifically in academic writing, and to promote bilingual students’ self-regulation of their entire linguistic repertoire” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014, p. 7). How then are children developing as writers in bilingual schools that primarily separate language instruction by time and space? This qualitative study draws from ethnographic data to examine how Lilly, an Ahiskan-Turkish girl, developed agency and competency as a writer at her Spanish immersion school. In the following sections, I review the literature on writing and identity in bilingual contexts before discussing the research methods and findings.

### **Writer Identity in Bilingual Contexts**

Voice, or writer identity, is a contested term and difficult to define (Canagarajah, 2004; Elbow, 2007). From a critical socio-cultural perspective, I view the enactment of voice in writing as the progressive ability to invoke intertextuality—or draw from one’s socio-cultural and linguistic knowledge in order to successfully navigate complex textual worlds (Bazerman, 2004). Thus, for emerging multilingual students, agency as a writer involves the ability to take up various literate voices, languages and discourses to “play the game” and accomplish communicative acts (Ashley, 2001; Bakhtin, 1981; Bazerman, 2004). However, as discussed in Chapter 2, the focus of writing instruction can be constrained by assessments and writing policies that privilege particular languages, genres, and forms of writing more so than the development of students’ literate voices (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Spence, 2010).

Moreover, the design and implementation of language policy is greatly influenced by a monolingual framework and a parallel view of bilingualism (Garcia, 2009; Gort, 2015; Palmer, D., Henderson, K., Wall, D. et al., 2015). For example, a monolingual lens considers possessing one language as the norm while bilinguals are viewed as deficient or “semilingual” (Escamilla, 2006; Grosjean, 1989). A parallel view of bilingualism conceives the bilingual as “two monolinguals in one person” (Grosjean, 1989, p. 6). That is, the two languages should be equally fluent and they operate separately from each other. This separate view of bilingualism has informed how we teach language and measure students’ writing development. As seen in Chapter 2, I found that writing policies failed to incorporate goals that address the unique needs of multilingual learners. Similarly, in Chapter 3, students revealed the ways they wanted to be seen as writers by composing multilingual and multimodal texts while at the same time they were working through linguistic and social boundaries that perhaps were reinforced by curricular practices. In the next section, I discuss how multilingual writing is unique from monolingual writing and thus deserves to be analyzed using a multilingual perspective.

### **A Holistic Multilingual Approach to Writing**

As discussed above, bilingual education programs in the United States often operate by designating official times and spaces for instruction in English and the target language. Nevertheless, a growing body of research has found that despite these official language designations, emerging bilinguals engage in heteroglossic or hybrid language practices at school both spontaneously (Dorner & Layton, 2014) and when encouraged by teachers (Garcia, Markar, Starcevic, & Terry, 2011; Gort, 2006, 2012). In order to

understand the language practices of multilingual speech communities, the concept of *translanguaging* was developed and continues to evolve as more research takes place (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). Williams (1996) in Wales developed the term “trawsieithu” to refer to pedagogical practices in Welsh heritage language programs. In these programs, teachers planned instructional activities that called on students to use both English and Welsh. For example, students might be asked to read in one language and discuss it in another or plan for writing in one language and draft in another. Later, the term translanguaging was expanded by Garcia (2009) to include a bilingual approach to pedagogy, as well as a theoretical approach to studying and understanding the hybrid language practices of bilinguals. As the term continues to gain clarity and precision in the field, we can view translanguaging as the dynamic use of two or more languages to mediate learning and other sociolinguistic processes (Lewis et al., 2012).

Studies of writing in multilingual settings have also found that young writers engage in hybrid language practices both spontaneously and when encouraged by teachers (Gort, 2012; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). These practices demonstrate how multilingual writing development is distinct from monolingual writing in a number of important ways (Bauer & Gort, 2012). First, multilingual youth draw from both of their languages to produce writing in their respective languages. For example, as elementary-aged writers decipher the spelling-sound correspondences of their respective languages they have been found to apply phonological and orthographic knowledge of one language to write in another and this transfer occurs in both directions (Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005; Durgunoglu, Mir, & Arino-Marti, 2002). Secondly, when bilingual youth are asked to produce writing in one language at school, they may engage in bilingual

discussion, planning, and thought in order to produce a monolingual or bilingual text (Gort, 2006, 2012; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). Finally, a number of case studies have found that students from different language backgrounds have different patterns of language use in producing their written compositions and thus may need different kinds of support to develop writing competency in their respective languages (Gort, 2006; Serrano & Howard, 2007).

The research discussed above provides evidence that multilingual youth develop writing in ways that are unique to multilingual learners: (1) they draw from both of their languages to produce writing in either language; (2) they have unique patterns of language use depending on their language backgrounds and investments in each language; (3) they may need different kinds of support to develop writing in their respective languages. However, these findings must be considered in the contexts in which students produced writing. Most often, in research-task settings and educational settings, multilingual youth are asked to produce writing in one language and then their writing is analyzed for evidence of use of the other language. Or, during formal educational assessments the writing of emerging bilingual children is measured using assessment tasks and analytical rubrics that do not consider how students' languages are interacting and the time it takes to develop an academic voice (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Escamilla & Coady, 2000; Soltero-Gonzales et al., 2012; Spence, 2010). For example, Soltero-Gonzalez et al. (2012) argued for a holistic bilingual lens in analyzing the writing of emerging bilingual students. A holistic reading of students' texts can provide important insights as to how students are accessing their languages to develop writing competency and how teachers can provide further support (Soltero-Gonzalez et



al., 2012). However, their approach focused on the use of specific cross-linguistic strategies rather than the development of students' writer identities.

A few studies have worked to analyze the writing of multilingual youth in order to understand how they are developing academic voice. For example, Carbone and Orellana (2010) studied how Spanish-English bilingual middle school students took up academic voices in their English writing. The authors examined students' writing samples looking at two different essays on the same topic; one addressed to the government and another addressed to a parent. The authors found that although students' essays contained structural mistakes that might make their writing seem "irredeemable" the students clearly used appropriate rhetorical strategies and demonstrated their knowledge for making arguments relevant to their respective audiences (p. 309). They called for "new ways" to look at students' writing "beyond a narrow focus on correctness at the textual level" to considering how students take up voices as competent writers and how these efforts can be further supported (p. 310).

In offering a more comprehensive way to analyze and understand the writing of emerging bilinguals, Spence (2010) strongly critiqued the six-trait analytical rubric widely used across U.S. schools. Spence (2010) asked two bilingual teachers at a Spanish-English bilingual school to use the six-trait rubric and analyze the English writing of Dulce, a third-grade Spanish-dominant student. Spence found that teachers gave much more weight to the rubric criteria than their actual knowledge of Dulce. For example, the six-trait rubric did not measure how engaged Dulce was in the writing process and the effort she put into researching, drafting, discussing and editing her work. Instead of the typical writing rubric, Spence argued that a holistic reading of students'

texts can bring to light “the genre, content, and cultural context of writing” (p. 344).

From this perspective, a reader can focus on how students are developing an academic voice through their use of rhetorical and linguistic strategies rather than mistakes based on the limited and prescriptive criteria of analytical rubrics.

Most recently, Velasco and Garcia (2014) identified a number of different ways that elementary-age immersion students’ writing was supported by translanguaging. As Velasco and Garcia (2014) explained, in everyday life and in learning environments bilinguals engage in translanguaging practices or the strategic use of their languages to maximize understanding and communication. Specifically, translanguaging “stresses the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately” (p. 7). In addition to aiding in communication, theory suggests that translanguaging and other linguistic strategies are part of the unique practices that children use in developing a sense of agency as writers (Franquiz, 2012; Kabuto, 2011). In their study, Velasco and Garcia (2014) found that students used both English and the target languages to plan and draft their writing, to acquire vocabulary and retrieve words, and as a rhetorical strategy to engage their audience (Velasco & Garcia, 2014). Interestingly, from their initial sample of 24 pieces of writing, only eight texts showed evidence of translanguaging, but that may be because the authors primarily analyzed the resulting artifacts, rather than the process of creating the artifacts. Velasco and Garcia’s study called for more research into the nature of children’s translanguaging in writing and its relation to writing development.

Building from the research discussed above, this study took a holistic multilingual approach to examine the kinds of writing Lilly produced over time at her Spanish

immersion school. By holistic, I mean going beyond the rubric-oriented approach that primarily examines structural characteristics of writing to focus on the writer's understanding of ideas and genre and how they are using language to meet specific communicative goals. Because translanguaging and other cross-linguistics strategies are theorized to be part of how multilingual students acquire agency as writers, I also considered the ways Lilly accessed her languages and used other rhetorical strategies in her writing.

## Methods

### Data Sources and Analytical Procedures

**Writing samples.** Data come from Lilly's written and drawn artifacts collected during her second and third grade years. A total of 146 artifacts were collected and filed according to date. Reading through each sample, I developed document summaries that included the prompt/activity, grade and class in which each piece of writing took place. Documents were further categorized based on genre such as narrative, expository, illustration/drawing, letter, grammar/vocabulary worksheet, etc.

Table 7.

#### *Number of Documents From Each Genre/Grade/Language*

Genre	Grade 2 English	Grade 2 Spanish	Grade 3 English	Grade 3 Spanish	Total
Grammar	7		20		27
Vocabulary study	8	1	16	1	26
Science/Social Studies Worksheet		12		4	16
Narrative	7		4	3	14
Expository	4			8	12
Drawing	2	4	1	2	9
Book Summary	5			4	9

Word search			1	6	7
Reflection/Unit summary		6			6
Reading comprehension	1		2	2	5
Writing process	1		3		4
Opinion	1		1	1	3
Research	2	1			3
Survey	2				2
Descriptive	1				1
Friendly letter			1		1
Poem				1	1
Total	41	24	49	32	146

The samples collected provide a representative picture of the various kinds of writing Lilly did at SIES during her second and third grade years. In our second grade English Language Arts classes, I primarily spoke to students in English. However, I sometimes spoke Turkish with Lilly and Spanish with students from Spanish-speaking homes to explain directions, provide examples, or elaborate on particular concepts. Most of our writing activities asked students to produce writing in English. For example, students wrote in English for vocabulary study that corresponded to the words they were studying in Spanish class. They copied words in their notebooks and wrote the definitions and had some follow-up activities like cross-word puzzles and fill in the blanks. Students also wrote more extended texts including narratives, friendly letters, expository books, book summaries, and poems.

When Lilly expressed difficulty with writing in English, I used a number of strategies to help her. Sometimes, I asked her to start writing by dictating her ideas to me. I would write the first sentence or two and then ask Lilly to continue. Sometimes, I simply helped by calling out the spelling of words she wanted to know. Another strategy I used was to ask her if she would prefer to write in Spanish or Turkish. In one of our

earliest writing assignments, Lilly wrote *Hadas de una sirena*, a story in Spanish blending our unit of study on respect and Lilly's interest in mermaids.

During creative writing centers, Lilly chose her own topics to write about and sometimes chose to write in English, Turkish or Spanish. She wrote two informational books in English; one about Hummingbirds and another about trees. She wrote creative stories as well including a story in Turkish, English and Spanish about a trip to the museum and a bird that needed a home. She also wrote a story in Turkish about baking cake titled *Angela ve Lilly kek yapmayı seviyorlar* (*Angela and Lilly like to make cake*), and a story in English about a spider in her room.

