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## Latino Families' Knowledge of Bilingual Education

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

LATINO FAMILIES' KNOWLEDGE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

A DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

ROSALINDA BARRAGAN

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2015

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate families' knowledge of bilingual education. The literature in the research consistently points to the fact that many parents do not understand the advantages and benefits of enrolling their children in bilingual programs. The goal was to obtain insight on families' knowledge of the research on the effectiveness and benefits of bilingual education and also to identify those factors that hinder parents from taking advantage of this program aimed at enhancing learning. Structured interviews with four participants were conducted to answer the following research questions: (1) How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education? (2) How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children? This study includes a discussion of the themes and individual responses that were developed for each research question.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Problem Statement**

The demographics of the United States have changed quite dramatically. The numbers of immigrants rose from about 10 million in the 1970's to about 14 to 16 million in the 1990's (Sowa, 2009). The population of children from immigrant families is growing faster than any other group of children in the United States. U.S. Department of Education statistics reveal that over five million school-age children are categorized as English Learners (NCELA, 2006). English Language Learners (ELLs) are children who evidence little or no English language skills (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). By the year 2035, the majority of the children in schools will be students of color and many of these students will not speak English as a first language (Sowa, 2009). The majority of English language learners (77%) speak Spanish as their first language (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). ELLs are more likely to have parents with lower formal education levels than their non-ELL counterparts and to come from low-income families. These factors, in combination, often lead to lower levels of academic achievement in ELLs, particularly in literacy; nearly three quarters of students classified as ELLs read below grade level in English. ELLs are retained more often and drop out of school in greater numbers (Gyovai, Cartledge, Kourea, Yurick, & Gibson, 2009; Zehler, Fleishman, Hopstock, Stephenson, Pendzick, & Sapru, 2003).

These students' underachievement or lack of response to classroom instruction results in a referral to special education; approximately 56% of ELLs being served in special education are referred for reading problems (Gyovai et al., 2009). The rate of placement in special education appears to be negatively correlated with the level of English proficiency. If a disability is determined, ELLs with disabilities, compared to their non-ELL peers, are likely to be instructed in more restrictive settings, receive fewer language supports, and have more long-term placements and less movement out of special education. ELLs account for approximately 6% of the school-age population, with Spanish-speaking students comprising approximately 70-80% of that group (Gyovai et al., 2009).

With regard to ELL students, programs which engage the family in the educational process, among other interventions, are more likely to improve academic achievement. However, this population of parents often faces unique barriers in being more actively involved in their children's academic lives and, therefore, in being a more active part of the school community. There are school-based barriers, which may include a negative climate toward immigrant parents, individual barriers, such as a lack of dominant language proficiency and logistical barriers, such as work responsibilities and lack of childcare which often make it difficult for parents to attend school functions (Vera, Israel, Coyle, Cross, Knight-Lynn, Moallem, Bartucci, & Goldberger, 2012). Further, approximately one third of parents of first-generation children have eight or fewer years of schooling (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). Therefore, it is important for mental health and school-based consultants to recognize that the parents of these children may

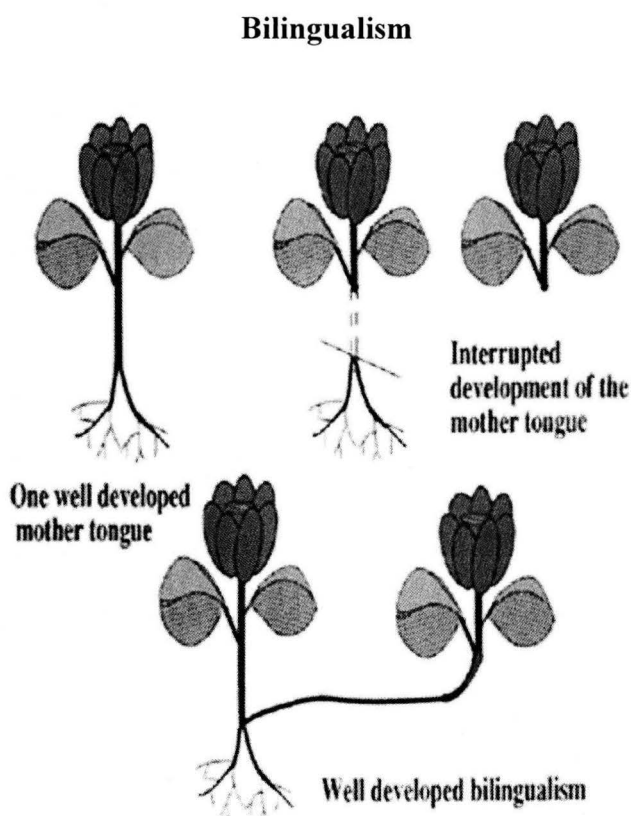
not understand how American schools operate or are aware of the various educational programs, such as bilingual education, available to assist their children.

### **Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education is a process, one which educates students to be effective in a second language while maintaining and nurturing their first language (Garcia & Pineulas, 2008). One instructional program that uses native and English native instruction is Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE). TBE programs provide instruction in both English and the child's first language; yet, only for a short period of time. This model started out in the 1970's as an early-exit model with students being transitioned from native language instruction to English within two to three years, kindergarten through second or third grade. Throughout the 80's and 90's these programs were modified to allow students to remain in the program until the end of fifth or sixth grade, late-exit model (Amaral, 2010; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). The primary purpose of the TBE program is to facilitate the child's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary (Garcia & Pineulas, 2008). The classes slowly phase out the student's native language and eventually teach entirely in English.

In successive bilingual children (where languages are acquired successively), a child's mastery of first language (L1) is strongly predictive of his or her ability to become competent in subsequent languages. Children who have developed a threshold level of literacy in their first language achieve proficiency in a second language more rapidly than younger children with less developed L1 literacy. If L1 is underdeveloped, the foundation and structure for second language acquisition is lacking (Cummins, 2000;

Krashen, 1997). According to Krashen, bilingual education works and bilingual education programs are very helpful for English language development. Bilingual programs that supply background information in primary language and that provide literacy in the primary language, and also provide instruction in the second language typically succeed in teaching the second language.



*Figure 1. Benefits of Bilingualism. Reprinted from Bilingualism or not: The education of minorities (p. 53), by T. Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981. Clevedon, England and Philadelphia, PA: Multilingual Matters.*

The visual above depicts the benefits of bilingualism. The first flower represents proficiency in the native language. The second one illustrates the disruption and the third

one depicts maintenance of the first language, which transferred to the second language. As a result, well-developed bilingualism was fostered (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Parents need to obtain solid research base knowledge on the benefits of the bilingual program. Parents also need to be aware of the importance of the language acquisition process and of the maintenance of the native language. The native language maintains efficient and effective communication at the home and it makes transfer of literacy skills to English easier. Advocates of family literacy programs have recognized the importance of integrating the first language and culture of both parents and students who speak English as a second language (Collier & Auerbach, 2011).

### **Illinois Law**

Under 23 Illinois Administrative Code (IAC) Part 228 Transitional Bilingual Education (Section 228.15) public school districts must identify children who are English learners by administering a home language survey to all children new to the district and conducting an English language proficiency screening process for children who come from a language background other than English. Preschool programs must offer a language instruction program for English learners consistent with the requirements of Part 228 to all preschool children identified as English learners.

The Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL) is the prescribed screening instrument for students in kindergarten through the first semester of grade one. The WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) is the screening instrument for student in the second semester of grade one or in grades two through 12 (Section 228.10). This screening must take place within 30 days either after the student's enrollment in the

district, or for preschool programs, after the student begins in the program, to determine if the student is eligible for bilingual education services.

In accordance with 23 IAC 228.25 (b)(2), effective January 1, 2014, children entering the first semester of kindergarten must score at least a 5.0 composite oral proficiency level on the WIDA MODEL to be considered English proficient. Children entering the second semester of kindergarten or the first semester of first grade must obtain an overall composite proficiency level of 5.0 as well as a literacy composite level of 4.2 on the WIDA MODEL to be considered English proficient. Children entering the second semester of first grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade must achieve an overall composite level of 5.0 as well as a literacy composite level of 4.2 and a writing proficiency level of 4.2 on the W-APT to be considered English language proficient. Under 228.15, any student not identified as English proficient shall be considered to be an English learner and therefore eligible for bilingual education services and placement into a program.

When a school district has an enrollment of 20 or more English learners of the same language classification, the school must establish a TBE program for each language classification represented by those students, Section 228.25 (a)(1). In accordance with Section 228.40 (a)(1), no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year or 14 days after the enrollment of any child in a TBE program during the middle of a school year, the school district shall notify by mail the parents or legal guardians of the child of the fact their child has been enrolled in a TBE program. The notice shall be in English and in the home language of the student and shall contain all of the information in simple, nontechnical language.

School districts must annually assess the English proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, of all English learners in kindergarten and any of grades one through 12, using the English language proficiency prescribed for their grade level, Section 228.25 (b)(1). Each student whose score is identified as proficient in accordance with subsection (b)(2)(A) of Section 228.25 shall no longer be identified as an English learner.

### **Literature Sources**

Recent studies have looked at parents' perceptions of bilingual education (Lee, 2013), the bilingual program (Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010), and the ESL program (Lueck, 2010). Reasons why families chose not to enroll their children in bilingual education or the ESL program consisted of: lack of support for the bilingual program (Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012), lack of information about the bilingual program and ESL program (Lueck, 2010; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012), lack of understanding of the enrollment guidelines, and the school and district policies in regard to bilingual education (Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010). Lee (2013) found that despite the participants' perception that they understood the objectives of bilingual education; most parents did not recognize the different models and programs. Amaral (2010) provided insight into some of the reasons parents selected one of three programmatic options (bilingual, structured English immersion, and English-only classroom settings) for their children. Findings indicated that the longer parents are in the United States, the more inclined they are to place their children in programs with little or no English support. Further, parents tended to place their children in settings that mirrored the language patterns used in the home and the higher the parent's level of



education, the more likely they were to place their children in bilingual programs where home language support was available.

### **Study Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate families' knowledge of bilingual education. The literature in the research consistently points to the fact that many parents do not understand the advantages and benefits of enrolling their children in bilingual programs (Lee, 2013; Lueck, 2010; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010). The goal was to obtain insight on families' knowledge of bilingual education and of the research on the effectiveness and benefits of bilingual education and also to identify those factors that hinder parents from taking advantage of this program aimed at enhancing learning.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?
2. How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children?

