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Dual Literacy Practices for Dual Language Learners

Darlys G. Garcia-Marty
Concordia University - Portland, darlys.garciamarty@gmail.com

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Darlys G. Garcia-Marty
Concordia University - Portland

Concordia University−Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ AND APPROVE THE DISSERTATION OF

Darlys Garcia-Marty

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

James A. Therrell, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Donna Eastabrooks, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Beth Hoeltke, Ph.D., Content Reader

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Darlys Garcia-Marty

Concordia University−Portland

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James A. Therrell, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Donna Eastabrooks, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Beth Hoeltke, Ph.D., Content Reader

Concordia University−Portland

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Abstract

In early childhood academic settings, literacy practices play a crucial role in the development of emergent literacy skills. Many of the available practices for developing these foundational pre-reading skills are not often inclusive to second language learners. Educators who enter classrooms where dual language exposure is necessary to their curriculum are limited to the types of practices they can utilize to support the development of literacy in two languages. The purpose of this case study was to explore what literacy practices teachers could implement to improve dual literacy development in second language learners. The study began with a foundational understanding of dual literacy development followed by an exploration of current practices that educators were using to support literacy in language immersion settings. The case study included four classroom observations, eight interviews, and a focus group comprised of six educators. The eight classroom interviews were conducted with Grades K−1 immersion teachers from two different elementary schools to collect data on their experiences and available training opportunities that informed their practices in early dual literacy. One recommendation resulting from this study was to provide training opportunities for targeted practices in literacy areas specific to the needs of second language learners.

Keywords: dual literacy, language immersion, literacy practices, second language learners

Dedication

I am dedicating this work to my family, who never ceased in prayer for me and were my biggest cheerleaders throughout this educational endeavor. To my husband Steven, thank you for reminding me of whose I was when the impossible seemed to be the only thing I could see. You truly are a man after God's own heart. To my son, Steven Jr., who always whispered, mom you got this, may this accomplishment serve as a reminder that you can do anything you put your mind to do. To my big sisters, Ana and Anny, thank you for your unconditional love and support. Who would have thought three little Spanish girls from the Dominican Republic would all step into their areas of calling and accomplish their own aspired levels of greatness. I would also like to include my mother because she will always be my reason to succeed, aside from God. Lastly, I would like to recognize one of the most supportive and influential individuals in my life, my dear friend, and cohort sister in Christ, Dr. Brita Williams. Thank you for always reminding me of the end goal, your pep talks and laughter were my lifelines, your friendship is a true reminder of God's unfailing love and support for us. The reason for this journey is simple education, is transformative, and provides educators with a platform to not only evolve but to assist others in the process. This degree provides me with the knowledge and support needed to help other educators become transformative in the area of early childhood dual literacy instruction.

Acknowledgments

The statement “it takes a village” is truly indicative of all the individuals it takes to accomplish a desired goal. I would not have made it this far without the support of my colleagues at work, my dear friend Patrice who daily shared their expertise in education and always reminded me of the importance of my research. My committee members Dr. Donna Eastabrooks and Dr. Beth Hoeltke, thank you for providing me with constructive feedback, support, and, most importantly, encouragement throughout this journey. Lastly, I want to thank Dr. James Therrell, my dissertation chair, who was the calm within my storm. His feedback and plethora of knowledge helped to guide my focus and ensured that the only option involved was an onward approach to completion.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

The main topic of this study was to examine how educators teaching in immersion programs can implement literacy practices that support the development of dual language reading in the primary grades. Educators may use specific literacy practices in English to develop reading biliteracy skills for students who are enrolled in Spanish immersion programs (Genesee, 2015). These early reading skills may be introduced through practices that expose young learners to a balanced approach in emergent literacy domains (Rohde, 2015). The structured domains may include a designated literacy time that provides language immersion students with guided practices in the following areas: word study, shared reading, interactive read alouds, small group instruction, and daily writing (Chan & Sylva, 2015). Many of these teacher-facilitated reading blocks are evident in primary grades in the general reading curriculum found in American schools; however, in immersion programs, exposure to these practices was not equally as structured (Hickey & Mejia, 2014).

Such variations in dual literacy programs may be a result of the types of curriculum that they use which focus on the acquisition of a new language first and then the development of literacy within the newly attained language (Chan & Sylva, 2015). While the structure of literacy instruction may not look the same in all classrooms the goal to develop strong readers in any language should unify the practices used by all educators. Therefore, as the researcher, I closely examined the current practices that educators in early immersion settings utilized to facilitate the development of dual reading. Teacher collected assessment data from their students were also examined to see if targeted literacy practices could be linked to student growth.