In second grade Spanish classes, teachers reported that students were not writing extended stretches of text such as narratives or expository pieces but rather writing to respond to questions regarding science and social studies units. Students also copied words and definitions for vocabulary study and wrote brief summaries about what they learned in each unit.

In third grade English Language Arts students were expected to write in English. The teacher did not invite students to write in any other languages. They copied vocabulary words and wrote definitions. They also wrote sentences using their spelling words and were given opportunities to write narratives through creative writing prompts. Lilly wrote two narratives about what she did over the weekend, one creative story about being stranded in the desert, and a creative dialogue between a sheep and a bunny. She also wrote a friendly letter to a pen pal in Japan. In April 2013, students continued copying words and definitions and began writing essays in response to practice test prompts for the state test.

Third-grade Spanish teachers also expected students to write in Spanish and did not invite students to write in any other languages. The Spanish teachers reported that the majority of students' writing focused on expository essays related to the units of study. In total, students had written 15 essays or *publicaciones*. I collected eight of Lilly's publications that were printed in the class book. Some of them were missing from the class book because they were not completed on time or Lilly had been absent. The publications collected were on the following topics: *La Constitución* [*The Constitution*], *La granja lecheria* [*The dairy farm*], *La agricultura* [*Agriculture*], *Mi escuela* [*My school*], *Reciclar* [*Recycling*], *Saludable o no?* [*Is it healthy or not?*], *El agua* [*The water cycle*], *Servicios públicos* [*Public services*]. Lilly also wrote narratives on occasion including *Mi abuela* a story about her grandmother, a story about flowers, and a comic strip. She wrote two friendly letters to pen pals in Spain which I could not obtain since they were sent abroad. When test preparation began in April, students took time off from writing in Spanish to write in English for practice test essays.

**Lilly's language strategies.** After documenting the types of writing samples collected, I examined each of Lilly's texts for evidence that she strategically drew from her languages in her written compositions. That is, I noted when Lilly used two or more languages in the same text as well as whether or not she composed in other languages within the context of her Spanish and English classes. Using the categories developed by Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla and Hopewell (2012), I looked through each sample and coded for the following kinds of cross-linguistic strategies:

Table 8.

*Cross-linguistic Strategies*

<b>Location of occurrence</b>	<b>Strategy type/number code</b>
Word level	Phonetic transfer-1 Within-word mixed phonetic-2 Loan words-3 Nativized loan words-4 Semantic transfer-5
Sentence level	Syntactic transfer-6 Inter-sentential code-switching-7 Intra-sentential code-switching-8 Borrowing-9
Discourse level	Rhetorical structures-10 Punctuation-11

I analyzed 146 writing samples for evidence of cross-linguistic strategies and whether Lilly composed texts outside of the official language of instruction during Spanish and English class. Of the total sample, 25 texts demonstrated that Lilly primarily drew on knowledge of Spanish in her English writing, especially at the word- and sentence-level. Starting with second grade ELA, Lilly's file included 41 samples, 10 of which showed evidence of cross-linguistic strategies. From second grade Spanish, Lilly's file included 24 samples of which none showed evidence of cross-linguistic strategies. From third grade English, 13 out of 49 samples showed evidence of cross-linguistic transfer and from third grade Spanish, 2 of 32 showed cross-linguistic transfer. Lilly used 7 of the 10 cross-linguistic strategies listed in table 7 above. Table 9 provides examples of the strategies Lilly used.

Table 9.

*Examples of Cross-linguistic Strategies*

<b>Cross-linguistic transfer</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Loan words	Using a word from one language while writing in another	Bir gün ben y Angela art müzeyeye gittik.
Inter-sentential code-switching	Occurs between sentences; Begins in language 1 and ends in language 2	He put food in his coat and said, “ <u>ye kürküm ye!</u> ”
Bidirectional syntax transfer	Structures unique to one language are applied to the other	<u>A little nays girl</u> /A nice little girl
Bidirectional phonetic transfer	Principles unique to one language are applied to the other	<u>raits</u> / <u>writes</u> <u>sacrim</u> / <u>scream</u> dey/they

As I analyzed Lilly’s writing, I noted how languages interacted, for example, if the transfer was from English to Spanish or Turkish to English etc. Across the 25 samples, which contained use of linguistic strategies, transfer occurred bi-directionally across languages; for example, from Spanish to English and Turkish to English as well as from English to Spanish and Turkish. Table 10 below, provides the distribution, frequency and language direction of the strategies used. In the next section, I provide an analysis of Lilly’s writing from a holistic perspective that considers linguistic strategies as well as the genre, content and socio-cultural context in which the writing was produced.

Table 10.

*Distribution and Frequency of Linguistic Strategies*

<b><i>Location/Strategy/Language Direction</i></b>	
<b>Word Level</b>	<b>81</b>
<i>Phonetic transfer</i>	73
Spanish-English	53
Spanish/Turkish-English	20
<i>Nativized loan word</i>	2
English-Turkish	2



<i>Loan word</i>	6
Spanish-English	2
English-Spanish	2
Spanish-Turkish	1
Turkish-English	1
<b>Sentence Level</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Syntactic transfer</i>	6
English-Spanish	5
Turkish-English	1
<i>Intrasentential</i>	3
English-Turkish	1
Spanish-English	1
Turkish-Spanish-English	1
<i>Intersentential</i>	1

### Findings

In this section, I provide an analysis of Lilly's writing from a holistic perspective that considers linguistic strategies as well as the genre, content and socio-cultural context in which the writing was produced. The five texts I have selected to analyze here were produced by Lilly in different instructional contexts. The first three texts (*My story survey*, *Hadas de una sirena*, and *Angela ve Lilly kek yapmayı seviyorlar [Angela ve Lilly like to make cake]*) were written by Lilly during her second grade year in English language arts class. In this context, Lilly was primarily expected to write in English. Students were also invited to choose the languages they wrote in during creative writing centers. Lilly wrote the fourth text, *La agricultura* during her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Spanish class where she was expected to write in Spanish and did not have opportunities to draft or write creatively in English or Turkish. The fifth text was produced in Lilly's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English class where she was expected to write in English and did not have opportunities to draft or write creatively in her other languages. The texts from these different contexts reveal how Lilly used a number of linguistic and rhetorical strategies as she developed

her authorial voice and knowledge of genre. The first three texts illustrate the possibilities for writing that emerged when Lilly was invited to use her full multilingual abilities. The fourth text is an example of how Lilly was drawing from intertextual resources in order to practice and develop her use of academic discourse. The fifth text reveals how Lilly applied her own “funds of knowledge” from her cultural world to write a narrative in response to a practice test prompt. Taken together, these texts reveal how Lilly practiced writing in different instructional contexts and languages as she developed her voice as a writer.

### **Accessing Phonetic and Orthographic Knowledge**

Prior to second grade, Lilly had been receiving all of her literacy instruction in Spanish. More specifically, her writing instruction was provided in Spanish and she was expected to complete assignments using Spanish, the target language. Then, in the second half of Lilly’s second grade year, she began receiving English language arts instruction. As Lilly’s teacher, it was very fortunate that she and I both spoke Turkish and that I had intermediate knowledge of Spanish as well. I was flexible in terms of the languages in which Lilly practiced writing. I encouraged her to write in Spanish or Turkish when she felt frustrated or stuck in English. I also encouraged her to make her own choices about which language/s she wanted to write in during creative writing center. Sometimes writing in any language was a challenge, and I encouraged Lilly to dictate the beginning of her stories to me and write the rest on her own.

During this time, Lilly relied on her knowledge of Spanish phonology/orthography to begin writing in English. For example, in our first writing assignment, I asked students to fill out a survey on their personal lives in order to write a

narrative. We can see in the example below how Lilly accessed phonetic knowledge of Spanish to begin writing in English.

**READING** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Story

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks. Use these sentences to write a story about yourself.

I feel happy when in am walk with mi Familia

I feel sad when Wah Sami bavi Hrt may Filin

I am good at art SataF

Words that describe me: may Feyvrt akteviri az  
tuy gaw tay art mizimam

I can help at home by i cab help May man

My friends like me because i help May man at salinan

I like to gani pactare

My favorite food is pizza

My favorite animal is pozan sanek

Now . . . take your answers and write a story about **you!**

Figure 10. Lilly's My story survey, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, ELA

Throughout the text above, we see several examples of how Lilly's knowledge of Spanish mediated her English writing. First, in the words *sam bavi* [somebody] and *Filin* [feelings] Lilly showed her understanding of Spanish phonology when she substituted the letter "i" the Spanish equivalent for the sounds made by -y and-ee (the English phoneme /i/). Next, within the word *sambavi* [somebody], Lilly used the letter "a" approximating the Spanish sound for the English phonemes /ə/ and /a/. Another example of phonetic transfer from Spanish to English is seen in the word *may* [my] in which Lilly uses her knowledge of the Spanish diphthong "ay" as the equivalent for the -y English phoneme /aɪ/. Lilly also spelled the words *sataf* [stuff] and *sanek* [snake] by

inserting a vowel sound as Spanish does not use the –st or –sn consonant combination.

In addition to transferring phonetic knowledge, Lilly employed another word-level strategy by using a loan word—the Spanish word “mi” which is the equivalent of the English “my.”

### **Multilingual Knowledge To Scaffold Writing Competency**

Ten writing samples from Lilly’s second-grade English class showed evidence of similar cross-linguistic strategies. Within these samples, the strategy observed most was Lilly’s access of Spanish phonology and orthography as a resource for writing in English. However, during our second grade English class, I encouraged Lilly to write in her language of choice during creative writing centers. In the example below, Lilly chose to write a story in Spanish. She creatively blended her interest in mermaids with the unit of study at the time which was respecting ourselves and the world around us. Lilly also transferred syntactic knowledge of English to her writing in Spanish. For example, as Lilly had acquired English grammar before attending kindergarten in Spanish, it was taking some time for her to acquire aspects of Spanish grammar that were not present in English. In English there is only one definite article ‘the’ while there are four forms in Spanish depending on whether the noun is masculine/feminine or singular/plural. We can see an example of how Lilly’s knowledge of English grammar interacted in a Spanish story that she wrote during second grade ELA.

**Title:** *Hadas de un sirena*

*las sirenas son una niñas muy Felices y buenas. sirenas se cuida los niñas.*

*algunos sirenas no son respetos con niñas. pero las otros sirenas son muy*

*rispetuosos y megusta a Los niñas Respetuosos. y viven en el oseanos*

**English gloss:** [Mermaids are very happy and good girls. Mermaids protect the children. Some mermaids are not respectful with girls. But the others are very respectful and I like respectful girls. And they live in the oceans.]

In Lilly's mermaid story, she included an unnecessary use of the Spanish indefinite article *una* and forgot to add the plural ending *-s*. At the same time, she correctly used the plural adjectives *felices* and *buenas*. Then Lilly used the masculine plural form *los* instead of *las* on two occasions and correctly used *las* on one occasion. Finally, Lilly used the singular *el* instead of the plural *los* in the last sentence. Lilly's use of the definite articles reflects how she was acquiring Spanish—while she was getting one aspect of the definite article correctly such as the masculine or feminine she might forget the plurality aspect and vice versa.