### **Significance of the Study**

This qualitative study will contribute and expand upon the aforementioned studies that investigated parents' perceptions on bilingual education, the bilingual program, and the ESL program and the reasons why they rejected language support services for their children. This study differs from previous research in that it includes families who accepted bilingual education and parents that did not select bilingual education. Also, structured interviews were conducted with all of the families and a follow-up meeting

was scheduled. This study will provide the school administration and ELL Director of Services a greater understanding of Latino families' knowledge of bilingual education and insight as to how the school could assist families in making informed decisions about bilingual education.

### **Organization of the Study**

The remainder of this study is organized into five chapters, followed by appendixes and a reference list. Chapter II presents a review of the related literature dealing with benefits of bilingual education and reasons why Latino families reject services. Chapter III explains the research design and methodology of the study. The setting, data sources, sampling, measures, design, and procedure are described. An analysis of the data is presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V contains the summary, practical and future implications, and limitations and future recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### **Conceptual Framework: Inclusión**

Scanlan (2011) developed a conceptual framework, *Inclusión*, for educators and school leaders that will create welcoming and effective environments for linguistically driven students and families. The four primary dimensions consist of the following: linguistically diverse students are bilingual, language acquisition is sociocultural and developmental, service delivery systems should be best equipped to meet student's special needs, and parent engagement is essential and ecological.

First, schools and families must promote bilingualism and sociocultural integration. A fundamental responsibility of the schools is to build English proficiency. The most effective way to facilitate English language development is to build on a student's native language. Second, language acquisition is a sociocultural and developmental process. Learning is intrinsically social and it is born of social, historical, and cultural experiences. Developmentally, individuals learn receptive domains (listening and reading) before productive domains (speaking and writing). Third, bilingual students are entitled to bilingual support services. The conceptual framework emphasizes an integrated service delivery system, which applies principles of universal design. This dimension could be applied through team teaching, building competency of the classroom teachers, differentiate curriculum and instruction, and integrate bilingual students with their peers as much time as possible. The fourth dimension involves

engaging parents, caretakers, and guardians. Parent engagement is essential and ecological. Parent involvement has a positive influence on student achievement when schools focus on specific learning goals, encourage trusting and collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members, and share power and responsibility with parents (Scanlan, 2011). Figure 2 illustrates what is emphasized in each dimension of *Inclusión*.

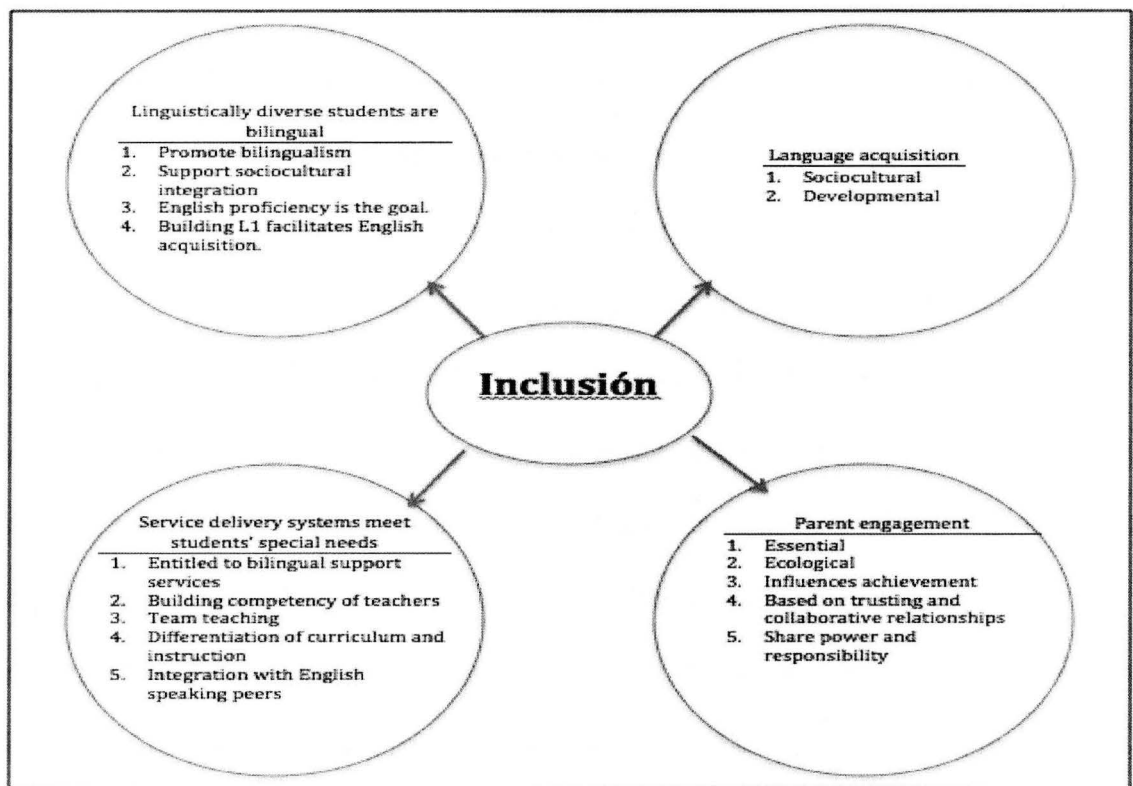


Figure 2. A Conceptual Framework for Linguistically Diverse Students and Their Families in Schools. Reprinted from *Inclusión: How school leaders can accent inclusion for bilingual students, families, communities* by M. Scanlan, 2011, *Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 6.

Through the lens of *Inclusión*, school leaders can approach and engage linguistically diverse members of a school community as parent engagement becomes the fundamental responsibility of schools and occurs as an ecological phenomenon. Scanlan (2011) identified students in linguistically diverse families as traditionally marginalized students. *Inclusión* encourages opportunity and access, in-school supports, and home-school collaboration for these students.

### **Benefits of Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education is a compilation of multicultural views through which diversity is enriched. Multicultural education creates a community in which everyone feels comfortable and achieves success (Gallo, Garcia, Pinuelas, & Youngs, 2008). Acquiring a second language enriches intellectual growth and promotes development of language-cognitive skill (Ngai, 2013). Contrary to the belief that learning a second language may hinder progress in the native language, research studies have provided evidence showing that acquisition in the second language enhances L1 development (Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 1997). Speaking two languages or more requires people to develop a flexible mindset to rapidly switch back and forth between languages. Bilingual education promotes cognitive flexibility and a bias towards a more focused scope of attention (Christoffels, de Hann, Steenbergen, van den Wildenberg, Lorenza, & Colzato, 2015). Another benefit is the maintenance of one's heritage language aspects, which includes pride in one's ethnic group, enhanced self-esteem among bilingual/bicultural individual, and the facilitation of meaningful intergenerational communication within the learner's non-English speaking family and community (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014; Gándara, 2015; Ngai, 2013). Benefiting in economic terms is another benefit.

Learning a second language increases job opportunities in many careers where knowing another language is an asset. Society as a whole is the beneficiary of bilingual education because it enables the full participation of its members to perform effectively in social and professional domains (Gándara, 2015; Ngai, 2013)

### **Opponents of Bilingual Education**

Opponents of bilingual education argue that bilingual programs are “watered down” programs that are ineffective in preparing linguistic minority students to engage in academics using English as the medium of instruction. They also claim that bilingual education is a waste of financial resources (Lee, 2013). Ochoa and Rhodes (2005) found that parents of ELL students might often be hesitant to have their children placed in instructional settings that are not English only. Many parents have experienced the educational and emotional hardship that often accompanies limited English proficiency and would like for their children to learn English as rapidly as possible. A viewpoint frequently expressed to the authors by parents is that they will assume responsibility for home-language maintenance if the school will assist in the development of English language proficiency. Among parents who opposed bilingual education in Lee’s study (2013), the majority of the participants responded that all students should be treated equally. The parents preferred their children enrolled in mainstream classes to prevent them from becoming “victims,” suggesting they might have perceived that bilingual education is a form of segregation in public education. Other reasons parents’ opposed bilingual education consisted of the following: they did not support bilingual education, they believed that only English should be used in the schools, they thought that using two languages negatively impacted the development of English, they wanted their children to

develop English competency (and not Spanish); they responded that bilingual education was ineffective, and that bilingual education was a waste of tax dollars (Lee, 2013). The author also found that despite the participants' perception that they understood the objectives of bilingual education; most parents did not recognize the different models and programs. Amaral (2010) found that the longer parents are in the United States, the more inclined they are to place their children in programs with little or no English support. Lee (2013) also found that parents of American born children placed less value on their primary/home language than parents whose children were born in another country.

### **Action Research**

Of concern to teacher preparation educators is the fact that there are very few teachers of color as the majority of teachers are Caucasian, middle class females who feel unprepared to teach children who are from diverse cultures and do not speak English as a first language. Teachers who work with English language learners should be knowledgeable about the second-language acquisition process (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). One action research study, conducted by Orosco and Klingner, demonstrated a sole bilingual 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher in the study school provided the highest-quality instructional support to the ELL population. The purpose of the study was to determine how one urban elementary school with a high percentage of English language learners implemented RTI at the primary level (K-2). The study consisted of 43 total staff members. The first author collected multiple sources of data (e.g., interviews, observations, assessment and instructional documents) for five months to document implementation of RTI and to help explain participants' perceptions. Four themes were included in the findings: Misalignment in Instruction and Assessment, Negative

Schooling Culture, Inadequate Teacher Preparation, and Limited Resources. Teachers applied generic RTI procedures of assessment and evidence-based reading principles that were not appropriate for meeting the needs of their English language learners. They did not incorporate knowledge of the language acquisition process and Latino English language learner pedagogy. Nonetheless, the teachers erroneously assumed these children were struggling in reading because of their data-driven evidence and many students were referred for further RTI support and special education. The bilingual 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher was the one exception to this pattern. She was able to provide direct and explicit native-language instruction that was socially and linguistically meaningful by connecting it to students' cultural and linguistic experiences and by allowing them to contextualize bilingual instruction through their native language. Furthermore, she was able to work well with the skills these children brought to school. Observations from monolingual teachers' classrooms suggested that students were motivated to learn to read, but that instruction was not appropriate for their needs and not motivating. Thus, students were not receiving an adequate opportunity to learn. This study demonstrated how monolingual teachers did not understand the language acquisition process and the instructional methods that these students required. Other findings suggested that participants were confused about how to distinguish between learning challenges and learning disabilities and were quick to attribute students' struggles to internal deficits of some kind and/or lack of support at home. As a result of the negative school culture, there was limited parental involvement and the participants were unable to draw resources from community and family-based networks. The RTI team did not include



one single family or community leader. They did not bridge home-school cultural and linguistic differences to create a better context for learning.