Recent findings have addressed teaching practices for immersion educators related to early literacy development, and the relationship they have with a child's "current level of knowledge" (Rohde, 2015, p. 1). The research suggested that informed literacy practices begin with a general understanding of what a child has been exposed to with language, text, and general concepts of print. Educators with a foundational understanding of these prior exposures can establish a baseline for where literacy instruction should begin (Rohde, 2015). In past decades educators teaching literacy, regardless of their setting were taught using a monolingual approach to literacy development in young children (Mohr, Juth, Kohlmeier, & Schreiiber, 2018). The early attainment of literacy and prior exposure to learning was focused on addressing the general goal, which focused on learning to read in one language (Goodrich et al., 2013). This type of literacy development focused on a linear ideology that suggested children first learned language through listening and communicating in one language. These first interactions then led them to early reading and writing progression (Mohr et al., 2018). Any exposure to a second language was not supported because educators were limited to content and resources that facilitated the addition of another (Flannery, 2015; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015).

In recent years this ideology has been updated to reflect instruction that addresses the needs of early literacy development in dual language instructional settings. The new training approach suggested that children were able to learn different languages concurrently, specifically in the areas of early reading when taught explicitly using a variation of word study in both language domains (Genesee, 2015). The foundational development of language was established with components such as word study, shared reading, interactive read alouds, small group instruction, and writing which are included in a structured literacy block. While this research addressed practices that were previously in place in monolingustic settings, newer research

trends suggest that the learner outcomes will be the same in an immersion-type setting. Children who were taught to read and write in one language can use those same skills to support reading in a second language (Mohr et al., 2018). Educators who utilize instructional practices that address dual literacy components may better equip themselves to support the biliteracy trajectories of their dual language learners (Chan & Sylva, 2015; De Jong, 2014; Goodrich et al., 2013).

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

The context of this study stemmed from the shared teaching experiences of early immersion educators who were working in Grades K–1 in a newly implemented language immersion program. The program was first offered at a private school and had later been implemented at a neighboring district public elementary school during the 2018–2019 academic school year. The public-school program began with two additional immersion kindergarten classrooms. Students were provided with the same instructional content as the other four English-only kindergarten classrooms that were in close proximity. The only difference between these academic settings was the language in which students were being instructed. Children who entered these programs were taught all their academic content in their target language of Spanish. The program began with 42 kindergarten students and four language immersion teachers. The following 2019–2020 school year numbers increased as two first-grade immersion classrooms were added to continue the instruction for the first group of immersion students that began in kindergarten the previous year.

The second-year addition to the immersion program included four first-grade educators and 40 second-year immersion students. The commonalities in the instructional practices shared were the tailoring of the district structured reading block used in the non-immersion classrooms.

The immersion staff was also provided with an on-site assistant principal that helped maintain the program's functions. The students were from all parts of the district and were picked using a lottery system design, which randomly selects participants from a provided pool of applicants. Lottery systems are used to remove selection bias as these selections are not done by humans but through technology. Program participation required that parents signed a 5-year commitment that ensured their children remained in the immersion academic setting throughout their elementary years.

The total one-way layout of instruction was to remain the same until students entered the third grade. In this grade, students were to receive instruction using both English and Spanish. This was because students were required to take state exams in their native tongue from that point on. The percentage of language usage was to gradually decrease as students entered grades third and beyond. While the initial start of the program progressively grew in popularity the learning process remained questionable to both parents and educators alike. The difficulty for immersion educators working in a newly implemented program was in trying to ensure that parents understood the developmental process for dual language learners. Many of these educators still lacked a clear understanding of how these literacy skills would transfer from one language to another and could only provide parents with limited responses on how children would be able to read in two languages. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a framework that provided educators with available knowledge in early dual literacy.

The development of this conceptual framework focused on a culmination of existing theories and early literacy models that addressed foundational aspects of early language development as children entered kindergarten. The framework for this study focused on language development, curriculum content, teacher knowledge and a student's prior knowledge in their

native tongue. The conceptual framework included three supporting theoretical components. These three components were the theory of planned behavior, linguistic theory, and Marie Clay's early literacy model (Chan & Sylva, 2015; Clay, 1998; Cummins, 1979). The final addition to the framework included Douglas Brown's linguistic principles. The joining of these theories provided a supporting foundation for the early development of dual literacy in second language learners (Brown, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Immersion programs in early grades are diverse and produced different results. Many lacked the needed literacy domain coverage to support student reading in their instructional language and in their native tongue English (Chan & Sylva, 2015). The focus in many of these early immersion programs was on the conversational elements and the general associations that different cultures assigned to word meanings (Mohr et al., 2018). Some of the reasons for this was a lack of consensus about what areas were essential for the development of early dual reading skills in the immersion programs. The resulting problem was the inconsistency of methods available to educators for determining what literacy domains helped them best support the current and later reading progression of their second language students (Taguchi, Gorsuch, Lems, & Rosszell, 2016). Students who began immersion programs that transition from one language back to their native tongue after third grade may lack the needed skills to become keen readers in later grades (Genesee, 2015). Therefore, strategic dual literacy practices appeared to be vital for early immersion students beginning as early as kindergarten and it shows a lack of effective teacher implementation of early literacy practices, primarily in the teaching of Spanish as a second language.