In the next narrative, we see an intriguing example of how Lilly drew from all of her linguistic resources including knowledge of English, Spanish and Ahiska-Turkish to write a story in Turkish. Toward the end of second grade, during creative writing centers, Lilly wanted to write a story in Turkish. During creative writing centers, students developed their own writing projects choosing the genre, topic, and language/s they wanted to write in. Lilly most often chose to write in English with the following exceptions: a story in Spanish that I mentioned above, a thank you card in Turkish, a valentine card to her mother in Turkish, another story mentioned above written in English, Spanish and Turkish and the narrative below which I proceed to discuss. I provided students with different types of stationery and Lilly chose some paper with an illustration of two bunnies holding a strawberry shortcake on the cover. Lilly was

inspired by the colorful illustration and asked me to help her get started. She dictated the title to me which I transcribed and she wrote the rest of the story independently..

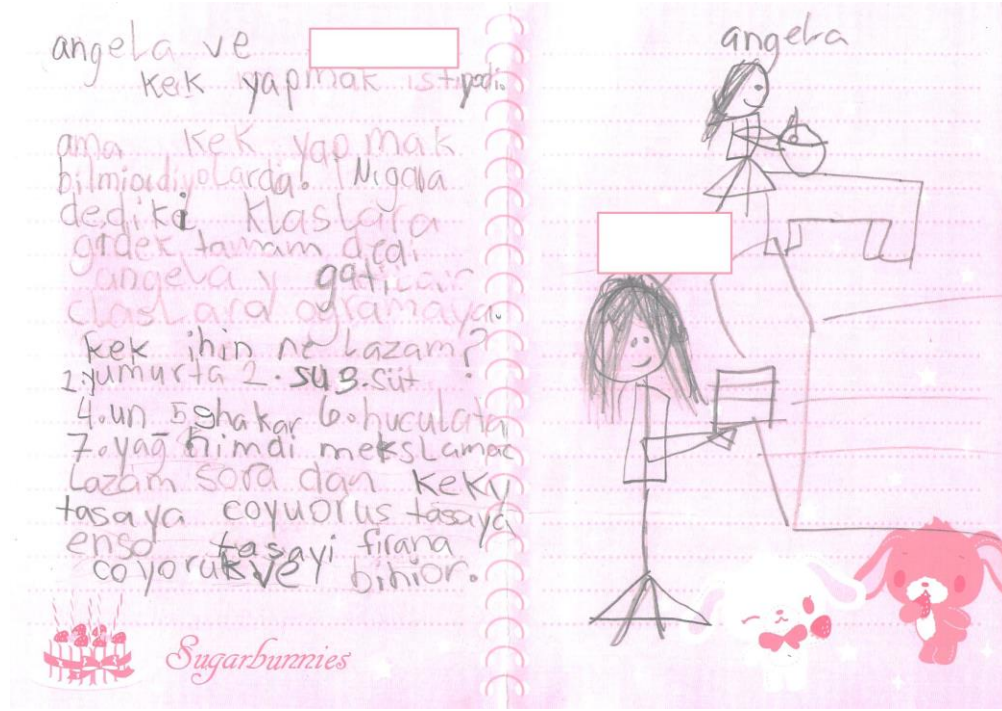


Figure 11. Lilly's cake story, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, ELA

**Title:**“Angela ve Lilly kek yapmayı seviyorlar”

angela ve Lilly kek yapmak istiyodi. Ama kek yapmak bilmiordiyelarda. Lilly dediki KLasLara gidek tamam dedi Angela y gatillar cLasLara ogramaya. Kek için ne lazım?1. yumurta 2. su 3. süt 4. un 5. şakar 6. huculata 7. yağ hindi mekslamak Lazam sora dan keky tasaya coyuorus tasaya enso tasayi firana coyoruk ve bihior.

**Turkish transcription:** Angela ve Lilly kek yapmayı seviyorlar (Angela ve Lilly kek yapmak istiyorlardı ama kek yapmayı bilmiyorlardı. Lilly dedi ki, “classlara gidek.” “Tamam,” dedi Angela ve gittiler classlara öğrenmeye. Kek için ne lazım 1. yumurta 2. su 3. süt 4. un 5. şeker 6 çikolata 7 yağ. Şimdi mikslamak lazım

sonradan keki tasaya koyuyoruz tasayi en son fırına koyuyoruk ve pişiyor).

**English gloss:** Angela and Lilly like to make cake

[Angela and Lilly wanted to make cake but they didn't know how. Lilly said, "let's go to some classes." "Okay," said Angela and they went to some classes to learn. What do you need to make cake? 1. egg, 2. water, 3. milk, 4. flour, 5. sugar, 6. chocolate, 7. oil. Now, it needs to be mixed. Then we put the cake in a pan. Finally, we put the pan in the oven and it cooks.]

The narrative above is significant for several reasons. First, it was interesting to find how well Lilly wrote in Turkish despite having no formal schooling in Turkish and having no books in Turkish at home. Also, this was only the third text that she had written in Turkish during our English class. Thus, Lilly's narrative above reflects how she drew from knowledge about writing in her other languages to write in Turkish. Also, it may have been relatively easy for Lilly to write in Turkish because like Spanish, Turkish spelling is very regular in that each word is spelled the way it sounds.

The above narrative is also important because it contains a number of linguistic strategies illustrating how Lilly activated knowledge of all her languages and intertextual knowledge to construct her story. For example, Lilly used several word-level strategies including phonetic transfer from English to Turkish, and Spanish to Turkish and phonetic/semantic knowledge of Ahiska Turkish. For example, Lilly's use of the words *gidek* [let's go] (instead of *gidelim*) and *koyuyoruk* [we put] (instead of *koyuyoruz*) are ways to conjugate verbs used in some dialects across Turkey as well as the Ahiska Turkish dialect. Lilly also used nativized loan words drawing from the English word 'class' to create the Turkish words *klasslara* (to classes) and a combination of Spanish

‘mezcla’ and English ‘mix’ to create the Turkish word *mekslamak* (to mix). Lilly demonstrated correct knowledge of Turkish syntax and English semantics as she properly applied Turkish endings to her English root words.

- *Lilly dedki klaslara gidek. (Lilly dedi ki derslere gidek.)*

[Lilly said let’s go to classes.]

- *himdi mekslamac lazam (Şimdi karıştırmak lazım)*

[Now, it needs to be mixed]

In the same text, Lilly also borrowed the Spanish word “y” for ‘and’ instead of the Turkish word ‘ve.’ Finally, Lilly wrote the word *shakar* (şeker) [sugar] in which she used phonetic knowledge of English -sh which is the equivalent of the Turkish -ş. Looking at the linguistic strategies Lilly used rather than simply identifying her mistakes revealed more information about how Lilly was developing her knowledge of syntax, semantics, and phonology in her languages.

Next, a holistic analysis of Lilly’s story considers how she used rhetorical strategies including how she organized her narrative, the theme and mood of the text, word choice and vocabulary development. For example, in terms of organization Lilly demonstrated intertextuality as she blended the narrative genre with her knowledge of recipes. She gave her story a title and began by introducing her topic and theme, “*Angela and Lilly wanted to make cake but they didn’t know how.*” Lilly captures the reader’s attention by introducing a problem and then in her next lines, the characters find a solution, “*Lilly said, “let’s go to some classes.” “Okay”, said Angela and they went to some classes to learn.*” Then Lilly demonstrates another organizational strategy, she uses a question within her narrative, “*What do you need to make cake?*” and follows up by



giving the ingredients in the recipe and the directions in a sequential order (i.e. now, then, finally). Lilly sets a playful mood at the beginning of her narrative, then the characters find out how to make cake and Lilly uses a more educational tone as she shares her familiarity of the subject through listing the proper ingredients and the basic process of how to make a cake.

A holistic approach to reading Lilly's narrative reveals that she is developing agency, creativity and linguistic flexibility as a writer. She drew from her languages to spell and even create new words. She demonstrated knowledge of various genres and took up different *voices*; first as a playful and inquisitive girl and then as a teacher/chef. Based on this text, to help Lilly further develop her authorial voice, I could suggest that she add more information to her story. For example, I could suggest her to tell the reader describe the setting of the cooking class and tell us more about each character. It also might be interesting to add more dialogue between characters. By adding more information, Lilly could invoke richer images in the story. Finally, to help improve the ending, it might be fun to know what happened after the characters baked their cake. Was it delicious? What kind of cake will they bake next? A holistic approach to reading Lilly's narrative allows the teacher to focus on important aspects of writing development and give feedback about how to improve the content and delivery of the message.

### **Developing an Academic Voice**

While Lilly's writing samples collected from Spanish classes did not exhibit examples of translanguaging or cross-linguistic transfer on paper, they do provide insight as to how Lilly was developing her literate voice. As mentioned earlier, many of the writing samples collected from third-grade Spanish were from the expository essay genre.

In writing their publicaciones, students were given a specific prompt and were able to draw from work they had done previously as scaffolds for writing. For example, in writing the essay below about agriculture, Lilly drew from a vocabulary worksheet she had completed previously.

NOMBRE: \_\_\_\_\_ FECHA \_\_\_\_\_

cultivar - ~~granja~~ - ~~agricultura~~ - ~~lechería~~ - ~~alimento~~ - ~~productos lácteos~~

La agricultura es la actividad más importante del mundo. Nuestra comida y alimento viene de la agricultura.

Casi todo lo que comemos se cultiva en las granjas. Una granja lechera puede producir mucha leche; la leche cruda luego se lleva a una lechería donde se envasa la leche y se hacen los productos cultivados.

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~~productor~~ - ~~consumidor~~ - ~~descomponedor~~ - ~~depredador~~

presa - ~~carnívoro~~ - ~~herbívoro~~

Figure 13. Lilly's vocabulary worksheet, third grade, Spanish



intertextual nature of how she was practicing writing in an academic voice and acquiring knowledge of the informational genre.

Finally, to further interrogate how Lilly was developing an authorial voice, I discuss an essay that Lilly wrote in third-grade English class in preparation for the state test. This section offers a holistic reading of Lilly's essay focusing on her ideas as a writer and her knowledge of genre rather than focusing on the structural characteristics of her writing alone. Before writing the essay, Lilly and her classmates quietly read a short story about a Native-American girl who forgot to help her friends. Then, Lilly's third grade English teacher, Ms. Candace passed out two sets of papers; one for drafting and one for final copy. Students were advised to (1) use their pre-writing paper to plan and make sure they had a beginning, middle, and end to their story and (2) use their final draft paper to write their essay. The practice test prompt asked students to write their own story about someone who remembered to help a friend. Although this was a practice test, Ms. Candace gave me permission to guide Lilly and offer explanations when necessary.