Martinez and Hinojosa (2012) conducted an action research project to contribute information about the reasons parents have for denying bilingual education services to their children who qualify for a bilingual program, yet, do not participate in it. There was a lack of research literature about the reasons this might occur. The researchers reported the majority of parents, regardless of background, see the benefits of bilingual education; however, there are some parents that do not want their children to learn the Spanish language or be taught in their native tongue. Four research questions were posed: (1) “What differences are present in parents that choose an English immersion ESL program rather than a bilingual Spanish program?” (2) “How does proficiency of parents in the English and Spanish language affect the determination of placing children in English dominated bilingual programs?,” (3) “What are parents’ negative considerations for academic Spanish literacy?,” and (4) “What can schools do to aid parents in making an informed decision?” The participants consisted of 15 individuals, eight males and seven females. They were selected from a Texas school district where Hispanics represented 97% of the population. Participants’ criteria included only one requirement that they qualified for bilingual education but accepted ESL or English (regular) education. A paper and pencil survey, titled, *Parents’ Perceptions and Attitudes for Denying Bilingual Education*, with open-ended questions, close-ended questions and semi-closed questions was distributed to obtain parent perceptions on bilingual education. Once surveys were administered and collected, questioners were selected for further analysis. Of the 15 distributed surveys, only 10 were chosen as adequate due to incorrect completion of

questions. Due to the lack of proficiency of parents in English and Spanish, some questionnaires were filled out for them. Because the instrument was not available in Spanish at time of completion, questions were read aloud in both languages. The data was then disaggregated and questions 1-10 were coded. Results were then accounted for using percentages. When parents were asked to describe why they chose a specific program, 60% of parents explained they chose English immersion. Comments provided in the open-ended questions included: "I chose English Only because I want my child to get ahead." All the parents strongly agreed that if the child knew English, he/she could learn faster. In addition, all of the parents also thought that the more English their child knew, the better the student would do in the future. For this particular study, language proficiency of the parents did not seem to play a major role in determining a language instructional program for their children (Research Question Two). The majority of the parents (60%) did not believe that Spanish was an asset to their children. They did not consider their native language as an important tool for second language learners (Research Question Three). When parents were asked about their knowledge of the bilingual program, 70% reported not to be informed. Only 10% selected "somewhat informed," another 10% said they were informed, but only 10% indicated to be very informed. When presented again with the same question, this time with the option to explain in detail, parents had comments such as "I don't understand the difference," "don't know much about the bilingual program," or "no thoughts."

The findings of this study cannot be generalized across a population, but the findings of this study did demonstrate despite the advancement on procedures districts have adopted, parents still do not feel educated about the bilingual program. Only one of

the parents in this study believed having been informed. The participant was not specific as to what was known. Were parents familiar with the process? Or were they knowledgeable of the benefits? Or did they recognize the importance of both? According to the researchers, this is a question that needs additional exploration. Parents want their children to know English and if a program does not have this exposure, then parents do not desire it (Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012). One fact that was found with this study is that parents think that knowing English facilitates learning. The researchers stated this raises the question whether parents are aware of the benefits of native language instruction.

First generation immigrants choose bilingual programs. The researchers recommended exploring the relationship between second and third generation immigrants and their lack of interest for the Spanish language and confirming if this in fact is the determinant piece. The necessity to understand why some parents think Spanish is important to their child, but being bilingual is not important to them is worth investigating. Another aspect that needs further clarification is if parents did not deny bilingual services for all their children, what were their motives? Further investigation and different data collection methods will be necessary to fully understand the concern of parent association of knowledge of the benefits of the bilingual program and language acquisition. The parents in this study did not support bilingual education, but the lack of information about the program was evident. Because of the small sample size, groups of US born and non-US born could not be compared and the researchers would like to address this in future research.

Cynthia E. Lueck is an ESL teacher with 17 years of classroom experience. She noticed the parents of ELLs were refusing language support services and she wondered if

misinformation about the program was influencing parents. Her action research project (2010) investigated the following question: What were the parents' perceptions of the ESL program? The participants in the action research study were nine parents of ELLs in the program. Participants included five Latinos, two Asians, and two whites. Most parents of ELL students in this study were affluent, highly educated, and valued education. Data were collected through pre and post-program surveys and audiotaped interviews. Six parents of the nine were purposely selected to participate in the study because they communicated with the examiner regularly. One parent represented each grade level. The transcripts were analyzed and coded for emerging themes. Survey data revealed parents' perceptions of the ESL program and teacher were positive both pre and post program. More in depth information about the parents' perceptions was revealed from the taped interviews. The themes that developed from this type of data collection consisted of the following: lack of program information or clarity, parental attitudes, views on testing, children's emotional development, and structure of the program and strengths and benefits. According to the results of the study, the majority of parents interviewed did not have a clear understanding of programs available for ELL learners and were also unaware that the study school offered ESL. Additionally, the lack of knowledge was compounded by a lack of available information. The findings suggested that program information should be readily accessible to parents, which prompted the researcher to create a parent-friendly website with specific information about admission criteria, the type of curriculum and instruction, and a calendar to inform parents of upcoming tests and important activities.

Due to several limitations of the study, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings. First, the study included a small sample size and also there could have been bias on the researcher's part due to her close involvement with the program. There was also the possibility of skewed data from the interviews because parents wanted to maintain a positive relationship with the teacher. The researcher's findings raised several questions which she recommended merited further investigation. For example, she said follow-up interviews should be conducted to explore contradicting aspects in that the parents were initially satisfied but unclear about the purpose of the ESL program. Further, she said another possible study might include examining the responses of parents who are not highly proficient in English. The study included only parents who were proficient in English.

Cherie Satterfied Sheffer, a first-year bilingual teacher of a bilingual kindergarten class in Houston Texas, conducted a study to determine parents' perceptions and beliefs regarding their bilingual program (2010). Additionally, she wanted to know parents' opinions about what is happening in their child's classroom right now and what they believe should be happening in respect to literacy and English-language acquisition. The study provided information about 19 families that had children enrolled in a bilingual kindergarten class. Questionnaires were sent home with the students. The questions were devised to gather background information on each family and to determine parents' attitudes toward the English language and its usefulness to their child.

All of the participants were immigrants to this country and they all reported they spoke primarily Spanish at home. All of the parents responded that it is very important for their children to speak English, many stated, that it is the "official language" of the

land and that it will be beneficial to the children's future. Every parent thought that bilingualism is positive. The study demonstrated that the parents were not aware of the school and district policies in regard to bilingual education. Only one of the 19 families surveyed knew the percentage of time students are taught in English and Spanish. Two people knew when the children would be exited from the program. The parents' wishes for the bilingual program were not being met, showing evidence of a lack of communication between the school and the parents. The author reported schools should have a bilingual program "education night" every year in which the program is outlined for the parents and where materials might be distributed in Spanish that describe the benefits of bilingual education. Furthermore, the most current research on the long-term benefits of bilingual education could be shared so that parents might feel more confident about their child's education and their decision to accept this service. By educating parents about the benefits of bilingual education, parents could become community advocates of bilingual programs. According to the author, "The best way to include parents who are marginalized because of language and socioeconomic barriers is to start by educating them by whatever means available so that these barriers do not perpetuate ignorance about and alienation from the educational system" (p. 337).

This qualitative study will contribute and expand upon the aforementioned studies that investigated parents' perceptions on bilingual education, the bilingual program, and the ESL program and the reasons they had for denying language support services. This study incorporated questions that authors mentioned needed additional exploration (Lueck, 2010; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012). This study differs from previous research in that it included families who accepted bilingual education and parents that did not select

bilingual education. Unlike the other studies, structured, in-person interviews were conducted with all of the families and a follow-up meeting was scheduled with the participants at the conclusion of the study to share the findings. This study will provide the school administration and ELL Director of Services a greater understanding of Latino families' knowledge of bilingual education and insight as to how the school could assist families in making informed decisions about bilingual education.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### **Setting**

Participants from this study were recruited from Lecco Elementary School that houses a TBE program, K-4 (school name is pseudonym). The school is located in the western suburbs. The school is comprised of two administrators, a Director of ELL Services, and 29 teachers. The current student population consists of 493 students. Seventy-three percent of the students qualify for bilingual/ESL services. According to the Illinois State Report Card (2013), 95.0 % of the students are Hispanic, 3% Black, 1% White, and 1% Asian. Ninety-four percent of the students are classified as low-income.

Lecco Elementary School is in a community comprised of approximately 25,500 people. The median household income is \$45,323.00. Individuals below the poverty level are 17.6%. Sixty-seven percent are high school graduates or higher (U.S. Census, Bureau, 2013). Approximately 70% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, 57% White, approximately 6% Black, and approximately 2% Asian.

The school follows the 90/10 model for kindergarten, in which students begin their instruction in Spanish and 10% of their instruction in English. In first grade, the model is 80/20; second grade, 70/30; third grade 60/40, and in fourth grade 100% of instruction is in English.



## **Data Sources**

Upon receiving informed consent from participants, they provided the researcher with qualitative data from structured interviews. The researcher maintained the confidentiality of obtained information by keeping their files in a safe, locked cabinet. Identifying information was de-identified and coded.

## **Sampling**

The researcher had a finite population and the sample was purposive (nonprobability sampling technique). Purposive sampling means participants are selected with a specific purpose or focus determined by the researcher's questions. Sampling was also criterion-based (i.e., based on characteristics relevant to research questions) and context and culture specific (Nastasi, 2009). The sample consisted of two groups of Latino parents in the school district, two mixed demographic families that chose bilingual education and two mixed demographic families that did not choose bilingual education. Table 1 contains demographic and characteristic information regarding the participating families. Participants were four parents of kindergarten and first grade (two in kindergarten and two in first grade) children who were enrolled full time at the school. Participants were women, all biological mothers. The age range was between 29 and 37. All participants were born in Mexico, reported their ethnicity as Mexican and their native language as Spanish. All of their children were born in the United States and their native language was Spanish. Families' language usage in the home was Spanish. Three out of the four participants reported no other caretakers lived in the household besides their husbands that spoke Spanish only. One participant reported the child's paternal

grandmother as the other caretaker that lived in the household that spoke Spanish only.

In regards to yearly household income, the range was between \$14,000 and \$35,000.