Purpose of the Study

The early development of literacy skills in foundational grades requires that educators teaching in those grades have a strong understanding of how they are applied specifically in an immersion-style setting (Mohr et al., 2018). The purpose of this case study was to explore what literacy practices teachers could implement to improve dual literacy development in second language learners. This study explored how structured reading practices and writing helped to support the development of dual literacy for students enrolled in immersion programs. The development of these reading components began by using prior research to gain a stronger understanding of how early reading practices were applied to create stronger reading connections in children that were learning a second language (De Jong, 2014; Genesee, 2015; Hoff, 2013; Mohr et al., 2018). The reason for pursuing a study in this area of literacy was to promote further research on the academic benefits that dual literacy learners received from teacher applied practices that supported dual literacy development in the primary grades.

Research Questions

The research question stemmed from the problem, purpose, and previous research on early literacy development in dual language settings. The case study attempted to define and analyze the varying roles and results that immersion programs had regarding student learning in the areas of early literacy development, teacher content knowledge, and parent-child relational support within their native tongue. These factors were used to determine their place and impact on the success of dual literacy development in kindergarten and first-grade students enrolled in total one-way programs. Hence, the research question which guided this study was: What practices can teachers implement to be more effective in teaching early literacy skills which improve dual literacy development in second language learners?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

Educators lacking in the types of reading practices needed to ensure foundational reading development might adversely impact the way students develop primary reading skills in the early grades (Barac, Bialystok, Peets, & Moreno, 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). Without providing educators with effective practices that could be used to inform how they taught reading to students in immersion programs, the students might not have reaped the benefits of an added language (Genesee, 2015). While language immersion programs are not a new venture to the academic community, their true potential in the areas of biliteracy development is still not fully understood (Hoff, 2013). The growing interest in immersion programs has initiated placing more emphasis on available research to support the growing claims of student growth in the areas of cognitive development for dual language learners (De Jong, 2014; Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). The previous limitations in available early biliteracy research development have had an impact on the practices of succeeding educators and their facilitation of early literacy opportunities for their students (Hoff, 2013). The more research available to educators who work in immersion programs the better informed their practices will be within the classroom.

Identifying the significance of this research study was necessary because the changing portrait of our mass education system no longer adheres to a ‘one-size fits all’ model of learning. Today’s classroom equally shares the same ideology, as the end goal is to prepare students with the tools needed to succeed in a richly diverse global economy (Mohr et al., 2018). The pursuit of dual language instruction requires that students be taught productively from their earliest exposure to learning how to communicate with the world around them. Children who are exposed early to dual language instruction in the form of vocabulary and reading can make

cross-cultural connections in immersion type settings (Barac, 2014; Genesee & Fortune, 2014). Students who also begin at an early age to learn an added language experience other benefits outside of the academic realm, such as their ability to communicate and appreciate the language differences among their peers (Genesee, 2015). While the notion of communication alone carries its merit, dual language programs also claim to provide students with other academic advantages in the areas of multilingual comprehension and analytic thinking (Mohr et al., 2018).

The topic of immersion at an early age also helps shape the types of curriculums adopted by the public school systems and the types of training in dual literacy that are developed for its teachers. A final point to consider is that while immersion programs continue to expand, research can serve to ensure that they are correctly implemented in early childhood classroom environments. Poor execution of any academic practice can be detrimental to the future development of an early reader (Hoff, 2013; Joseph & Evans, 2018). Foundational reading acquisition impacts many areas of student learning that programs that offer such claims should foster curriculum and instructional practices that are set up to accomplish the development of reading skills in any language (Rohde, 2015). The use of research to evaluate and determine academic advantages in the early grades may better inform the instructional practices of educators.

Researcher-as-Instrument

I was one of the pilot immersion teachers who was hired for the first year of the programs' implementation in my state. This teaching opportunity provided early observational access to other immersion educators within the state before and after the pilot program was initiated. I was able to visit immersion classrooms beginning as early as kindergarten and extending through the third grade. I conducted a case study from the vantage point of experience

as an immersion educator who closely worked with dual language reading development in Grades K–1 with both educators and their students. Through this study, I sought to understand how educators thought and felt about their current teaching practices, including what practices they observed to be the most effective in their student's development of dual literacy.