I asked Lilly what she would like to write about and she said "Me helping my mom make food." Then I asked "What kind of food? Tell me some details" and Lilly replied "Pilav!" Next, I encouraged Lilly to *plan* her story. During the previous week while taking a practice test, I noticed that Lilly and many of her classmates used their planning paper, not to plan, but simply to begin writing their stories and then copy their original stories onto the final draft paper. This time, Lilly wrote: *biganin, mitale, end* [beginning, middle, end] vertically on her planning paper and I exclaimed "Great job, you remembered from the last time we practiced!" Lilly then talked to me about the elements that would be in her story and wrote the following plan:

Original Spelling	Transcription
<i>biganin-This story is going to be about me Halping my mom.</i>	[Beginning- This story is going to be about me helping my mom.]
<i>I halpt my mom to cak food pilofe.</i>	[I helped my mom to cook food pilaf.]
<i>mitale-i am going to tell about The speshal food that we made.</i>	[Middle- I am going to tell about the special food that we made.]
<i>end- at The end my anti tried it and she said is good.</i>	[End- At the end my auntie tried it and she said it is good.]

After planning her story, it was time for Lilly to write her final draft. She gave her story a title and wrote the following:

*How I Halpt my mater make pilaf.*

[How I helped my mother make pilaf.]

*One day my anti was coming to dinar and I wantadt to impres her wate making pilafe. So then I Halp my mom mak pilaf. It was isy. I waste the rais and patit in the pan. At the end my anti like the pilaf. I felt so happy that I halpt my mom and inprest my anti.*

[One day my auntie was coming to dinner and I wanted to impress her with making pilaf. So then I helped my mom make pilaf. It was easy. I washed the rice and put it in the pan. At the end my auntie liked the pilaf. I felt so happy that I helped my mom and impressed my auntie.]

As Lilly's former second-grade English Language Arts teacher and as a participant observer in her third grade classes, I was able to read the above passage through a holistic lens and felt especially proud of Lilly. A focus on meaning reveals that her voice as an author was resonating; she was writing about a special, personal

experience and sharing aspects of her cultural world with the reader. The above text reveals a number of important insights about Lilly's writing development. First, in her correct use of the phrases *One day, so then, and at the end*, Lilly demonstrates her knowledge of narrative structure and her ability to retell events in a sequential order. Next, although Lilly makes some spelling mistakes she demonstrates her vocabulary development in English as in her use of the words *impres* [impress] and *inprest* [impressed].

In addition to demonstrating knowledge of narrative structure and writing on the given topic, Lilly personalized her writing by letting the reader know how she felt. Her use of language reflected confidence and pride in her knowledge and skills about cooking; making rice was *easy* for her, she wanted to *impress* her auntie, her auntie *liked* the rice, she felt *happy* that she *helped her mom and impressed her auntie*. Further, reading this passage as a Turkish-American, I understood the subtle cultural messages embedded in Lilly's writing—that rice pilaf is one of our most beloved foods and that it takes technique to cook it in the right way. Finally, in Turkish culture, cooking is an important skill as well as a form of art that people appreciate. For all of these reasons, I understood Lilly's anticipation to impress her aunt by cooking pilav well at a young age. As I thought about Lilly's writing from my own perspective, I wondered what score she might receive from a different reader—a test rater; someone who might get distracted by spelling mistakes, someone who might focus on the brevity of the passage rather than the content and depth of the story, someone who did not know anything about Lilly's multilingual ability.

## Discussion

Previous research has theorized that bilingual and multilingual children's translanguaging practices contribute to their development of agency and voice as writers. However, few studies of writing in immersion programs and other contexts have looked at how students from minority language backgrounds acquire writing in English and an additional language at school. In contrast, this study examined a trilingual student's writing development through a holistic multilingual approach. First, as a second-grader, Lilly's knowledge of Spanish and Turkish mediated her writing in English. She drew from her knowledge of both Spanish and Turkish orthography, phonology, and vocabulary to write English texts. Second, in second grade in which I developed a context that encouraged multilingualism, Lilly took opportunities to write in Spanish and Turkish during English class, what some authors have defined as translanguaging (Gort, 2012; Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). These texts provided a glimpse into the inner-workings of Lilly's knowledge of syntax, semantics, phonology, orthography, genre and rhetorical structures in Spanish, English and Turkish.

A holistic multilingual reading of Lilly's texts demonstrates that being able to draw from her full linguistic repertoire allowed her to exercise her voice as an author. For example, in one of our earliest writing assignments, Lilly wrote in Spanish weaving together her interest in mermaids while at the same time discussing the assigned topic of respecting ourselves and others. Lilly was able to express complex ideas in Spanish that addressed the writing assignment that she had not yet developed in English written speech. Another example of how translanguaging afforded Lilly an agentic voice comes from the story she wrote in Turkish about making cake. Lilly traversed linguistic

boundaries and created new words like ‘mekslamak’ a combination of Spanish ‘mezcla’, English ‘mix’ and Turkish verb tense demonstrating the richness of her languages.

This study demonstrated that Lilly had opportunities to practice writing in English, Spanish and Turkish. However, out of 146 writing samples, only 25 exhibited evidence of translanguaging or cross-linguistic strategies on paper. That is not to say that Lilly did not engage in other kinds of translanguaging while developing her voice as a writer. A limitation of this study is that it focuses solely on translanguaging as observed on finished products rather than how it may occur during the act or process of writing. However, by looking across the samples, the narrative genre as well as creative writing activities seemed to encourage Lilly’s translanguaging practices in her written speech. Other genres such as grammar worksheets, reading comprehension questions and vocabulary study made Lilly’s use of only one language at a time visible on paper.

### **Summary**

In Summary, a holistic multilingual approach to analyzing Lilly’s writing provided insights into how a trilingual student was developing her voice as a writer over time. This approach attended to the context in which Lilly produced her writing as well as how she drew from her linguistic, cultural and intertextual resources to make meaning and acquire knowledge of different genres in written speech. A holistic multilingual reading of Lilly’s texts provided evidence of how she used Spanish to begin writing in English, how she transferred knowledge of writing in both Spanish and English to write a Turkish text, and how she drew from intertextual resources as she constructed knowledge of academic discourse. Understanding Lilly’s ideas and knowledge of genre offered a fuller perspective of how to further support writing competency in her languages.



Traditional writing assessments and rubrics would not be able to capture the richness of Lilly's multilingual ability and thus offer a very limited perspective.

Lilly's case demonstrates the need for teachers in immersion programs to be responsive to students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Despite the official separation of languages in the classroom, writing instruction must be inclusive of students' full linguistic repertoire in order to support their writing competency. In conclusion, teachers can create learning environments and writing activities that are conducive to the natural ways multilingual children use languages.

### **Chapter 5: Possibilities for Writing Instruction in Immersion Classrooms**

While language immersion schools are on the rise in the United States, they are uniquely positioned in the crux of educational policy and national rhetoric that favors monolingualism rather than bilingualism (Cervantes-Soon et al., forthcoming; Gort, 2015; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus & Henderson, 2014). As language immersion schools are staking a claim for equitable education for students from all linguistic backgrounds there is a critical need to understand the complexities involved as youth learn to write in two or more languages. Yet we rarely hear from children in immersion programs about their literacy learning experiences. In this dissertation, I set out to investigate how four multilingual youth from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were developing writing at their Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES). In designing this project, I wanted to make children's experiences seen and heard as a way to bring their strengths and needs to the forefront and better understand how they were constructing self-concepts as writers.

Guided by socio-cultural theories and critical discourse analysis I viewed children's writing development through the metaphors of practices, narratives and voice and came to understand how children were negotiating power relationships between authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses. In this concluding chapter, I discuss how the methodological approach and findings of this project contribute to the study of childhood writing. I follow with implications for writing instruction in multilingual contexts. Finally, I discuss limitations and provide ideas for future research.

### **Reflecting on Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis**

To undertake this research, I drew from critical discourse studies anchored by an ethnographic approach to language and literacy research (Rogers, 2003). An ethnographic approach calls for the researcher to become, as much as possible, a part of the social context being studied (Heath and Street, 2008). An ethnographic approach allowed me to construct a thick description of school life at SIES and carefully attend to the social and cultural practices that were shaping children's writing development.

I began my role in this study first as a teacher. Before I began teaching second grade English language arts at SIES, I had some vivid pictures in my mind of the learning environment and the literacy activities I wanted to create for my students. From all of my course readings on literacy development and previous experiences with teaching young learners, I knew that we needed a literacy rich environment for students with engaging books and writing activities. I planned to read a variety of books with my second-graders and talk with them about each book. I planned for my students to have choices about the books they read and the writing they did. I was also excited about learning from my students and wanted to share my love for reading, writing and languages with them. Before I began teaching, I also attended a two-day workshop on the school's inquiry curriculum where I developed lesson plans around children's literature based on the unit of inquiry. When I began teaching at SIES, I started to put my plans into motion and also began traversing some unexpected terrain.

On the first day of our English classes, I came ready with a plan to read *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf. I selected this book because it was described as a story about being true to oneself and we were studying the theme of respecting ourselves and

the world around us. I walked in the classroom, introduced myself to students and then asked them to sit on the floor in a circle while I read to them. Little did I know that my students were going to get up and start running around and that they were not interested in reading *The Story of Ferdinand* at all! One of my students, an African-American boy, told me, “This book looks like it’s for babies!” After some wrangling, I gathered students to sit in a circle and read them the story. This experience started my journey as I navigated between authoritative discourses (my interpretations of how to teach literacy and implement the state expectations and the school’s inquiry curriculum) and students’ internally persuasive discourses (their interests and desires). As I got to know students, I became more aware of how to create space for literacy activities that would meet our curricular requirements while at the same time build from students’ interests.

In addition to creating space for student-driven literacy learning, I was also challenged in my efforts to support multilingual learning in our English language arts class. I sometimes spoke Spanish (and Turkish to Lilly) to translate words or explain instructions and concepts and was surprised that students from English-speaking homes opposed my use of languages other than English. I understood that they wanted an official time for English to be privileged. While I respected their perspectives, I also knew that my use of Spanish and Turkish would not overshadow our focus on English and continued to take a multilingual approach. I tried to broaden students’ perspectives by playing multilingual games, reading books about being bilingual and inviting students to choose which language they would like to write in during creative writing centers.

In the following year, I was able to change roles and observe my students’ third grade writing experiences from a different perspective. In taking an ethnographic

approach as both an insider (teacher) and outsider (observer) in the classrooms and students' lives, I was able to "cross cultural borders" (Orellana, 2015, p. 5), slow down, and look more in-depth at how students were participating in literacy at school. I asked students to become co-researchers with me and create texts about writing in their languages. As I interviewed students and listened to their experiences, I learned so much more about how they were constructing identities as writers. An ethnographic stance propelled me to go back and forth through the looking glass, if you will, to reflect on my experiences as a teacher and in turn ask my students to teach me about their literate lives.