Table 1

*Summary of Demographic and Characteristic Information of the Families*

	Grade Level of Child	Mother's Birthplace, Ethnicity, and Native Language	Child's Birthplace, and Native Language	What language(s) does family speak at home	Other caretakers that live in the household that speak Spanish only	Income	Age of mother
Gloria	Kindergarten (ESL)	Mexico, Mexican, Spanish	US, Spanish	Spanish	None	\$14,560 (Husband's)	33
Carla	Kindergarten (Bilingual)	Mexico, Mexican, Spanish	US, Spanish	Spanish	None	\$35K (Husband's)	35
Alicia	1 <sup>st</sup> grade (Bilingual)	Mexico, Mexican, Spanish	US, Spanish	Spanish	Paternal Grandmother	\$20K (both)	29
Rocio	1 <sup>st</sup> grade (ESL)	Mexico, Mexican, Spanish	US, Spanish	Spanish	None	\$30K (both)	37

*Note:* Pseudonyms for the participants were used.

### Measures

The researcher used individual in-person interviews (face-to-face) as the data collection method. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton, 2002). The interview was highly structured and standardized. An interview protocol was developed consisting of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each participant through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with the same words (see Appendices A & B). The interview protocol included central and associated subquestions to answer the research

questions. The structured interview consisted of open-ended, neutral, and clear questions. Four kinds of questions were asked: background/demographic questions, knowledge questions, feeling questions, and opinion and value questions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Interviews were audiotaped, using a digital voice recorder. Using a recorder permitted the researcher to be more attentive to the interviewee. The researcher took handwritten notes in the event that recording equipment failed. Transcripts were created.

The researcher kept a record of participants' telephone numbers, the best time to be in touch with them, and the time to avoid calling them. A project log was created to document date of contact; the type of contact; person contacted; the purpose of the contact, and a brief statement of the content of the contact (see Appendix C).

The researcher piloted the interview protocol and practiced interview skills with one participant not included in the sample. After completing the pilot, the researcher reflected on the experience, discussed it with the doctoral committee, and revised the research method/approach based on what the researcher learned from the pilot experience. The researcher knew approximately how much time to allot for one interview, 30 minutes. Preparation, planning and structure were crucial.

The in-depth interview permits: (a) standardization and comparison of responses across multiple interviewers, (b) in depth exploration, and (c) gathering of information in the language of the informants (Nastasi, 2009). This method was personal and the researcher developed a relationship with the participants. Consequently, the researcher received full range and depth of information.

## **Design**

A qualitative design was used for this project. In qualitative research the focus is on process, meaning and understanding. The qualitative researcher asks the questions, collects the data, makes interpretations, and records what is observed. The design involved in-depth interviews. There are eight common steps in qualitative research: select the research topic, determine research questions, design the study, collect data, analyze data, generate findings, validate findings, and write research report (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). The qualitative researcher may not follow the eight steps in a linear fashion (e.g., during data collection and analysis, questions can be changed or modified).

Qualitative research was the most appropriate method of study as understanding why decisions were made was the primary goal of the research project, not the generalization of findings. Advantages of this design include that it provides descriptive data, does not require manipulation or control of individuals or the setting, reports include verbatim quotes of those interviewed, leads to greater understanding about the context of the subject, may lead to greater understanding about practice, provides data that are rich with examples and stories, captures what is important to participants, embraces the diversity of perspectives and experiences of participants, and allows the evaluator to collect information on outcomes not known or anticipated prior to the learning and performance initiative (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009).

## **Procedure**

The researcher obtained the list of families who accepted bilingual education and a list of families who did not select bilingual education from the Director of ELL

Services. Two randomly selected families were chosen from each list. Telephoning by the researcher was the first step in making contact. An initial recruiting script for an in-person interview was created (see Appendices D & E). The conversation with the parent/guardian consisted of only a brief introduction, an explanation of how the interviewer gained access to the person's name, and a decision when to meet. The major purpose of the telephone contact was to set up a time when the interviewer and the potential participant could meet in person to discuss the study. The researcher recommended an informal setting; the interviewee and the researcher agreed upon the location.

At the first contact visit, the researcher presented the nature of the study in a broad context and explicitly explained what was expected of the participant. A script for the first contact visit was created (see Appendices F & G). The researcher explained the interview would take no longer than thirty minutes. The contact visit helped determine if potential participants were interested. All of the participants were interested. Thus, the researcher reviewed what the consent form covered and checked for understanding of what was involved in their accepting the invitation to be interviewed (see Appendix H). The participants were also asked for permission to record the individual interview. After consent was signed, the participants and the researcher determined the best times, places, and dates to conduct the interview. After the contact visit, the researcher confirmed the appointments with a follow-up phone call as the interview date approached. One of the participants from the initial four families contacted chose not to participate; consequently,

the researcher randomly selected another name from the corresponding lists and continued with the aforementioned process.

At the time of the interview, the researcher asked the participants each question on the interview protocol. The order and the wording of questions were presented in the same manner for each participant. By using the same interview protocol with both sets of families, the researcher was able to discover patterns of differences among the participants associated with their choice. The digital voice recorder was used to ensure verbatim note taking. The researcher thanked the participants and notified them that they would be contacted at the conclusion of the study.

Transcriptions were completed immediately after each interview. Postinterview, the researcher recorded details about the setting and observation of the interview: Where did the interview occur? Under what conditions? How did the interviewee react to questions? How well did the researcher ask the questions? How was the rapport?, in a manner similar to one suggested by Patton (2002).

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher contacted each participant by telephone to schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the results. The interviewee and the researcher agreed upon an informal location. A script for the follow-up meeting was created (see Appendices J & K). At this time, the researcher gave an oral report of the findings, using figures and illustrations. Additionally, the researcher gave the participants an executive summary and a thank you card.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of making sense and meaning out of the data and is the process used to answer the research questions. The data set consisted of transcribed interviews (verbatim, in Spanish). The researcher transcribed all of the interviews into a word processing file. The researcher was the primary expert and instrument in data collection. The researcher asked the questions, collected the data, and made interpretations. Data collection and data analysis were a simultaneous process.

Constant comparison analysis is one method the researcher used for data analysis. The first step was to organize and read through all the data (transcripts and notes). This step provided a general sense of the information and opportunities to reflect on its overall meaning; for example, what general ideas are participants stating (Creswell, 2014). Next, the researcher chunked the data into smaller meaningful parts. Then, the researcher labeled by hand each chunk with a descriptive title or code. These codes were then translated into English as they were in Spanish, the language spoken by the participants. They were translated in this study for the benefit of the reader. Coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing text and writing a word representing a category in the margins. It involves taking text data, segmenting sentences into categories, and labeling those categories with a term (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christenson, 2014). The researcher compared each new chunk of data with previous codes (this was the comparison part of the analysis); thus, similar chunks were labeled with the same code. While coding, the researcher utilized an inductive approach. With this approach, the researcher attempted to identify themes and patterns in the data that reflected the

experiences, thinking, and behavior of the participants, and avoided the intrusion of their own conceptions (Nastasi, 2009). Thus, the researcher created codes from the participants' words rather than using preexisting codes, capturing fair and equal representation of all participants. A coding chart was created (see Appendix L).

The inductive analysis approach assisted the researcher achieve culture specificity (Nastasi, 2009). After all the data was coded, the codes were grouped by similarity and a small number of themes were generated. The researcher constantly reviewed and analyzed the codes, which helped the researcher develop the themes. Similarly, the researcher constantly reflected and revisited the themes while creating figures and made revisions during the process.

The researcher also included a classical content analysis (the researcher counted the number of times each code was utilized) to obtain a sense of which codes were used the most, which helped identify most important concepts for the interviewees (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). Furthermore, the researcher used a Keywords-In-Context (KWIC) analysis to perform this analysis; the researcher read through the data and identified words that were used frequently. KWIC was an appropriate tool in encapsulating the actual words used by the participant (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

A narrative approach was utilized to represent the themes. There was a discussion of several themes completed with subthemes and interconnecting themes. A final step in data analysis involved making an interpretation of the findings or results, asking "What were the lessons learned?" (Creswell, 2014). The standardized open-ended interview made data analysis easier because it was possible to locate each participant's answer to



the same questions rather quickly and to organize questions and answers that were similar (Patton, 2002).

### **Author's Role and Biases**

I am a bilingual school psychologist. I am the child of Mexican-born parents. Due to my familiarity with the Latino culture and language, I felt my personal background helped establish rapport and trustworthiness among the participants. My ability to speak Spanish was an asset, without which this project would not have been feasible. The families recruited for this study were from another school district outside of my employment setting, which posed no conflict of interest. Furthermore, I entered each interview with an open-mind and a neutral viewpoint.

### **Validity Strategies**

To ensure the researcher did everything possible to enhance the internal validity of the evaluation data, member checking was used. This strategy was utilized to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report to participants and verifying whether the participants felt that they were accurate. Furthermore, the researcher used a thick description to describe the themes developed from the study. This description made the results become more realistic and richer. Finally, the researcher used peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account. A peer examiner was located, who reviewed and asked questions about the qualitative study. As a result, the account resonated with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

### **Reliability Strategies**

Three techniques were developed to ensure reliability. First, the researcher provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher's role, the participants' position and basis for selection, and the context from which data was gathered. Second, triangulation of data collection and analyses was used, which strengthens reliability and internal validity. Triangulation means data will be collected through multiple sources to include interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell, 2014; Nastasi, 2009). Lastly, data collection and analysis strategies were reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate depiction of the methods used in the study. All phases of this project came under the review of the Institutional Review Board of Loyola University through the researcher's director, who is experienced with qualitative methods.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate families' knowledge of bilingual education. The goal was to obtain insight on families' knowledge of the research on the effectiveness and benefits of bilingual education and also to identify those factors that hinder parents from taking advantage of this program aimed at enhanced learning. The research questions consisted of the following:

1. How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?
  - a) What do families know about the eligibility criteria for bilingual education?
  - b) What do families understand as the benefits and/or detriments of native language instruction?
  - c) What are the demographic differences between families selecting ESL and bilingual programs?
  - d) What are reasons families choose or do not choose to enroll their child in a bilingual program?
2. How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children?
  - a) How did school personnel help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?

- b) How could the school personnel help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?

The following chapter will provide the results of the in-person interviews as they relate to the research questions. The data were coded, the codes were grouped by similarity, and a small number of themes were generated.

### **Research Question 1**

*How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?*

#### **Gloria**

Gloria is 33-years-old. She attended school in Mexico and completed one year of college. She said credentials do not transfer between countries. Gloria discussed the differences in access to education (i.e., cost, transportation, school supplies), differences in academic expectations and differences in technology (i.e., low levels of achievement and technology in Mexico). She moved to the United States in 2004. She is currently a full-time caretaker of her two children, five-year-old male in kindergarten and nine-year old male in fourth grade. Her husband's annual income consists of \$14,560. Gloria chose to enroll her oldest son in the ESL program in kindergarten because he did not know any English. She enrolled him in the bilingual program in first grade. She wanted him to learn to read and write in Spanish. He exited the program in third grade. Gloria explained, "Now that he is grown, he knows how to write well in both. Then now I say it worked because if I would have left him in English, he would not have known any Spanish...he could communicate with my mother and other family members in Mexico

who do not speak English.” Her youngest son is currently enrolled in the kindergarten ESL program. She plans to enroll him into the bilingual program for first grade.