The underlying inspiration for this case study was a result of collaborative conversations with other educators and parents of students enrolled within the immersion program. Many of them expressed common concerns about reading development for children who were immersed in a second language in the early grades. These educator and parental concerns were important to me because I worked in the area of immersion and acknowledged how vital their support was to the sustainability of these programs. For example, immersion programs relied heavily on the parental commitment and if parents were not sold on the academic benefits that language immersion has on their child's learning they could remove their child from the program. Immersion programs depend fully on the yearly enrollment of their students, parents, and teachers. The loss of any of these components would impact the success and longevity of a program. Therefore, teachers having access to research supported practices was the intended aim of this study. The more aware that parents and teachers were of how immersion programs benefited learners the deeper their buy-in would be in the academic outcomes of immersion programs.

Definition of Terms

Bilingual/Bilingualism. The ability to speak and understand in two different languages (Mohr et al., 2018).

Biliteracy. The ability to read and write in more than one language (Mohr et al., 2018; Chan & Sylva, 2015).

Dual language instruction. The academic practice of providing students with instruction in two languages (Genesee, 2015; Hickory & Mejia, 2014) This practice is done to ensure the development of bilingualism and biliteracy skills in those who are exposed to these levels of instruction (Genesee, 2015; Boyle, August, Tabaku, Cole, & Simpson-Baird, 2015).

Monolingual. The ability to speak one language (Genesee, 2015).

Total one-way immersion programs. The total one-way immersion layout is another language approach used in the classroom. This form of immersion provides English-speaking students with an immersed curriculum and classroom learning experience in the second language. Total one-way immersion instruction means that students are taught 90% of their daily curriculum in Spanish and 10% in English. According to Genesee and Fortune (2014), early total one-way models are the most successful at producing dual language speakers in an academic setting in comparison to other language models currently available (Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Genesee, 2015).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

Recognition of assumptions was essential to the logical conduct of this research (Simon & Goes, 2013). Assumptions about student learning in dual literacy programs relied on the types of instruction that students received, the types of assessments utilized to measure competencies in the areas of language development, and the educator's knowledge in the instructional practices that when applied promoted the development of biliteracy skills. The first assumption recognized how important teacher practices were towards the development of dual literacy and therefore, relied on identifying which practices had the greatest impact on student dual language reading outcomes. It assumed that applied practices in literacy helped students become bi-literate readers. The second assumption relied on the validity of the assessments used to measure what students

knew prior to entering the program. It assumed that the provided assessments accurately measured what students knew. The last assumption assumed that educators were candid about the instructional practices they knew and shared with their peers to develop biliteracy skills within their program.

Delimitations provide studies with an understanding of the areas in which their validity and reliability may be limited within the scope of a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). This case study was limited to teaching practices from two different educational settings. The first was derived from an immersion program in a public school, and the second came from an immersion program in a private school. Only two immersion program sites were available in the state, therefore the selection process was limited to only those two schools. The limitations of these two educator groups were also impacted by the limited range of grade levels that were solicited to participate in the interviews. The final delimitation was due to the assessments that were used to collect student data outcomes for later instructional decisions. This area of assessments in immersion programs differed greatly from one program to another, therefore, the assessments available were limited only to the schools that used them and were not consistent with schools that did not utilize them in early literacy immersion settings.

Chapter 1 Summary

Identifying the significance of this research was necessary because the changing portrait of our mass education system no longer adheres to a one-size fits all model of learning. Today's classroom shares this similar sentiment, as the end goal is to prepare students with the tools needed to succeed in a global economy (Mohr et al., 2018). The pursuit of a productive instructional approach requires that students be taught effectively from their earliest introduction to learning. These exposures to language through literacy extend both spoken and written ways

to communicate with the world around them. The most common one was the ability to communicate and appreciate the language differences of others (Genesee, 2015). The use of research to evaluate what practices supported early literacy development in second language learners helped inform the instructional choices that were applied by immersion educators in their classroom.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

Educators in the United States are tasked with the challenge of educating children who represent many languages and cultures. With over 350 languages spoken in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), educators have a growing need for instructional solutions that support dual language learners. The classroom instructional practices once geared towards educating a monolinguistic population are not suited to meet the growing needs of today's dual language learners. The limited number of quality dual language programs available in schools has made the continual inclusion of languages more problematic (Flannery, 2015). One of the emerging problems impacting schools is a lack of knowledge in the area of dual literacy instruction, which is a vital component of bilingual development (Mohr et al., 2018).