While ethnography allowed me to develop an insider perspective as both a teacher and participant observer with my students, critical discourse theory and analysis provided the framework for interpreting data. CDA pushed me to look at the educational policies and practices that we educators often take as given or standard procedure and make them "strange" as Gee (2011) describes. As a teacher, it had not occurred to me to critically examine or question the way writing was discursively constructed in our educational policies and classroom practices. However, ethnography paired with a critical discourse lens afforded me with tools to examine and interpret the power relationships between institutional academic discourses and students' identities as writers.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Socio-cultural theories and theories of critical discourse analysis must consider more nuanced ways to conceptualize and analyze children's literacy and identity development as congruent processes. Critical studies of language and literacy are working to expand our understanding of youth language practices in terms of identity diversity and complexity within local and global social spheres (Blommaert & Backus,

2013; Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Pennycook, 2010). New theories continue to examine language and identity as relational constructs (Pennycook, 2010). In this study, students' writer identities were linked to whether they felt as belonging or not belonging to a particular speech community. The students expressed a range of emotions about themselves as writers from confident and interested to doubtful and worried. These feelings demonstrate how students were constructing writer identities as they negotiated between their inner self-concepts and outward social structures such as race, nationality, class and gender (Norton and Toohey, 2011).

While critical discourse studies theorize identities as dynamic and relational, so too are language practices. As discussed in this dissertation, the field of bilingual education continues to push for a dynamic understanding of how multilingual youth develop literacy in their languages. Monolingual and monoglossic frameworks guide educational policies and the assessment of multilingual youth. However, new theories of languaging or "doing language" stress a need to understand the heteroglossic nature of literacy development in multilingual contexts (Creese and Blackledge, 2011; Garcia, 2009a). This includes an understanding of the multiple ways students make meaning through both spoken and written speech as well as visual and physical ways of meaning. For example, when I asked students to use pictures and words to create idea maps about writing in their languages, they blended languages, genres, images and play to create multilingual and multimodal texts. Similarly, in our interviews, students mentioned multilingual literacy events that they initiated outside of the official writing assignments at school. For instance, Carmen mentioned that she and her friend Veronica often helped classmates from English-speaking backgrounds with writing in Spanish. Zane said that at

home he often wrote letters in Spanish to his uncle and then “transported” (translated) them in English. Francisco and Zane also played Pokémon in both Spanish and English during their free time with friends at school. Lilly searched for things on the internet at home with her mom and translated them from English to Turkish. All of these rich language practices could be acknowledged and built upon at school to support students’ literacy learning and overall communicative competency. Thus, theories of writing development must help us consider the multiple kinds of writing students are doing rather than basing development on what students have put on paper within monolingual and mono-modal frameworks of instruction and assessment. An intertextual approach to writing development would broaden our gaze and consider how students weave together their cultural worlds within the written word to accomplish specific communicative goals.

### **Implications for Writing Policy and Instruction**

As prior research has shown, this study demonstrated that immersion schools are faced with a number of challenges regarding equitable teaching practices and policies (Cervantes-Soon, et al., forthcoming, Dorner & Layton, 2013; Palmer, 2010). Firstly, the socio-political and educational status difference between English and Spanish at SIES posed challenges to designing equitable education for students from different language backgrounds. In Chapter 2, I found that classroom writing policies re-voiced state policies more so than the school’s vision for writing instruction. Policies at the state and school levels both failed to account for the needs of bilingual/multilingual students. In effect, this may have constrained the writing guidelines crafted by teachers. For example, CDA calls for a description of how ideas are re-produced, transformed or resisted within particular contexts. In Chapter 2, recall that Lilly’s nickname for the writing center in

Spanish class was ‘the police center.’ This nickname represents how Lilly and perhaps others were resisting the writing center by labeling it as a place which enforced rigid rules or time frames. As teachers, we want to encourage children’s joy for writing and certainly don’t want our students to view the writing center as a space for enforcing strict rules or steps.

The status difference between English and Spanish at SIES was also evident as the school was required by the state to test students in English language arts and mathematics after only one and a half years of instruction in English. In Chapter 3, Carmen expressed her feelings about Spanish class as follows: *“I feel great that I’m learning more Spanish and more English and I’m glad that we have English class because people keep talking in English, English, and maybe they got an idea to make English”*. This comment refers to Carmen’s concern that her school was becoming less focused on Spanish as time was being taken away to complete test preparation activities in English. This sent a clear message to students about the importance of English over bilingualism.

Put another way, the definitions of writing in the language of schooling can broaden or constrain students’ understandings of what it means to be an effective writer. Based on these findings, I strongly encourage teachers and administrators in immersion programs to carefully examine their writing guidelines and tailor them to meet the needs of multilingual learners. Further, from my own personal experience, I learned and this dissertation has demonstrated that teachers need support in navigating the multiple frameworks and ideas presented in state requirements and school curricula in order to



craft classroom policies that consider goals for bilingualism and writing for meaningful purposes.

In addition to creating a school policy with goals for multilingual writers, classrooms should also display these goals and make them visible to students. Theories of language and literacy development argue that students' academic engagement is linked to how well they can navigate structural power relations implicit within schools and society (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011). I found that my students' self-concepts as writers were linked to their investment in each language—that is how they were positioned within a community of language users. These results suggest a need for classroom practices to affirm students' multilingual identities (Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera & Cummins, 2015). Writing instruction that draws from students' interests and strengths or “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) can support academic identity investment. Further, critical literacy pedagogical practices and the use of bilingual and multicultural literature to explore themes of language, race, class and identity could support more integrative relationships among students (Naqvi et al., 2013).

Teachers, administrators, and policy makers should make writing instruction inclusive of the needs of multilingual learners. This includes the way writing instruction is carried out, the goals of writing instruction and the way students' written products are evaluated. Below, I offer a rationale with specific ways that educators can create and develop a multilingual writing curriculum.

1. Children's languages are part of an integrated network not isolated systems. Therefore, multilingual writers can use their languages to think

about writing, to plan for writing, and to talk with their teachers and classmates about writing.

2. Students from different language backgrounds may need support in specific registers and discourses to develop writing competency in their languages. Teachers can provide balanced opportunities for students to practice writing in both social and academic genres in their languages.
3. Students need to develop a connection to their respective language communities. Teachers can create games, activities and environments that support multilingual play and interaction.
4. Students need to see that their identities are affirmed and valued at school. Therefore they should have many opportunities to choose the language/s they want to write in, the genre of the text, and the topics they want to write about.
5. Translanguaging practices offer a number of important scaffolds and strategies that students can employ to solve problems and accomplish writing goals. For example, students can use their languages as a scaffold to plan for writing, as a resource for building vocabulary knowledge, and as a rhetorical strategy to express creativity and engage the audience. Students should also have access to bilingual dictionaries and bilingual books to support reading comprehension and writing competency.

The goal of writing instruction is to support students' understanding of how to use written speech effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes. As such, writing policies and instruction should help students acquire an increasing meta-knowledge about

both the forms and functions of writing in their languages. Further, writing assessments for multilingual learners must take into account the context in which students produce writing as well as the cultural and linguistic resources they are drawing from. These goals are not exhaustive but provide an example of how teachers and students could discursively construct a writing environment that foregrounds multilingual communication as the goal rather than simply monolingual writing in Spanish class and monolingual writing in English class.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The claims made in this study may be limited by several factors. First, although schools are inherently literate places organized by written laws, rules, curricula, lesson plans and a myriad of other documents, choosing to examine writing policy documents and students' responses to them as representations of social practices offers only one aspect of a complex story. Teachers' perspectives and experiences were missing; their beliefs about writing and everyday practices cannot be gleaned from analyzing writing policy documents alone. Second, it is important to consider the timing of the interviews. Students were interviewed about their writing experiences during a particular context of writing instruction in which they were preparing for the state standardized test in English and Mathematics. While students did reflect on past writing experiences they also discussed writing as it was taking place in that particular moment in time. Their responses provided valuable insights into how immersion programs must grapple with required testing in English. However, students may have discussed writing differently had they been interviewed during a non-testing time of year, rather than the first year that they experienced the standardized state tests. Finally, the writing samples collected in

third grade were limited to what teachers had saved from students' work; primarily "publicaciones" in Spanish class and vocabulary words/sentences in English class. Thus, there were limited examples of writing from other genres.

### **Implications for Further Research**

This study took place at a new Spanish language immersion school in a Midwestern city where language enrichment education was not otherwise offered. More research is needed on how new immersion schools are working to support the literacy development of multilingual youth from diverse backgrounds. There are especially few studies that focus on the experiences of African-American and youth from language backgrounds other than English and the target language of the school. The students in this study demonstrated the social nature of writing development and the intertextual nature in which they drew from their languages and interests to create their identity texts. However, we did not get a chance to use the identity texts as part of a classroom writing activity. More research could examine the use of identity texts as pedagogical tools for writing instruction.

In addition, the students in this study demonstrated that their orientations toward writing shifted depending on several factors including the genre and context of the writing as well as their investment in the imagined language communities. While Chapter 3 gave details on students' self-concepts as writers, we know little about how writer identities change or shift depending on not only language but genre and register whether academic or social. Thus, further research could examine how students from diverse backgrounds develop their intertextual resources for writing in a variety of genres in their respective languages.

### Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I have examined how four students from different linguistic backgrounds were constructing writer identities at their Spanish immersion school. I set out to explore three interrelated aspects of writer development: (1) the *discursive practices* through which writing policy is created and enacted, (2) students' *narratives* of literacy or the stories they have constructed about themselves as literate beings, and (3) the development of one multilingual writer's *voice*. As I worked to interpret and present the data discussed in this dissertation, I offered critiques of monolingual writing policies and assessments that couldn't account for how students' were developing their ideas about writing and attitudes toward writing. I was also challenged and constrained by the genre of academic writing to portray my findings in such a way that could express the richness of students' lives and experiences. My students' revealed so many possibilities for writing through their creative multilingual practices beyond the typical genres that we often encounter in school. As a concluding thought, I hope that this research inspires educators to make space for children to explore, play and experiment with new ways to present their ideas. I believe that students have much to teach us if we are willing to listen and learn from them.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocols

- I. Idea Maps: Being a multilingual writer
  1. Today we're going to make an idea map. What do you think an idea map is or have you made one before?
  2. An idea map is a collection of drawings, pictures, words and phrases all connected to the same idea. For example, if we make an idea map of X what might be some words, phrases, or experiences that come to mind?
  3. Today, we are going to make an idea map all about being a writer in two or more languages.
  4. You can start by drawing yourself as a writer and then draw, write, and talk about your experiences with writing in Spanish, English, Turkish and any other languages you know.
  5. (Written instructions, will also provide Spanish and Turkish) Make an idea map of being a multilingual writer. Show the kinds of writing that you do in Spanish/English/Turkish.
  6. Follow-up questions:
  7. You showed me some of your writing/drawing around the school/classroom; where else do you write?
  8. What are your favorite things to write about?
  9. How do you feel when you write for a test/ write with friends for fun/ write an essay for school/write on the computer?
  10. What do you do when you don't know how to spell a word in English, Spanish, Turkish?
  11. Who do you share your writing with?
  12. What makes someone a good writer in Spanish/English? How do you know?
  
- II. Timelines: Writing memories and milestones
  1. Tell me about this work you completed.
  2. Select a piece from each grade level/language. Tell me about how your writing looks at each grade. How has your writing changed over time?
  3. Which are some of your favorite pieces of writing and why? What do you remember about these pieces of writing?
  4. Have you ever had a difficult time with writing? What was it like?
  5. What do you notice about your writing in English/Spanish/Turkish/etc.?
  6. Find out if participants are familiar with time-lines (have they seen one before, what do time-lines show etc.)
  7. Show an example of a time-line. What are the milestones/big moments?
  8. What kinds of writing did you do in Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade? How has your writing changed over time?
  