### **Carla**

Carla is 35-years-old. She moved to the United States in 2006. Her husband’s annual income consists of \$35,000. Carla attended school in Mexico and she is a college graduate. She reported, “I am grateful I studied because it has helped me a lot so I could help my daughters and I see the great importance that is why I chose the bilingual program rather than all English. Because I know learning both languages is a necessity.” Carla has two daughters enrolled in the bilingual program, one is eight-years-old and the other one is six-years-old. Carla knew her eldest child was eligible for bilingual education services and her second child was not through a letter sent home by the Director of ELL Services. Carla knew her second child did not qualify for bilingual services because she scored well on the exam, “She did not qualify because she did well on the exam they gave her...I think it was a 5...they told me she received a high score, consequently, she could not receive the bilingual program...I spoke with the Director of ELL Services and said, no, I need her to participate in the bilingual program to help her...I speak more Spanish.” Carla’s request was honored.

### **Alicia**

Alicia is 29-years-old. She moved to the United States in 2004. She and her husband’s annual income consist of \$20,000. Alicia attended school in Mexico. She dropped out of school to work, but she returned and finished. Alicia knew her daughter qualified to receive bilingual services as a result of an evaluation, “Before registering my

child for kindergarten, the teacher told me she would have to take an evaluation to determine if she was eligible for bilingual education. After the evaluation, the teacher called to tell me she was not proficient in English and that I would have to take her to a school where they offered a bilingual program and that they would provide everything, transportation...” Initially, Alicia wanted her child enrolled in the ESL program. She was surprised her daughter qualified for bilingual services; she felt her daughter had adequate language skills in English. Yet, she said she accepted and she is happy that her daughter is in the bilingual program, “She relates more with children because she is very shy and she has problems with socializing and now she is talking more with the children in her classroom and she could read.” Her daughter is in first grade. She is her only child.

### **Rocio**

Rocio is 37-years-old. She moved to the United States in 1995. She and her husband’s annual income consist of \$30,000. Rocio attended school in Mexico. She started a GED program when she arrived to the United States; however, she never took the exam. She described her experience as positive and she said she had good teachers. Rocio has two sons enrolled in the ESL program, one is in first grade and the other one is in second grade. She chose not to enroll her children in a bilingual program because she believes Spanish should be taught at home and English should be taught at school.

*Subquestion 1: What do families know about the eligibility criteria for bilingual education?*

All of the participants knew their children were eligible for bilingual education through school notification and as a result of an evaluation process. Gloria and Carla

received a letter from the school and Alicia and Rocio were contacted by a staff member. Carla was the only participant who mentioned a specific score from her daughter's exam, a 5.0, which determined she was not eligible for the bilingual program.

*Subquestion 2: What do families understand as the benefits and/or detriments of native language instruction?*

**Parents' knowledge of bilingual program.** When participants were asked what they knew about the bilingual program, Carla, Alicia, and Rocio reported children develop Spanish and English simultaneously. Gloria reported it was a new program and assisted students with English language development. Gloria, Carla, and Alicia also mentioned the students had access to curriculum and communication in their native language. Alicia reported the bilingual program was very helpful, "The bilingual program helps them learn their first language they use at home and second in English...when they are older, it will be useful for them to know both languages."

**Reasons why bilingual program was designed.** Gloria and Rocio said the bilingual program was designed to help the students learn a second language. Gloria, Carla, and Alicia alluded to the increase in the Spanish-speaking population. Gloria said, "I believe because of the increase of Latino families and of the increase of Hispanic children in schools. I imagine they saw that the children struggled to learn English and that is why it was designed." Carla responded, "The bilingual program was designed because we are a lot of people who speak Spanish...parents are the first educators of our children, so it is the way in which we could help them." Alicia said, "Well maybe in part

because parents sometimes do not speak English...for the children because of an increase in the Spanish-speaking population.”

**What parents have heard about the bilingual program.** When asked what they have heard about the bilingual program, Gloria said, “The bilingual program is good because it allows the children to learn English. They feel more confident in their native language and they could communicate with their teachers and as a result, learning English is easier for them.” Rocio stated, “I have heard more than not that sometimes the bilingual program affects a lot of children because they feel really comfortable with the program that when it comes time to transition and learn English, it requires more work from them.” Carla responded,

The school says that it is a really good program; yet, I have heard from other families that they do not like it because the children become confused. But I think not. The children are never going to get confused because they are a little sponge, and they absorb everything that you teach them...for me, personally, I think it is good that the bilingual program exists...I strongly defend it...

Alicia explained,

A lot of people say the children fall behind because they are solely in Spanish...there are other mothers who enrolled their older children in bilingual and they are not doing well in school...they have not developed English well...I have heard from two mothers that when the bilingual children are exited in fourth grade and they do not understand English well, they are mistreated by their teachers...the teachers are like racists...that’s what I was told. I do not know if it



is true or not. The program is good in that they are becoming familiar with two races.

**Benefits of the bilingual program.** In regards to the benefits of the bilingual program, Gloria said, “As a parent who does not know English to help them with their homework is a benefit. Also, increased proficiency in reading and writing in both languages is a benefit.” Alicia reported, “I like the program because I could communicate with the teachers in Spanish when I have any questions and my daughter has good teachers who keep me informed about her.” Rocio responded she did not know because her children are not in the bilingual program. Carla explained,

There are a lot of benefits. My children would not only be fluent in both languages, but they would also be able to read and write in both languages. The brain would work more because they are thinking in both languages.

**Negative effects of the bilingual program.** The participants were asked what negative effects the bilingual program has for their children. Alicia responded, “Nothing,” and Rocio said she did not know. Gloria stated, “I feel if you leave them in the bilingual program the entire time, they will fall behind...when they transition to fourth grade, their English will be less developed than their English native peers.” Carla responded,

Well, the Spanish language is very broad. In the United States, the Spanish language from Latin America is standardized. Consequently, there are words that one does not recognize in other countries, like Guatemala and Peru...in reality,

this is not a bad thing because you are also learning about other cultures. I see nothing wrong.

*Subquestion 3: What are the demographic differences between families selecting ESL and bilingual programs?*

No demographic differences were found in this study among the families. The participants appeared to be a homogenous group. All four mothers were born in Mexico, attended school in Mexico, native language was Spanish, children born in the United States and Spanish spoken at the home. Age range was between 29 and 37. Annual household income was between \$14,000 and \$35,000. All of the mothers and fathers were the primary caretakers. Alicia's husband's mother lived in the household.

*Subquestion 4: What are reasons families choose or do not choose to enroll their child in a bilingual program?*

**Thoughts of child being bilingual.** All of the participants mentioned opportunity for their children if they were bilingual. Gloria explained, "Currently, there are many opportunities. I think now I am seeing bilingualism as more of a benefit because wherever anyone goes, bilingual people are needed. And a person who has two languages is more beneficial in any aspect." Rocio responded, "There are better opportunities and more options for them to become accomplished...In many jobs, they are asking for more bilingual people who could help the rest." Carla elaborated,

For me it is excellent because she has more opportunities...I hope and I wish that in the future she will have more opportunities since she knows two languages

because if she cannot work here, she could work in another location where they speak Spanish: Mexico, Argentina, well any other place.

Alicia stated,

The program provides a good opportunity for her to develop both languages well. There are a lot of Mexicans that do not speak Spanish. She will also become familiar with traditions in both cultures. In school they teach her about the Mexican holidays...I think the program helps her recognize her races.

**Difference between bilingual education and ESL services.** Gloria and Rocio reported students learned Spanish and English simultaneously in bilingual education and English only while receiving ESL services. Alicia did not know the difference between the programs: “It is not the same?” Carla described,

My daughters have not yet learned English. I think from third grade then they start all of their classes in English, but with respect, those who are in the program from kindergarten to second grade with my daughter in comparison to others who are not in the bilingual program, I think I see those who speak two languages more alert. That is the advantage.

**Opinion of bilingual education.** All of the participants had a positive perception about bilingual education. Gloria said the program was good because the student obtains proficiency in their native language. She also reported it was bad because of the lack of communication between the home and the school. She mentioned parents were misinformed, “We need meetings in the schools to receive an explanation of the differences between each program so that parents are not confused.” Alicia said it was

beneficial for her child. Rocio responded, “Well I think bilingual education is good. It promotes communication for the parents and comfort for the child until they learn English.”

Carla explained,

I am in favor of bilingual education...I would like if bilingual education was offered in all the schools...Regardless if they are Mexican, Japanese, Italians, if the bilingual program existed in all of the schools, this country would have more power...Hopefully, the program would be offered and the two languages would be taught at least through all of elementary school and continue through middle school and high school...

## **Research Question 2**

*How can schools support families in making informed decision regarding bilingual education for their children?*

*Subquestion 1: How did school personnel help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?*

**School procedure and direct communication.** Gloria was mailed a letter home, which said her child was eligible for the bilingual program. She went to the school and spoke with a teacher to explain she wanted to change him to the ESL program.

Consequently, her son was enrolled in the ESL program for kindergarten. Carla went to the office and asked if there was a bilingual program in preschool. She was told no.

When she registered her child for kindergarten, she asked if there was a bilingual program. They told her yes, but first her child would need to take the state exam to

determine if she was eligible. Alicia received a phone call from the Director of ELL Services, who notified her that her child was eligible for the bilingual program. Rocio said she knew her child was eligible for the ESL program based on the assessment results, followed by a recommendation from the school.

*Subquestion 2: How could the school better help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?*

**Provide more information.** Gloria, Carla, and Rocio reported they would like more information from the school to better help them decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program. Rocio said, “Well I think the school could explain more to the parents which program is more convenient for the child based on the assessment results. Gloria responded,

Well they could give us more information about the difference between a bilingual program and an ESL program, the pros and the cons, and what are the benefits of both languages. As a result, the parent has a clearer understanding of the difference between the programs...I think a meeting or a workshop would be really good and those who are interested could attend to receive the information.

Carla stated,

I think they could present more information to the parents so they could be more confident in picking a program that is appropriate for their child....Before registration, the school could do an exercise where parents would know if they could help their child in that language that they are going to select, if not, they should not make the investment. I would like to say something else. For

example, the school that houses the bilingual program would benefit from more bilingual materials. I think that maybe that is why people want to, I have heard, I don't know, they want to eliminate the bilingual program because it is double the cost. For example, if you buy books in English, it is not the same if you buy bilingual books or a book in English that has the same title in English and in Spanish. Then I imagine that maybe that is why many parents do not, it is hard getting bilingual books, bilingual programs outside of school. That is why I take advantage that they are in a bilingual program at school...