Currently, schools in the United States are beginning to add dual language programs as a way of addressing the increasing instructional demands that have become more visible in the 21st century (Mohr et al., 2018). Many culturally populated states such as California, Florida, North Carolina, Utah, and Tennessee are attempting to bridge the language gap in their schools by facilitating cross-cultural awareness and promoting bilingualism through academically directed programs (Adam, 2016). These cultural academic inclusions are facilitated through multilingual listening devices and informational text that allow students to learn about other cultures and languages (Adam, 2016). The classroom uses of technology also provide a virtual gateway to countries and instructional practices around the world (Adam, 2016; Fortune & Tedick, 2015). Using both text and technology, educators who teach in immersion programs also strive to pursue instructional opportunities that help students not only continue their development

in their native tongue but also incorporate concepts, as well as meanings through the learning of a new language (Mohr et al., 2018).

In recent years dual language programs have increased their focus to address a younger demographic of learners (Genesee, 2015). The following states offer different variations of dual language programs beginning as early as kindergarten: Utah, Tennessee, and North Carolina each offer a variation of dual language instruction in their public as well as private school settings. The states of Utah and Tennessee offer total one-way programs that provide a 90/10 approach to language immersion. Students receive all core instruction in Spanish or Mandarin and only 10% of their day is spent in English. North Carolina's immersion programs provide a 50/50 approach which means that students receive an equal amount of time of instruction in both languages (De Jong, 2014).

The exposure to immersion instruction in many of these established programs begins in grades as early as pre-kindergarten and extends well beyond elementary school into high school (Utah Dual Language Immersion, n.d.). While these programs offer an opportunity for all students to learn another language regardless of their first language, the programs often lack the shared curriculum and literacy practices needed to help educators support the development of dual literacy in their second language learners (Mohr et al., 2018). An educator's continual goal in the classroom is to prepare students to be successful academically in the areas of reading, writing, and speaking with each passing year. Foundationally, for educators who teach Grades K–3, their instructional practices become the building blocks for all other learning content in the grades that follow. For that reason, it is essential to have available resources and opportunities for educators to share practices that help to support the development of dual literacy.

In the primary grades where children's minds are most malleable, the need for applicable literacy practices becomes crucial for their ongoing dual language development in the area of early reading (Castro, 2014; Genesee, 2015). Dual language acquisition requires instruction to be extensive and repetitive in the areas of phonics instruction and vocabulary building (Mohr et al., 2018). Educators who work with young children should be taught how to develop learning toolboxes that facilitate cross-cultural language connections between words from one language to another (Taguchi et al., 2016). Educators should also have access to shared knowledge and resources in this particular area to better support the dual learning trajectories of their students. While teaching children how to communicate in more than one language addresses the present concern, more information is still needed on the available practices that educators can use to facilitate early biliteracy skills. The ongoing development of targeted dual literacy instruction in domains that support meaningful connections between two languages may provide a foundational solution for making immersion programs more viable for all learners (Castro, 2014).

The review of this literature sought to identify instructional practices that support the academic progression of early literacy skills in dual languages. The focus of this review was to identify the role that effective literacy implementation plays in the success of dual language acquisition in immersion settings. While it is essential for instructional practices in literacy to include variations of comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency it is even more critical that educators understand how to use them (Castro, 2014; Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). Therefore, the review also explored the classroom practices of teachers who are currently working with children in immersion settings as early as kindergarten through first-grade.

The literature review process began by first looking over available literature on immersion programs in American schools and around the world. Many of the collected articles shared a mutual ideology in the importance of acquiring a second language in an early academic setting. These previous immersion programs supported the belief that "bilingual education provides an opportunity to improve schooling both quantitatively through participation and qualitatively as it pertains to the learning process" (Mohr et al., 2018, p. 11). The initial review of literature consisted of 50 articles, mostly published between 2013 and 2018. The focus of the articles was on areas of research that explored literacy development in children learning a second language. These articles also provided information on the types of literacy domains that teachers utilized to measure student learning. The articles were selected using the following keywords in various combinations: immersion, bilingualism, early literacy model, dual language perceptions, and student learning behaviors.

The initial scan of the literature yielded a diverse compilation of journal articles comprised of research and theory. The articles that addressed past studies were highlighted and grouped to help solidify notable common trends in literacy development. The research articles that shared jointly related methodologies were sorted and paired together because of their duplicated attributes. Articles that shared similar theoretical frameworks were also grouped and compared to identify trends in the provided research.