- III. Self-Portraits

1. Draw yourself as a writer

IV. Reading inventory

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read each sentence. Circle the one that describes you best!**

- |  |        |           |       |
|--|--------|-----------|-------|
| 1. I like to read at home.                                 | always | sometimes | never |
| 2. I enjoy reading with my friends.                        | always | sometimes | never |
| 3. I like when an adult reads to me.                       | always | sometimes | never |
| 4. I like when someone listens to me read.                 | always | sometimes | never |
| 5. I like going to the library.                            | always | sometimes | never |
| 6. I can figure out the meaning of a word in a sentence.   | always | sometimes | never |
| 7. I like when my teacher says we are reading a new book.  | always | sometimes | never |
| 8. I like to read books that have pictures.                | always | sometimes | never |
| 9. I would rather read a chapter book than a picture book. | always | sometimes | never |

**Answer the following questions.**

1. Do you read at home? \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you find books you love to read? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Besides books, what other types of materials do you read? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you do at the library (internet, check out books, read magazines, etc.)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How do you feel when you are reading a book silently? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How do you feel when the teacher asks you to read aloud to the class? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What do you do when you come to a word you don't know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete these sentences.**



1. One of my favorite authors is \_\_\_\_\_
2. The best book I have read recently is \_\_\_\_\_
3. The topics I enjoy reading about are \_\_\_\_\_
4. As a reader, I'm good at \_\_\_\_\_
5. I could improve my reading by \_\_\_\_\_
6. What I like most about reading is \_\_\_\_\_

**List books that you have read.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**List five things you like to read about.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## V. Writing inventory

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read each sentence. Circle the one that describes you best!**

- |  |        |           |       |
|--|--------|-----------|-------|
| 1. I like to draw.                                 | always | sometimes | never |
| 2. I draw a lot at school.                         | always | sometimes | never |
| 3. I like writing at home and during my free time. | always | sometimes | never |
| 4. I like writing notes and letters to people.     | always | sometimes | never |
| 5. I like writing at school.                       | always | sometimes | never |
| 6. I enjoy sharing my writing with others.         | always | sometimes | never |
| 7. I have trouble thinking about what to write.    | always | sometimes | never |
| 8. Writing is difficult.                           | always | sometimes | never |
| 9. I wish I had more time to write at school.      | always | sometimes | never |
| 10. I am a good writer.                            | always | sometimes | never |

**Answer the following questions.**

1. Do you write at home? \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What kinds of things do you write? (poems, stories, letters, comics, etc.)

---



---

3. What topics do you like to write about (your life, heroes, animals, sports, adventures, imaginary worlds etc.)

---

4. How do you feel when you share your writing with others?

---



---

5. What do you do when you don't know how to spell a word?

---



---

6. Do you ever get stuck when you're writing? \_\_\_\_\_ What do you do?

---



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7. What have you learned about writing in two languages that can help other kids?

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VI. Bilingual poem

## Appendix B: Transcription Conventions

**CDA Transcription Key:** Adapted from (Atkinson and Heritage)

/ A slash indicates a long pause in speech (1-2 seconds)

( ) In parentheses various characteristics of talk and movement or other contextual information is displayed in *italicized* text

**Bold** marks extra stressed words or syllables

Capital letters represent an utterance much louder or with a stronger emphasis than surrounding talk

[ ] Translation appears in brackets

Note: (1) [Translation of Spanish or Turkish will follow in brackets]

**Multimodal Transcription Key:** Adapted from (Norris, 2004)

1. From left to right: images followed by text
2. Image descriptions: (in parentheses)
3. Contextual descriptions: *in italics*
4. Student's original spelling: Times New Roman font
5. Conventional spelling and translation:[in square brackets]

### Appendix C: Timelines

¿Cómo se aprende a leer y escribir en dos o más idiomas?/How do people learn to read and write in two or more languages?

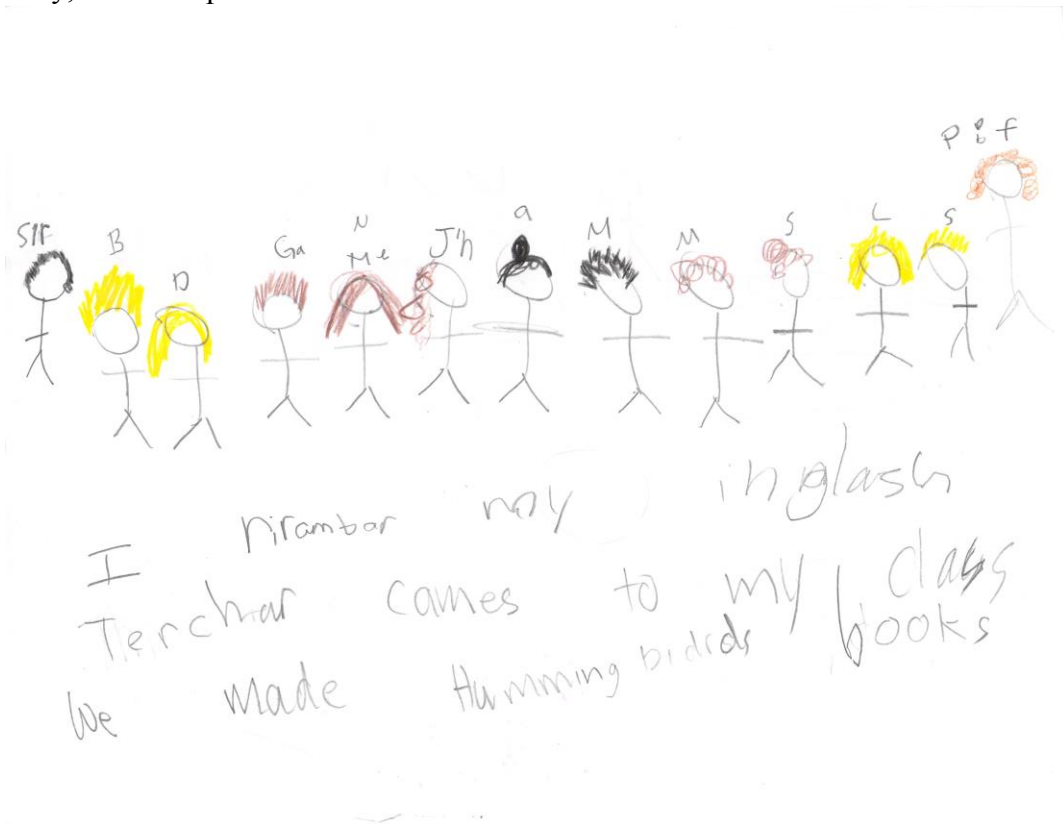
Hace dibujos y escribe sobre cómo aprendió a leer y escribir en dos idiomas/Draw pictures and write a story telling how you have learned to read and write in two languages.



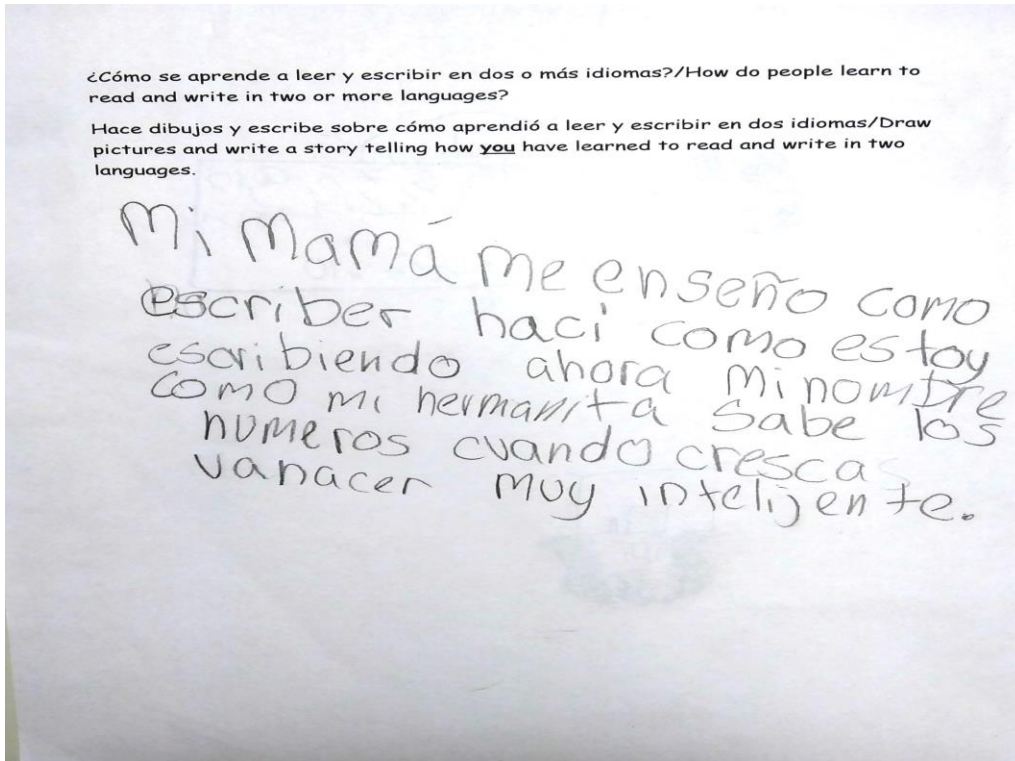
I am in  
kardar gardening making  
arte work