Alicia reported,

I don't know...I am happy with the program and that they are supporting me. The teacher has told me that they are recommending more books in Spanish because the majority is in English. When children go to the library sometimes they do not have a large selection and teachers are making the recommendation so the program stays active and they do not remove it.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided the results of the four in-person interviews related to Latino families' knowledge of bilingual education. Qualitative analyses methods were used to identify themes and repeating ideas. Figures 3 and 4 summarize the findings for the research questions of this study, including themes and individual responses. In general, all of the participants knew their children were eligible for bilingual education services through school notification and that their child qualified as a result of an evaluation process. Carla, Alicia, and Rocio said the students were learning Spanish and English

simultaneously in the bilingual program. Gloria and Rocio said the bilingual program was designed for the children to learn English. Gloria also thought the program was designed due to the increase in the Spanish, speaking population, which was also stated by Carla and Alicia. The following were listed as benefits the bilingual program had for their child (Gloria, Carla, and Alicia): communication in native language and development of English. In regards to detriments, the participants identified the following: student confusion between English and Spanish (Carla and Alicia), more difficult to learn English (Alicia and Rocio), gap in learning/fall behind in comparison to English native speakers (Gloria, Alicia, and Rocio), and teacher maltreatment (Alicia). There were no demographic differences found between families selecting bilingual and ESL programs. Reasons influencing the selection of the bilingual program consisted of: opportunity (all of the participants), maintenance of heritage language and culture (Gloria, Carla, and Alicia), promotion of comfort and confidence in child (Gloria, Alicia, and Rocio), and positive perceptions of the bilingual program (all of the participants). Reasons influencing the refusal of the bilingual program included the following: child did not know English, parents are confused between the differences in programs, and parents are misinformed (Gloria); Rocio believed Spanish should be taught at home and English should be taught at school. Carla felt parents did not choose the bilingual program because it is double the cost.

Participants reported school personnel provided them with school procedures (Gloria and Rocio) and direct communication (Carla and Alicia) to help them decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program. Gloria, Carla, and Rocio

recommended the school provide more information and meetings/workshops (Gloria and Carla) to help them better decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program.

### **Guiding Principles**

The research project integrated the American Evaluation Association (AEA) Guiding Principles. The project was systematic, intentional, and data-based (*Systematic Inquiry*). The researcher was forthright with the primary intended users about competencies in professional practical knowledge, systematic inquiry skills, interpersonal competence, and cultural competence (*Competence*). During the interviews the researcher built trust for honest discussions. The researcher stayed tuned into the concerns of primary intended users and did not let personal interest dominate or control the process (*Integrity/Honesty*). The researcher ensured the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The researcher kept primary intended users engaged with and informed about necessary changes and adaptations in methods as the project unfolded (*Respect for People*). The researcher organized data to be understandable and relevant to primary intended users and followed-up with primary intended users to support taking action on findings and monitoring what happens to recommendations. The researcher helped primary intended users and other stakeholders see evaluation as an ongoing process rather than a one-time event or moment-in time report (*Responsibilities for General and Social Welfare*).

**Communication and reporting plan.** The researcher communicated and reported to the Loyola committee, which included the assistant principal and the Director



of ELL Services from the elementary school throughout the entire process. They were informed about the progress of the research and the researcher presented initial and interim findings, followed by complete/final findings. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher met with the Director of ELL services to present and interpret the findings. The researcher gave an oral report, accompanied by figures, which incorporated themes and individual responses developed from the data collection. The researcher also gave the Director of ELL Services an executive summary. In addition, the researcher met with each of the participants individually to report the findings. The setting was informal. They were given an oral report, including figures and illustrations. Finally, they were given an executive summary, in Spanish, and a thank you card.

When the researcher shared the results with the participants, Alicia made a comment about her response listed on Figure 3 - *Teacher maltreatment*,

Could someone talk to the fifth grade teachers to ask them to be more patient with the bilingual students who are entering their classrooms, especially in regards to homework, since the parents do not speak English and cannot assist them with their assignments?

Rocio also commented on Alicia's response of teacher maltreatment and she was not in agreement,

Both of my children have been in the ESL program since kindergarten. I am happy with their present and previous teachers. I feel that children who are learning English as a second language quit easily and become frustrated when they do not understand.

Carla made a comment about a particular detriment listed: *Gap in learning/Fall behind in comparison to monolingual peers*. She used the metaphor of someone driving a car with a manual transmission,

Sometimes the driver will get stuck in the wrong gear; yet the driver will figure it out. Bilingual students will sometimes struggle with English, but that is normal. We should not tell them English is hard and use that as a barrier. Last November, the principal told me there probably would not be a bilingual program. Teachers were telling parents to push their children to learn English. School is the second mother. Why can't the children learn both languages until high school?

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*How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?*

- I. Eligibility criteria
  - A. School notification
    - 1. Letter (*Gloria, Carla*)
    - 2. Staff member (*Alicia, Rocio*)
  - B. Evaluation process
    - 1. Assessment (*Gloria, Carla, Rocio*)
- II. Family understanding of native language instruction
  - A. Benefits
    - 1. Development of English and Spanish simultaneously (*Carla, Alicia, Rocio*)
    - 2. Development of English (*Gloria, Rocio*)
    - 3. Access to curriculum and communication in native language (*Gloria, Carla, Alicia*)
    - 4. Program was designed due to increase in Spanish-speaking population (*Gloria, Carla, Alicia*)
  - B. Detriments
    - 1. Student confusion between Spanish and English (*Carla, Alicia*)
    - 2. More difficult to learn English (*Alicia, Rocio*)
    - 3. Gap in learning/Fall behind in comparison to English native peers (*Gloria, Alicia, Rocio*)
    - 4. Teacher maltreatment (*Alicia*)
- III. Reasons influencing selection or refusal of bilingual program
  - A. For Selection
    - 1. Opportunity (*Gloria, Carla, Alicia, Rocio*)
    - 2. Maintenance of heritage language and culture (*Gloria, Carla, Alicia*)
    - 3. Promotes comfort and confidence in child (*Gloria, Alicia, Rocio*)
    - 4. Positive perceptions of program (*Gloria, Carla, Alicia, Rocio*)
  - B. Refusal
    - 1. Child did not know English (*Gloria*)
    - 2. Misinformed parents/Lack of communication between home and school (*Gloria*)
    - 3. Spanish should be taught at home and English should be taught at school (*Rocio*)
    - 4. Double the cost (*Carla*)

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*Note:* The names in the parenthesis represent which participant made the response, of which Gloria and Rocio did not select bilingual education and Carla and Alicia did select bilingual education.

*Figure 3.* Themes and Individual Responses for Research Question 1

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*How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children?*

- I. School personnel
  - A. School procedure (*Gloria, Rocio*)
  - B. Direct communication (*Carla, Alicia*)
- II. Moving forward
  - A. More information (*Gloria, Carla, Rocio*)
  - B. Meetings/workshops (*Gloria, Carla*)

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*Note:* The names in the parenthesis represent which participant made the response, of which Gloria and Rocio did not select bilingual education and Carla and Alicia did select bilingual education.

*Figure 4.* Themes and Individual Responses for Research Question 2

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Research Findings**

The purpose of this study was to provide insight and an understanding on the following two research questions: (1) How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education? (2) How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education?

Participants presented their knowledge, feelings, and opinions and values in the following areas: eligibility criteria for bilingual education, their understanding as the benefits and/or detriments of native language instruction, and their reasons for choosing or not choosing their child in a bilingual program.

While the participants knew their child qualified as a result of an exam, Carla was the only participant who reported a numerical score for her child. A finding that was consistent with the aforementioned studies was a lack of information and knowledge about the bilingual program (Lueck, 2010; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010). The goal of the TBE program is to facilitate the child's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary; the classes slowly phase out the student's native language and eventually teach entirely in English (Garcia & Pineulas, 2008). Gloria plans to transfer her youngest son from the ESL program to the bilingual program in first grade so he could learn how to read and write in Spanish. The TBE program was not

designed to teach Spanish. While participants knew the bilingual program involved students communicating in their native language and learning English everyone had different perceptions of when English was introduced, which indicated they did not understand the model for each grade level (Lee, 2013). Carla and Alicia believed students were not introduced to English until third and fourth grade. Gloria and Rocio said the students learned both languages at the same time. Gloria, Carla, and Alicia's perceptions of the bilingual program appeared to be confused with a dual language program, in which students are taught literacy and content in English and in Spanish. Carla envisioned the bilingual program continuing onto middle school and high school. Alicia did not appear to know the difference between the bilingual program and the ESL program (Lee, 2013; Lueck, 2010, Martinez and Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010).

The participants reported positive and negative aspects of the bilingual program. The negative aspects reported were similar to the ones found in Lee's study (2013): student confusion between Spanish and English, more difficulty to learn English, students fall behind in comparison to English native peers, and teacher maltreatment. Interestingly, none of the participants experienced the negative aspects personally; their perceptions were based on information they heard from other parents. In contrast to the Martinez and Hinojosa study (2012), all of the participants had a positive opinion about bilingual education (Satterfield Sheffer, 2010) and they believed that Spanish was an asset to their children. All of the parents reported their children would have more opportunities in terms of economic benefit as a result of being bilingual (Gándara, 2015;

Ngai, 2013). Maintenance of heritage language and culture were also listed as benefits (Gándara, 2015; Ngai, 2013; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005).

Reasons influencing Gloria's refusal of the bilingual program consisted of child did not know English and misinformed about the differences between programs (Lueck, 2010; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Satterfield Sheffer, 2010). Rocio refused due to her personal belief: Spanish should be taught at home and English should be taught at school (Lee, 2013; Martinez & Hinojosa, 2012; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005).

Amaral's study (2010) found that the longer parents are in the United States, the more inclined they are to place their children in programs with little or no English support. This was the case for Rocio, who arrived to the United States in 1995. She was here longer than the other participants. Amaral also found that parents tended to place their children in settings that mirrored the language patterns used in the home. In addition, the higher the parent's level of education, the more likely they were to place their children in bilingual programs where home language support was available. This was found to be true in Carla's case who was the most educated among the participants and whose primary language at the home was Spanish.

Gloria, Carla, and Rocio reported the school could provide more information about the differences between a bilingual program versus an ESL program to help them better decide which program to choose. Consequently, families could make decisions with a clearer understanding and more confidence.