The final matrix overview provided an informative outline that was useful in determining the most relevant attributes as shown in the Argument of Discovery (see Appendix A). The attributes, which were initially identified from the research topic, were: (a) the early development of language, (b) the instructional practices that support dual literacy development, (c) the role of the teacher in facilitating an environment of dual learning, (d) Parental influences

on learner outcomes, and (e) the impact of the student's prior knowledge on their acquisition of new knowledge. The reoccurrence of these attributes noted in the compiled research matrix provided a supporting layout in conducting the Argument for Advocacy in the study (see Appendix B).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an argument used to support the research relevance and value of a study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), assisting the researcher to provide a compelling argument for the measures taken to evaluate and address a research question. The provided explanations utilized by a framework can be depicted through written descriptions or a graphic representation of the connecting ideas that link previous theoretical or empirical studies to newly proposed ideas (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). For this particular study, three different frameworks were linked together to better understand the key factors that were involved in the development of dual literacy in the primary grades (see Figure 1). The three selected theoretical frameworks for this study include: The theory of planned behavior (TPB), the linguistic theory, and the early literacy model.

These three theories addressed dual learning influences such as behaviors, language exposure, and early literacy content that are necessary for shaping the reading development of literacy in young children in acquiring a new language. The selected theories for this research were essential because they addressed three particular areas that influence the learning process both inside and outside of the classroom. The greatest support that academic communities can begin to offer in immersion settings is effective instructional solutions that educators can use frequently to support a student's biliteracy progression beginning in the primary grades. The

correct application of instructional solutions is foundational to the development of early reading (Ajzen, 1991; Genesee, 2015; Rohde, 2015).

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The current research on dual language learner (DLL) programs in academic settings presented a need for exploration of the language experiences as well as learning behaviors developed as a result of a student's exposure to literacy at home and school (Call, Rodriquez, Vasquez, & Corralejo, 2018; Castro, 2014). One relevant consideration is the TPB that was used in the Utah Dual Language Immersion program, (n.d.). TPB which links beliefs with behaviors (Ajzen, 1991), was used to explain how learning behaviors influence the instructional practices of teachers. The theory also suggested how parents who were involved in the immersion process perceived literacy and how those perceptions impacted student behaviors towards their dual language learning outcomes.

TPB was first introduced in the 1980s by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (Ajzen, 1991). The theory stemmed from a previous ideology on reasonable action, and the only difference between the theories is that TPB added the behavioral component in this extended theory (Ajzen, 1991). The addition of behavior to this theory was introduced by Icek Ajzen who wanted to create a better understanding of how learning is influenced by behavior. Ajzen used his theory to explain and predict human responses towards specific situations as it pertained to second language acquisition (Ajzen, 1991). His theory was easily tailored to fit a dual language setting and provided further insight into learning behaviors in immersion programs. The behavioral influences impacting the development of reading in a new language included the attitudes, perceptions, and learning development associated with the parents, teachers, and students.