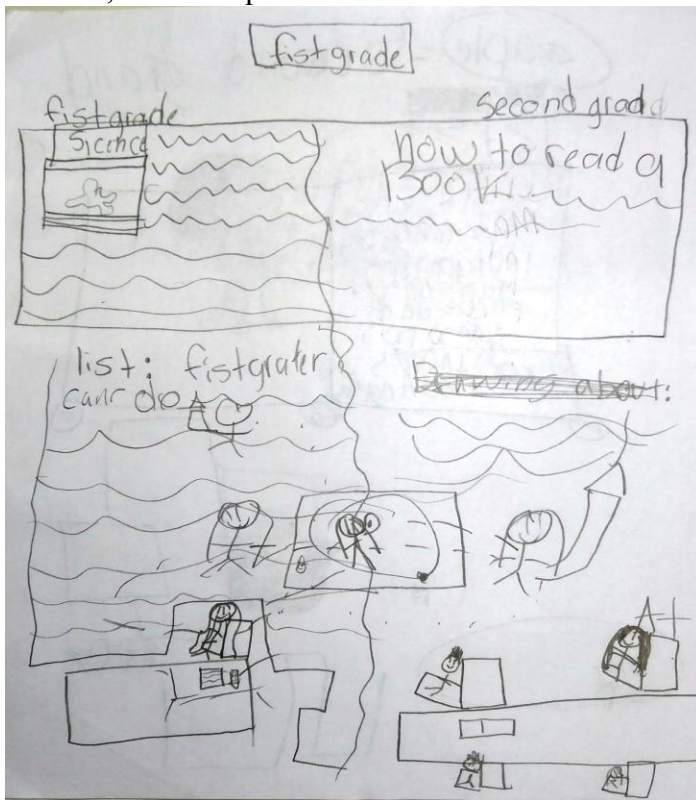
Lilly, Timeline p. 2



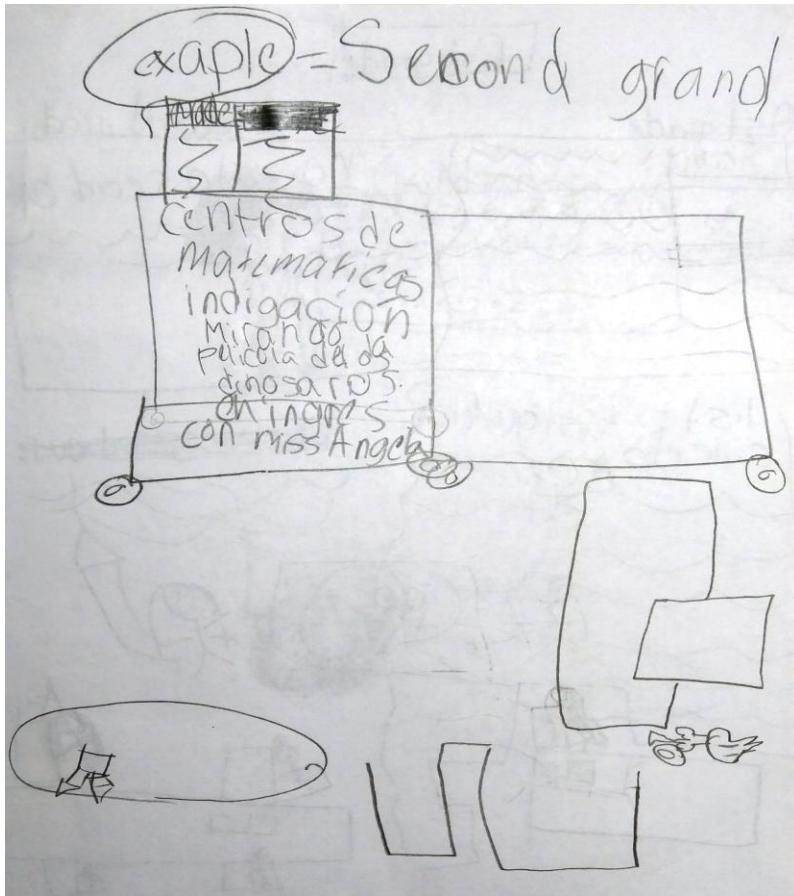
Lilly, Timeline p. 3



Carmen, Timeline p. 1

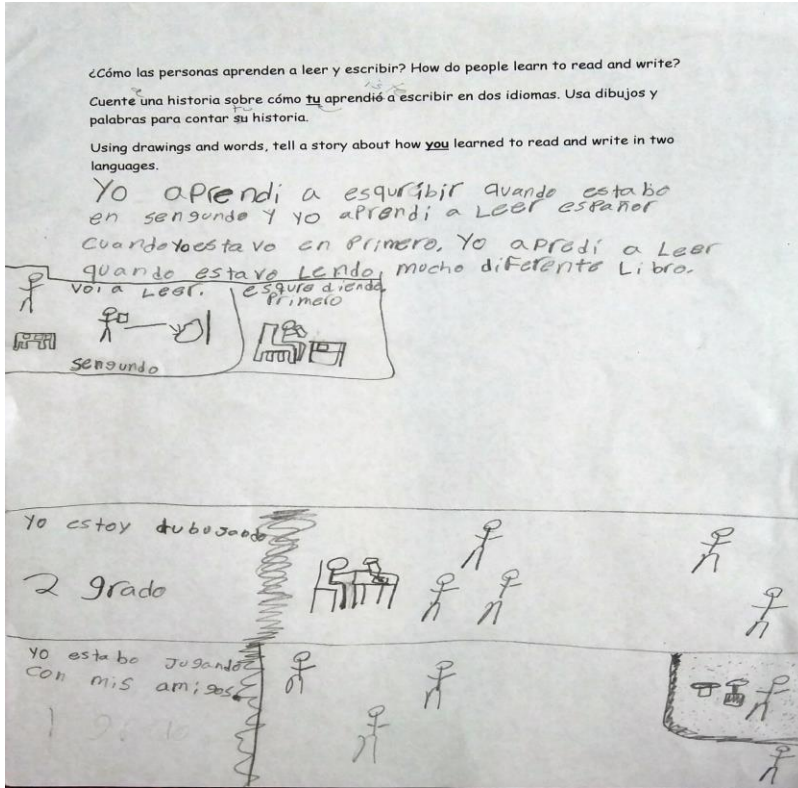


Carmen, Timeline p. 2



Carmen, Timeline p. 3

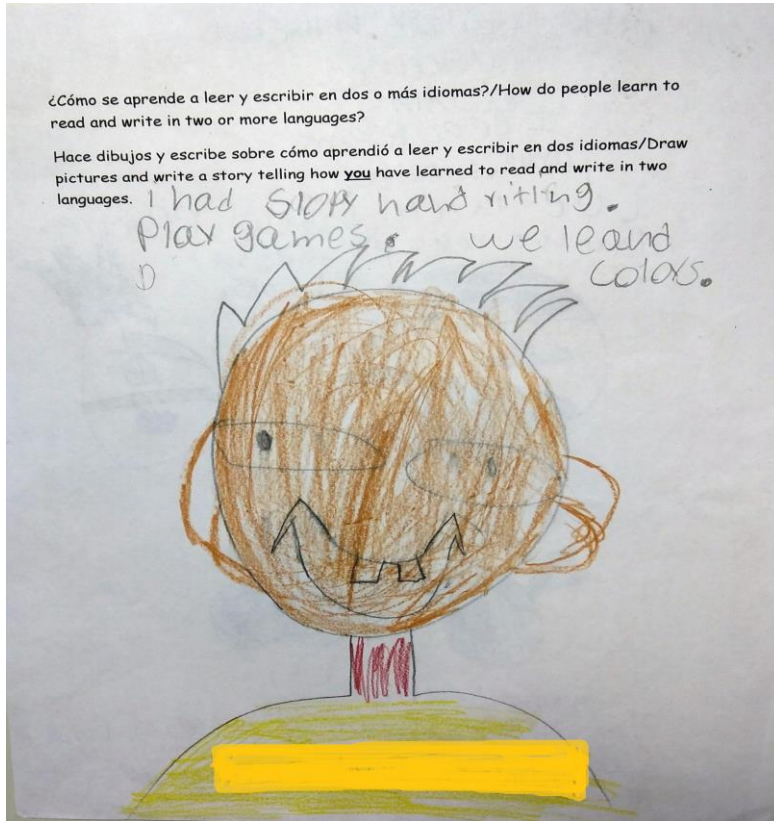




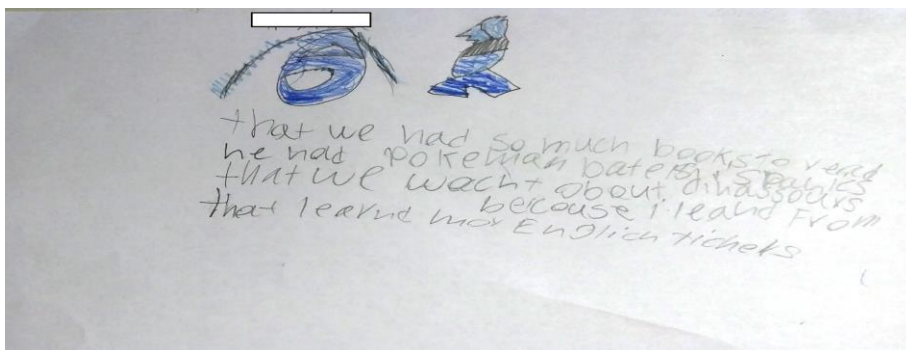
Francisco, Timeline p. 1



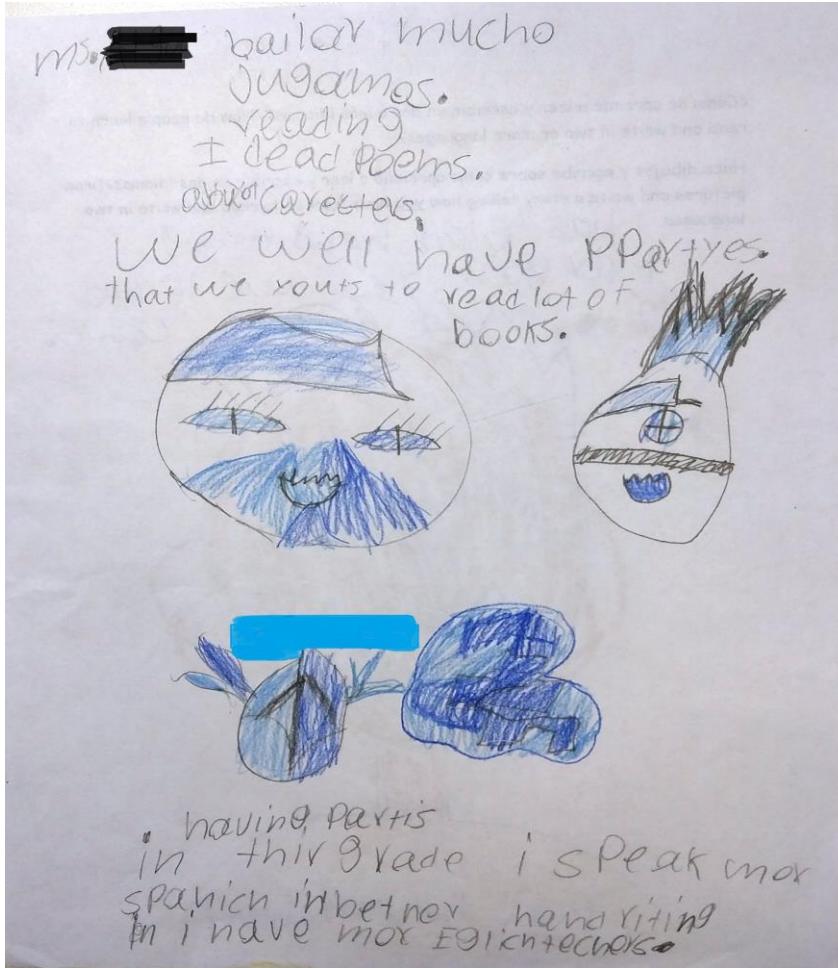
Francisco, Timeline p. 2



Zane, Timeline p. 1

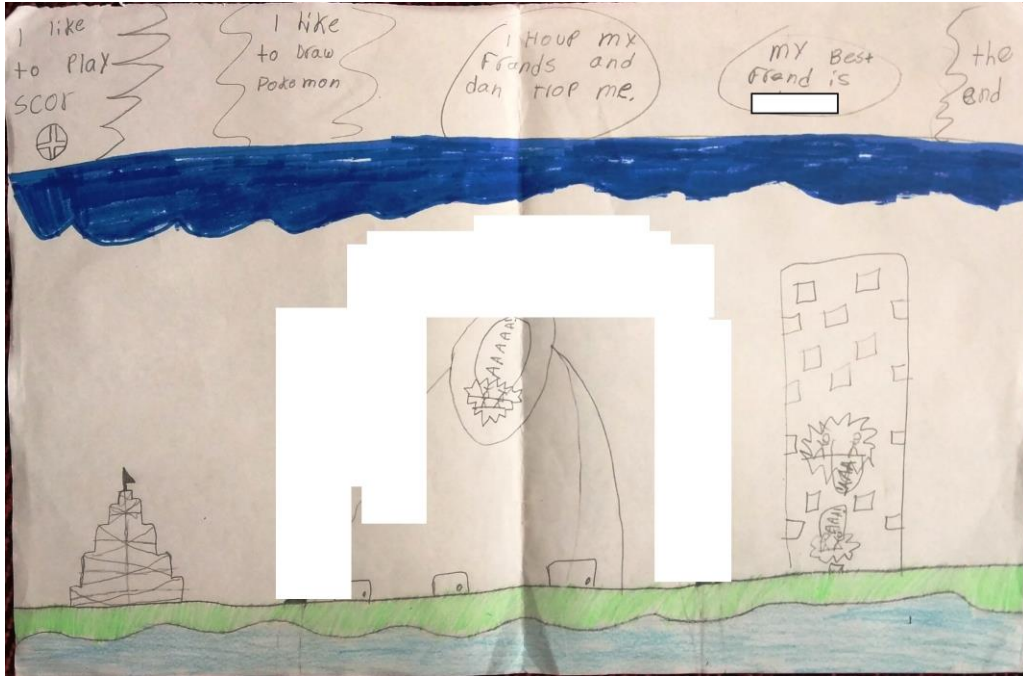


Zane, Timeline p. 2



Zane, Timeline p. 3





Francisco, Idea Map



Zane, Idea Map

**Appendix F: Self-Portraits**



Lilly, Self-portrait



Carmen, Self-Portrait

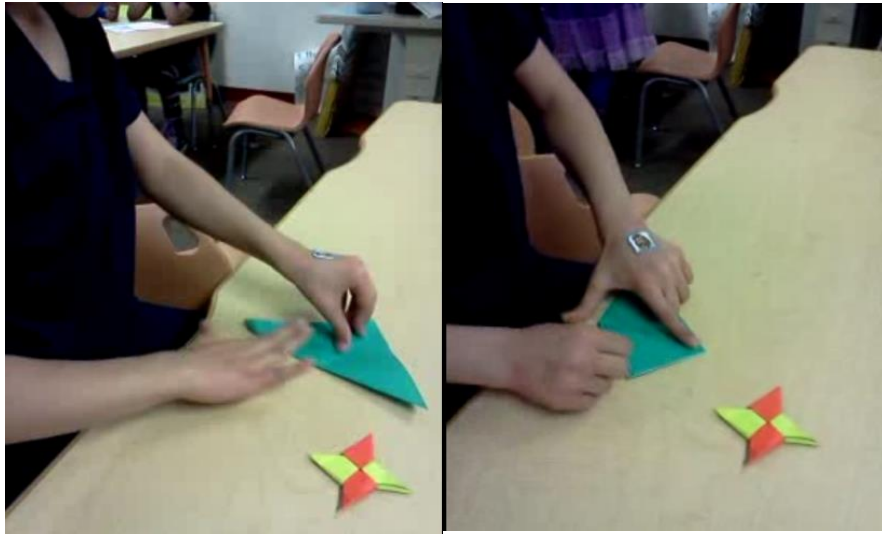


Francisco, Self-Portrait

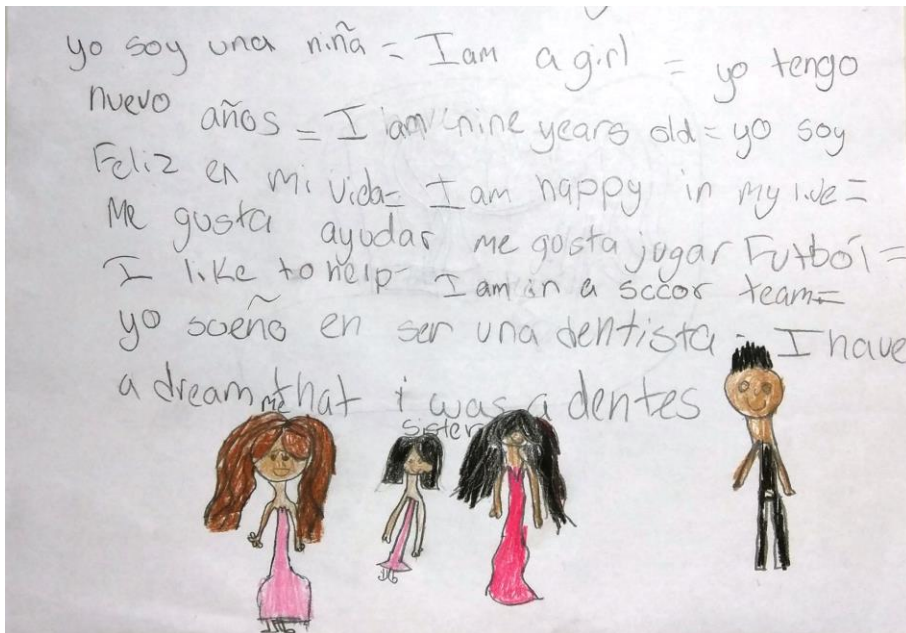


Zane, Self-Portrait

**Appendix G: Bilingual Poems & Artwork**

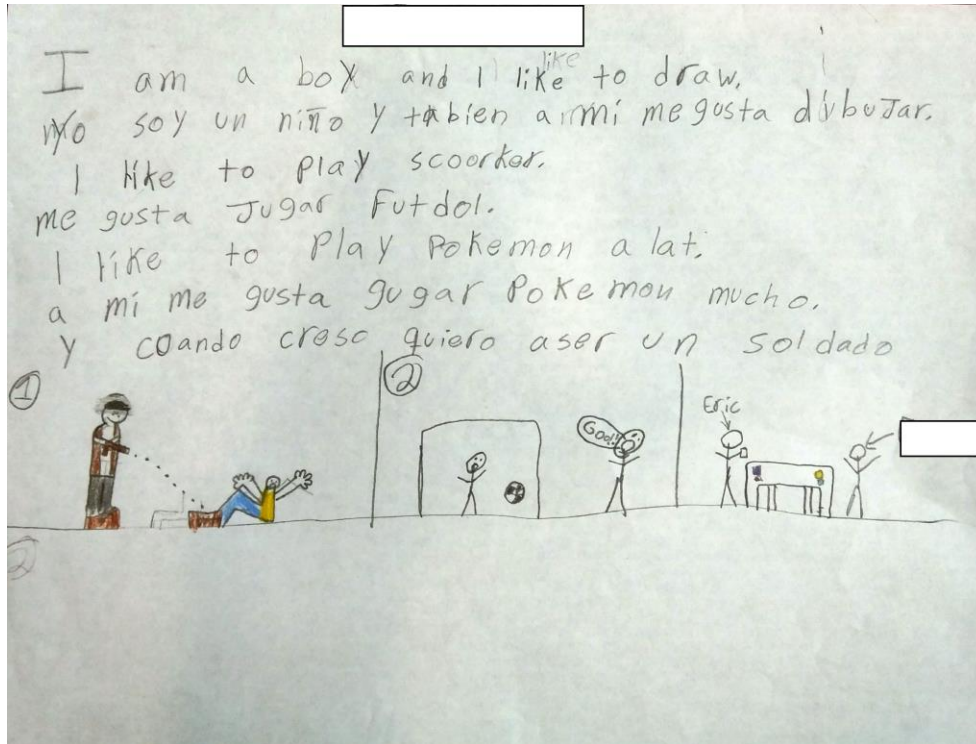


Lilly, Origami

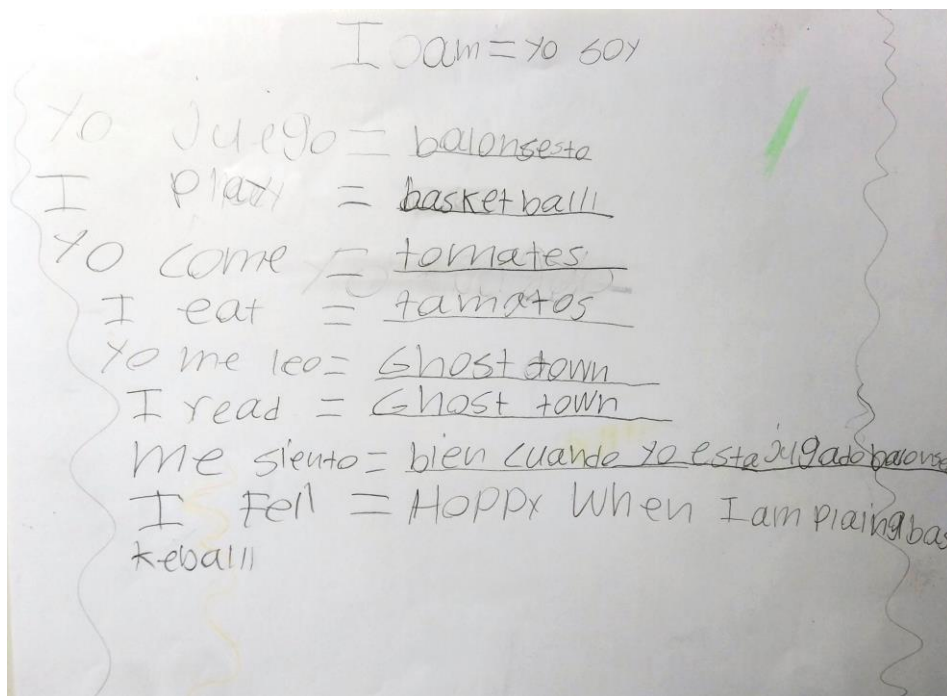


Carmen, Bilingual Poem





Francisco, Bilingual Poem



Zane, Bilingual Poem

**Appendix H. Table 3**

Table 3.

*Summary of Findings From Institutional Documents*

Institutional Documents	Sign systems	Knowledge/Belief systems	Definitions of “good” writers/writing	Identities Privileged
State documents	English privileged	Writing is a process Writers can be taught the skills to follow this process	Good writing exhibits particular key elements; logic, organization, correct mechanics, audience awareness, genre awareness	Writers with command of English academic discourse
School documents	English privileged	Writing is a process, Writing is a set of skills vs. Writing is communicating for a meaningful purpose and self-expression	Good writing follows standard conventions vs. Good writing develops from the desire to communicate and share experiences, knowledge, opinions	Writers with command of academic discourse, Writers with metacognitive awareness about language; creative thinkers, analytical thinkers, storytellers
Classroom documents	Spanish and English	Writing is a process, Emphasis on writing correctly and efficiently in the academic essay genre	Good writing exhibits particular key elements; correct mechanics, details and examples, specific number of phrases	Writers with command of Spanish and English academic discourse