### **Practical and Future Implications**

Bilingualism is becoming increasingly important because of the growing diversity within the United States. Research has demonstrated cognitive, academic, social, psychological, and economical benefits of bilingualism (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014; Christoffels et al., 2015; Cummins, 2000; Gándara, 2015; Krashen, 1997; Ngai, 2013; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). Keeping the heritage culture and language alive is likely to bring about heightened community and individual esteem and healthy social and emotional development among ethnic-minority children (Culler & Auerbach, 2011; Gándara, 2015; Ngai, 2013). By educating parents about the benefits of bilingual education, parents could become community advocates of bilingual programs (Satterfield Sheffer, 2010).

Per the participants' request for more information about the differences between the bilingual program and an ESL program via meetings/workshops, the school should have a bilingual program "education night" every year, recommended by Satterfield Sheffer (2010). Findings from this study also indicate school personnel should define a dual language program. Amaral (2010) found informed parents were better equipped to choose the best program for their ELL child and they were able to make the most appropriate decision. Permission from the school to allow parents to participate in the selection process and to communicate directly with teachers and administrators was the best way for parents to become informed. School based consultants need to work with parents to identify a program of choice, explain program instructional language models, and to discuss any potential barriers to program participation to create a better context for



learning (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005; Orosco & Klingner, 2010). In the absence of such education efforts, parents' views and positions on bilingual education may be based on inaccurate perceptions of the objectives of bilingual education (Lee, 2013).

An administrator needs to inform parents about the assessments, bilingual models, goals, and expectations of the bilingual program (Gallo et al., 2008). At this "education night," specific information about admission criteria, the type of curriculum and instruction, and a calendar to inform parents of upcoming tests and important activities should be shared (Lueck, 2010). Information must be presented and distributed to parents in Spanish. Parents should have an understanding as to why their children were selected for participation. Further, the programs would be defined and outlined for the parents. The most current research on the benefits of bilingual education should be shared to clarify any misconceptions and to help parents feel more confident about their child's education and their decision to accept this service (Satterfield Sheffer, 2010). This "education night" would be an initial step to educate Latino families about bilingual education. This initiative would provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions and to voice their concerns. Their collective and active presence would be felt within the school and hopefully, families would feel as integral members of their children's academic lives (Vera et al., 2012).

More importantly the education night initiative is in alignment with the fourth dimension of the conceptual framework of *Inclusión: Parent education is essential and ecological*. Full adoption of the framework would require school leaders to create school-wide models that support and promote bilingualism. The most important step

involves strengthening the skills of the teachers working with bilingual students. School leaders can prioritize bilingual-bicultural certification while hiring teachers to accomplish this goal. Additionally, school leaders can provide professional development and teaming and coaching to help all teachers understand the language acquisition process and how to work with bilingual students effectively in their classrooms (Scanlan, 2011).

### **Limitations and Future Recommendations**

The study included a small sample size, four participants. Thus, caution should be taken in generalizing the findings. Secondly, while Gloria did not choose bilingual education for her children in kindergarten, she enrolled her eldest child in the bilingual program in first grade and she plans to do the same for her second child when he completes kindergarten. Thus, she only opted out of the bilingual program for one year for both of her children. Future research should include interviews with families who did not accept bilingual services every time it is offered to obtain a more accurate comparison with a family member that also did not accept bilingual education. Another limitation is that there were no males included in this study. Consequently, one cannot determine if their responses would have been the same or similar to the mothers in this study. Future research should include Latino fathers' knowledge of bilingual education. Another limitation is that only Latina mothers were interviewed. Future research should include parents from different cultural backgrounds to determine their perceptions of bilingual education. Lastly, a future study should include an investigation of families who have their children exit a bilingual program and transfer into a new middle school to determine their opinions about their children's transition and school experience; Gloria brought up

the issue of maltreatment by teachers and it might be beneficial to explore if those parents feel their children are segregated and not treated equally (Lee, 2013).

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Research Question 1: *How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?***

- **What do families know about the eligibility criteria for bilingual education?**
  1. How did you find out your child was eligible for bilingual education services?
  2. How did your child qualify to receive bilingual services?
  
- **What do families understand as the benefits and/or detriments of native language instruction?**
  1. What do you know about the bilingual program?
  2. What do you think the bilingual program was designed to do?
  3. What have you heard about the bilingual program?
  4. What benefits does this program have for your child?
  5. What negative effects does this program have for your child?
  
- **What are the demographic differences between families selecting ESL and bilingual programs?**
  1. In what grade level is your child currently enrolled?
  2. Where were you born?
  3. Where was your child born?
  4. What is your ethnicity?
  5. What is your child's native language?
  6. What is your native language?
  7. What language (s) does your family speak at home?
  8. Who are the other caretakers that live in the household who are Spanish-speaking only?
  9. What is your income?
  
- **What are reasons families choose or do not choose to enroll their child in a bilingual program?**
  1. What do you think of your child being bilingual?
  2. What program did you select for your other children?
  3. What is the difference between bilingual education and ESL services?
  4. What is your opinion of bilingual education?
  5. Tell me about your educational experience
  6. Describe why you chose a bilingual Spanish program/an English immersion program

**Research Question 2: *How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children?***

1. How did school personnel help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?
2. How could the school better help you decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program?

**Closing Question: *That covers the things I wanted to ask. Anything you care to add?***

APPENDIX B  
SPANISH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Research Question 1: How do Latino families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education?**

- **What do families know about the eligibility criteria for bilingual education?**
  1. ¿Cómo supo que su hijo/a era elegible para recibir servicios de educación bilingüe?
  2. ¿Cómo calificó su hijo/a para recibir servicios bilingües?
- **What do families understand as the benefits and/or detriments of native language instruction?**
  1. ¿Qué sabe usted sobre el programa bilingüe?
  2. ¿Qué cree usted que fue el propósito/razón por el cual el programa bilingüe fue diseñado?
  3. ¿Qué ha oído sobre el programa bilingüe?
  4. ¿Cuáles beneficios tiene este programa para su hijo/a?
  5. ¿Qué tiene de malo este programa para su hijo/a?
- **What are the demographic differences between families selecting ESL and bilingual programs?**
  1. ¿En qué grado escolar está su hijo/a inscrito en este momento?
  2. ¿Dónde nació usted?
  3. ¿Dónde nació su hijo/a?
  4. ¿Cuál es su etnicidad?
  5. ¿Cuál es el idioma materno de su hijo/a?
  6. ¿Cuál es su idioma materno?
  7. ¿Qué idioma (s) habla su familia en casa?
  8. ¿Quiénes son los otros guardianes que viven en la casa que solamente hablan español?
  9. ¿Cuál es su ingreso?
- **What are reasons families choose or do not choose to enroll their child in a bilingual program?**
  1. ¿Qué piensa sobre que su hijo/a sea bilingüe?
  2. ¿Qué programa seleccionó para sus otros hijos?
  3. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la educación bilingüe y los servicios de Inglés como Segundo Lenguaje?
  4. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre la educación bilingüe?
  5. Dígame sobre su experiencia educativa
  6. Describa por qué eligió un programa bilingüe español /un programa de inmersión en Inglés

**Research Question 2: How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education for their children?**

1. ¿Como le ayudaron los empleados de la escuela a decidir entre elegir un programa bilingüe en comparación con un programa de Inglés como Segundo Lenguaje?
2. ¿Que mas piensa usted que la escuela puede hacer para ayudarle a elegir un programa bilingüe en comparación con un programa de Inglés como Segundo Lenguaje?

**Closing Question: Eso concluye las cosas que quería preguntar. ¿Le gustaria agregar algo mas a la conversación?**

APPENDIX C  
PROJECT LOG





APPENDIX D

INITIAL RECRUITING SCRIPT FOR AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW

Hi,

My name is Rosalinda Barragan and I am a bilingual school psychologist. I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in school psychology. In order to successfully complete my Ed.D. in School Psychology at Loyola, I must create and implement an action research project. The action research project is titled "Latino families' knowledge of bilingual education."

The purpose of this study is to investigate families' knowledge of bilingual education. You have been asked to participate because A) you have a child enrolled in bilingual education or B) your child was eligible for the bilingual program and you opted for ESL services. I received your name from the Director of ELL Services.

I would like to schedule a time to meet with you to discuss the study and determine if you would be interested. Our conversation should take about thirty minutes and I would be happy to meet you in a public setting of your choice. Would you be willing to meet with me? If yes, what day and time works best for you? If no, thank you for your time.

APPENDIX E

SPANISH INITIAL RECRUITING SCRIPT FOR AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW

Buenos Dias,

Mi nombre es Rosalinda Barragan y yo soy una psicóloga escolar bilingüe. Estoy terminando mi doctorado en psicología escolar en la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. Necesito llevar a cabo un proyecto para terminar mi programa. El proyecto se encuentra bajo la supervisión del Dr. Pesce de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. El título del proyecto es: “El Conocimiento de Familias Latinas sobre la educación bilingüe.”

El propósito de este proyecto es investigar el conocimiento de familias latinas sobre la educación bilingüe. Usted ha sido elegido/a para participar porque A) tiene su hijo/hija inscrito en el programa de educación bilingüe o B) eligió un programa de inmersión en Inglés en lugar de un programa bilingüe. Recibí su nombre por medio del Director de los Servicios de Inglés como Segundo Lenguaje.

Me gustaría hacer una cita con usted para discutir el estudio y determinar si usted quisiera participar. Nuestra conversación durará unos treinta minutos y me gustaría reunirnos en un lugar público de su elección. ¿Estaría de acuerdo en reunirse conmigo? Si usted está de acuerdo, cuál día y hora es conveniente para reunirnos? Si no, muchas gracias por su tiempo.

APPENDIX F  
SCRIPT FOR FIRST CONTACT VISIT

Hi,

My name is Rosalinda Barragan and I am a bilingual school psychologist. I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in school psychology. In order to successfully complete my Ed.D. in School Psychology at Loyola, I must create and implement an action research project. The action research project is titled "Latino families' knowledge of bilingual education."

The purpose of this study is to investigate families' knowledge of bilingual education. You have been asked to participate because A) you have a child enrolled in bilingual education or B) your child was eligible for the bilingual program and you opted for ESL services. I received your name from the Director of ELL Services.

I am asking for your voluntary participation in this action research study. If you agree to be in the study you will be asked to complete a face-to-face interview with me. The interview will take no longer than an hour and a half of your time and will be conducted in an informal setting at your convenience. The topic area will pertain to bilingual education and four types of questions will be asked of you: knowledge questions, feeling questions, opinion questions, and background/demographic questions. The interview will be audiotaped.