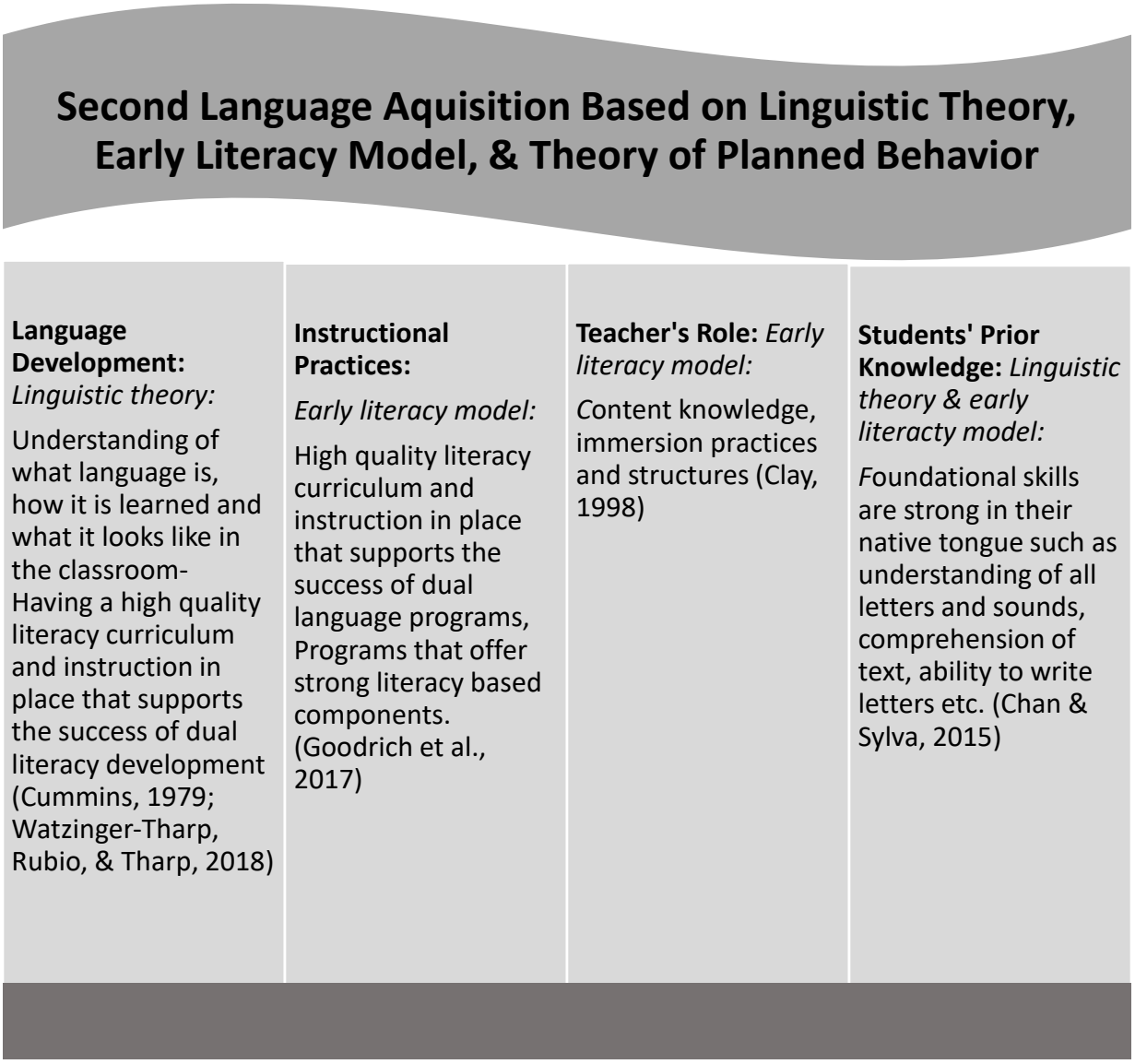

Figure 1. The theory of second language acquisition which includes the addition of the theory of planned behavior, the early literacy model, and the linguistic model adapted from Brown (1994).

The first component of this theory embraced literacy from the viewpoint and perspectives of the parents. Parents who chose to place their children in these types of immersion programs were usually aware of the extended benefits that a second language provides academically for their children. According to Hickey and Mejia (2014), many parents pursued immersion programs for their children because they understood the social, cultural, and economic benefits

that dual language acquisition provided. Another parental research related belief was that early immersion programs served as a vital preparatory step for the extensional language development of their children in the process of immersion (Hickey & Mejia, 2014).

The dually shared attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs between the teacher and the parents also catalyzed the quality of education that immersion programs produced within a school setting. Teachers who see the value of dual language acquisition used their beliefs of language attainment to guide the level of rigor needed to ensure students had exposure to language-rich content. General school beliefs and behaviors towards full immersion learning were also experiencing a shift as these types of immersion programs were viewed equally as necessary to their monolinguist counterparts. Lastly, all three of the previous components may have an immediate impact on the perceptions and behaviors of the students. Young learners who began their formal academic years surrounded by parents, teachers, and schools that shared a mutual attitude towards their development of a foreign language can accomplish better learning outcomes (Call et al., 2018; Chan & Sylva, 2015).

Using Ajzen's (1991) theory to explore how parents, teachers, and students feel about immersion programs helped provide a framework that informed the practices and beliefs of these relationships. The mutual understanding of learning behaviors between parents and educators also helped provide another level of support in improving learning perceptions that negatively impacted student learning of a new language. For example, parents not allowing students to share new knowledge of a second language at home out of fear that they may lose knowledge of their first language. The misperceptions of parents about language development in the provided example may have influenced the way children feel about learning a new language. Parents and educators who approached learning with behaviors that support the uses and development of

different languages provided a learning environment of acceptance (Mohr et al., 2018). Lastly, the more evidence of dual literacy attainment realized through the achievement of student learning outcomes, the more positive influence these programs may have on the behaviors and perceptions of those involved in the process.

Linguistic Theory

The second framework is the linguistic theory, which addressed the progression of language development and its acquisition in the primary grades (Watzinger-Tharp, Rubio, & Tharp, 2018). The theory aimed to define what language is, should include, and what must be present to become an acquired practice (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). The foundational considerations for this theory focused on the development of expression and word meaning as a key descriptor of language. Linguistic developmental factors included morphs and morphemes, lexicon, syntax, and recursion, as they are associated with pronunciation, as well as descriptive word meaning (Chan & Sylva, 2015).

The acquisition of language at its fundamental level required exposure to key foundational elements, such as oral language exposure, phonological processing, and a knowledge of print. According to the U.S. National Early Literacy Panel (as cited in Arndt, 2013), these three areas provided a clear sense of future reading trajectories. In a similar conceptual model used with kindergarten students in Hong Kong, the noted literacy pathways considered other surrounding influences for aligning with word reading and literacy development. For example, the amount of time students were able to apply their learning through oral communication with peers in their newly acquired language (Chan & Sylva, 2015). In the research completed by Goodrich et al. (2013), children's linguistic development in one language was easily transferred to a second language as a result of exposure and application of its uses.