If you agree to participate, I will need your written consent. (*If participant agrees, the researcher will present the Consent Form, check for understanding, and obtain the participant's signature*). Lastly, we will need to select a time, place, and date to conduct the interview. I will confirm the appointment with a follow-up phone call as the interview date approaches.

Thank you.

APPENDIX G  
SPANISH SCRIPT FOR FIRST CONTACT VISIT



Buenos Días,

Mi nombre es Rosalinda Barragan y yo soy una psicóloga escolar bilingüe. Estoy terminando mi doctorado en psicología escolar en la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. Necesito llevar a cabo un proyecto para terminar mi programa. El proyecto se encuentra bajo la supervisión del Dr. Pesce de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. El título del proyecto es: “El Conocimiento de Familias Latinas sobre la educación bilingüe.”

El propósito de este proyecto es investigar el conocimiento de familias latinas sobre la educación bilingüe. Usted ha sido elegido/a para participar porque A) tiene su hijo/hija inscrito en el programa de la educación bilingüe o B) eligió un programa de inmersión en Inglés en lugar de un programa bilingüe. Recibí su nombre por medio del Director de los Servicios de Inglés como Segundo Lenguaje.

Le estoy pidiendo su participación voluntaria en este estudio. Si usted acepta participar en el estudio, se le pedirá que tenga una entrevista conmigo, cara a cara. La entrevista no tomará más de una hora y media de su tiempo y será conducida en un ambiente informal decidido por ambas partes. El área temática pertenecerá a la educación bilingüe y a usted se le harán cuatro tipos de preguntas: preguntas de conocimiento, preguntas sobre sentimientos, preguntas de opinión, y antecedentes/ preguntas demográficas. La entrevista será grabada.

Si está de acuerdo en ser participe en este estudio, voy a necesitar su consentimiento escrito. (*If participant agrees, the researcher will present the Consent Form, check for understanding, and obtain the participant's signature*). Finalmente, tendremos que seleccionar una hora, el lugar y la fecha para conducir la entrevista. Voy a dar seguimiento a nuestra conversación con una llamada por teléfono para confirmar la cita a medida que se acerque la fecha de la entrevista.

Gracias.

APPENDIX H  
CONSENT FORM FOR FAMILIES

Dear Parents,

My name is Rosalinda Barragan and I am a bilingual school psychologist. I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in school psychology. In order to successfully complete my Ed.D. in School Psychology at Loyola, I must create and implement an action research project. The project is under the supervision of Dr. Rosario Pesce from the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. The action research project is titled “Latino families’ knowledge on bilingual education.”

The purpose of this study is to investigate families’ knowledge on bilingual education. You have been asked to participate because A) you have a child enrolled in bilingual education or B) your child was eligible for the bilingual program and you opted for ESL services.

I am asking you for your voluntary participation in this action research study. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to complete a face-to-face interview with me. The interview will take no longer than an hour and a half of your time and will be conducted in an informal setting decided by both parties. The topic area will pertain to bilingual education and four types of questions will be asked of you: knowledge questions, feeling questions, opinion questions, and background/demographic questions. The interview will be audiotaped.

This process may bring up areas that cause discomfort; I will work with you to establish rapport and trust. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. The benefit of this interview is to provide you with an opportunity to share your thoughts in a safe environment. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential and anonymous. All data will be kept in a safe, locked cabinet. I will transcribe the interview audiotapes. The transcriptions will include pseudonyms. I will schedule another appointment with you to share the findings before they are published. Upon completion of the study, all data will be destroyed.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689. If you have any questions or concerns, you may call me at 773-742-8990 or email me at [rbarragan@paec803.org](mailto:rbarragan@paec803.org) or contact my Loyola sponsor for this research, Dr. Ross Pesce at [Rpesce@luc.edu](mailto:Rpesce@luc.edu).

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

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**Participant’s Signature**

---

**Date**

---

**Researcher’s Signature**

---

**Date**

APPENDIX I  
SPANISH CONSENT FORM FOR FAMILIES

Estimados Padres,

Mi nombre es Rosalinda Barragan y yo soy una psicóloga escolar bilingüe. Estoy terminando mi doctorado en psicología escolar en la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. Necesito llevar a cabo un proyecto para terminar mi programa. El proyecto se encuentra bajo la supervisión del Dr. Pesce de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Loyola de Chicago. El título del proyecto es: “El Conocimiento de Familias Latinas sobre la educación bilingüe.”

El propósito de este proyecto es investigar el conocimiento de familias latinas sobre la educación bilingüe. Usted ha sido elegido/a para A) tiene su hijo/hija inscrito en el programa de la educación bilingüe o B) eligió un programa de inmersión en Inglés en lugar de un programa bilingüe.

Le estoy pidiendo su participación voluntaria en este estudio. Si usted acepta participar en el estudio, se le pedirá que tenga una entrevista conmigo, cara a cara. La entrevista no tomará más de una hora y media de su tiempo y será conducida en un ambiente informal decidido por ambas partes. El área temática pertenecerá a la educación bilingüe y a usted se le harán cuatro tipos de preguntas: preguntas de conocimiento, preguntas sobre sus sentimientos, preguntas de opinión, y antecedentes/ preguntas demográficas. La entrevista será grabada.

Este proceso puede causarle algún sentimiento de incomodidad sobre el tema. Voy a trabajar con usted para establecer una relación de confianza. No hay riesgos predecibles al participar en este estudio más allá de los experimentados en la vida cotidiana. El beneficio de esta entrevista es para ofrecerle la oportunidad de compartir sus pensamientos en un ambiente muy seguro. Usted no tiene que participar si no quiere tomar parte en este estudio. Aunque usted decida participar, usted es libre de no responder a ninguna de las preguntas y / o retirarse de la entrevista en cualquier momento sin penalización.

Su participación será muy apreciada y sus respuestas serán confidenciales y anónimas. Los datos obtenidos se mantendrán en un gabinete seguro cerrado con llave. Yo voy a transcribir las entrevistas grabadas. Voy a usar seudónimos en la transcripción. Voy a programar una cita con usted para compartir los resultados antes de que sean publicados. Todos los datos se destruirán al término el estudio.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante, se puede comunicar con la Oficina de Investigaciones en Loyola al (773) 508-2689. Si tiene cualquier pregunta o comentario, me puede llamar al 773-242-0890 o me puede contactar por correo electrónico [rbarragan@paec803.org](mailto:rbarragan@paec803.org). También puede contactar a mi patrocinador en esta investigación de Loyola, el Dr. Ross Pesce al [Rpesce@luc.edu](mailto:Rpesce@luc.edu).

Su firma indica que usted ha leído la información proporcionada anteriormente, ha tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas, y esta de acuerdo en participar en este estudio de investigación. Se le dará una copia de esta forma para mantener en sus archivos.

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**Firma del participante**

**Fecha**

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**Firma del investigador**

**Fecha**

APPENDIX J  
SCRIPT FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETING

Hi,

Thank you for meeting with me. At this time I will share the findings with you before they are published. I would like to verify whether you feel the findings are accurate. I will make revisions accordingly. Upon completion of this study, all data will be destroyed.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX K  
SPANISH SCRIPT FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETING



Buenos Dias,

Gracias por reunirse conmigo. En este momento voy a compartir los resultados con usted antes de que sean publicados. Me gustaría verificar si usted siente que los resultados son exactos. Hare revisiones si es necesario. Todos los datos se serán destruidos al término el estudio.

Gracias por su participación.

APPENDIX L  
CODING CHART

**Research Questions:**

1. How do Latino Families make decisions for their children regarding bilingual education? (RQ1)
2. How can schools support families in making informed decisions regarding bilingual education? (RQ2)

RQ1	RQ1	RQ1	RQ2	RQ2
Subquestions			Subquestions	
Eligibility Criteria	Understanding of native language instruction	Reasons influencing selection/refusal of bilingual program	Ways school personnel helped families decide between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program	Ways the school could better help families between choosing a bilingual program versus an ESL program
Codes				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Staff member</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>	<p><i>Benefits:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of English</li> <li>• Development of Spanish and English</li> <li>• Access to curriculum in Spanish</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul> <p><i>Detriments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students confuse English and Spanish</li> <li>• Harder to learn English</li> <li>• English less developed than peers</li> <li>• Teacher maltreatment</li> </ul>	<p><i>For Selection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity</li> <li>• Help with homework</li> <li>• Communicate with teacher</li> <li>• Speak with family in Mexico</li> <li>• Bilingual program is good</li> </ul> <p><i>Refusal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESL preference</li> <li>• Do not know difference between ESL vs. bilingual</li> <li>• Spanish should be taught at home</li> <li>• Double the cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Direct communication</li> <li>• Assessment results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information</li> <li>• Outline differences</li> <li>• Direct Communication</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>

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## VITA

Rosalinda Barragan is the daughter of Jose Barragan and Maria Avila. She was born in Chicago, Illinois on January 27, 1983 and currently resides in Forest Park, Illinois. She attended Mother McAuley High School. She graduated from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and with a minor in Spanish. She continued on to graduate school at Loyola University Chicago and in 2006 received a Master of Education degree and in 2008 earned an Educational Specialist Degree in School Psychology.

Rosalinda has worked as a bilingual school psychologist at Proviso Area for Exceptional Children (PAEC) since 2008. While at PAEC, she has served in early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school levels. She consults with administrators, bilingual coordinators, and school teams from all districts regarding ELL assessments and interventions. She is currently working at JW Riley Elementary and Northlake Middle School. Her research interests focus on ELLs.

Rosalinda has been an active member of the Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA). She is the chair of the Bilingual/Bicultural Workgroup and has held this position since 2008. She meets monthly with her committee members and to date, she has facilitated the translation of the school psychology brochure in eight languages.

Rosalinda was acquainted with many academic professionals who were accessible as role models and advisors; they guided her on this path to success and she is grateful for

their support. She is also thankful for the encouragement she has received from her family, friends and colleagues. Obtaining this doctoral degree was her life goal.



## DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

The Doctoral Research Project submitted by Rosalinda Barragan has been read and approved by the following committee:

Rosario C. Pesce, Ph. D., Director  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
School Psychology Coordinator of Clinical Training  
School of Education  
Loyola University Chicago

Amy J. Heineke  
Associate Professor  
School of Education  
Loyola University Chicago

Victoria Hansen  
Assistant Principal  
Grant Elementary School

Lynn Carranza  
Director of ELL Services  
Grant Elementary School

The final copy has been examined by the director of the Doctoral Research Project and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the Doctoral Research Project is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The Doctoral Research Project is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Date

8/19/15

Director's Signature

Rosario C. Pesce