Children who can already understand phonetic principles and can apply them to read simple words in English can instructionally apply similar sound associations to word meanings in Spanish. Linguistic influences, as a result of this research, were considered to be interchangeable between a child's first and second languages. The application of this research in a classroom setting suggested that if children received intervention or instruction on a particular skill in one language, the learning could be applicable in both.

Knowledge of linguistic developmental factors was equally as important in immersion programs. Children entering immersion programs in kindergarten with strong linguistic factors in areas that pertain to oral language, phonological processing and a strong knowledge of print in their primary language were better equipped to learn a new language (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hoff, 2013) A more in-depth focus on language acquisition is a necessary component of immersion programs because students begin this transition by first learning sounds and grammatical rules in their first language of instruction. In a case study that focused on language acquisition researchers, concluded after measuring preschoolers "phonetic inventories" through a serious of measured oral assessments that dual language learners began learning through phonetic transfer (Hoff, 2013, p. 6). Preschoolers, in this case study, when exposed to phonetic principles in their first language at home, were easily able to apply them to a newly taught language at school by helping them develop connections between sounds.

The researchers also noted that dual language learners (DLL's) have a stronger advantage in their ability to discriminate between speech and sound patterns in comparison to their monolingual counterparts (Hoff, 2013). Further findings in this case study also suggested that before students can actively engage in the learning process of a new language, they must be able to understand the general linguistic practices in their native tongue (Hoff, 2013). Similarly,

Brown's (1994) theory of language development suggested that a good indicator of dual language success was a student's prior knowledge based on their current foundational development of language. Native English speakers entering Spanish immersion programs can process new meanings quicker when linguistic development in their native tongue is already present (Goodrich et al., 2013).

Early Literacy Model

The final model in this framework focused on the development of literacy through the introduction of the five domains of literacy development in the areas of phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency (Chan & Sylva, 2015). Maria Clay first introduced the early literacy model in the early 1960s (as cited in Rohde, 2015). The theoretical model suggested children learn to read before being able to connect words with their symbolic meanings. The early literacy model was further enhanced in the 1990s through the acknowledgment of phonetic principles identified as a precursor in emergent skills needed for reading and writing development by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) (as cited in Chan & Sylva, 2015). Maria Clay's (1960) early literacy model supported the need to expose early learners to a structured systematic format of reading foundations that included alphabetic awareness of letters and sounds, symbolic representation of words, and communication of these domains in practice (as cited in Rohde, 2015). The early acquisition of literacy for learners occurs when these domains are present (Rohde, 2015; Watson & Wildy, 2014).

One of the areas of the early literacy model that is closely connected to dual language development is the comprehensive emergent literacy model or CLEM identified as an added extension of Maria Clay's early structure of literacy (Rohde, 2015). The CLEM was added to Clay's research by James Cunningham to connect the curriculum and instructional practices of

early childhood facilitators (as cited in Rohde, 2015). James Cunningham's addition to Clay's (1960) ELM, approaches emergent literacy through a three-part layout that encompasses "word identification through print awareness, phonological awareness as it leads to listening comprehension and the development of oral language that leads to reading comprehension" (Rohde, 2015, p. 4).

The presence of these literacy domains may be applied differently when learning new languages. Educators may use symbolic representations of words to aid dual language learners (DLL) in their understanding of meanings as the visuals provide an added measure of support from one language to another (Chan & Sylva, 2015). Classroom instruction involving dual language opportunities for learning in an early learners' native tongue helps students make meaningful learning connections in both languages (Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The theory of early literacy emergence was comprised of a child's ability to develop these skills and the environment that influenced their developmental outcomes (Genesee, 2015). The theory, therefore, was useful for explaining the possible learner benefits of dual literacy implementation using effective practices as they are applied daily by educators teaching in immersion programs.

Development of Second Language Acquisition

Together, the three theories selected for the framework of the study explored the acquisition of dual literacy development in early immersion programs and their impact on literacy from a behavioral, linguistic, and emergent viewpoint of research. Their alignment to the acquisition of a second language was based on content and learning environments that produced strong literacy support in children's native tongues before having any exposure to another. The impact of immersion programs at an early age on literacy helps to inform the training and practices of current and future educators through the lens of these new foundational domains.

These three conceptual ideologies were easily connected in this study through four repetitive attributes. The following paragraphs identify and explain how each attribute was essential to the development of dual literacy in an early immersion program.

The first attribute identified an understanding of how languages develop. The development of early literacy in a dual language setting is more likely to occur when teachers enter the immersion process having a strong knowledge of what emergent literacy is and how it develops in young children (Rohde, 2015). Educators pursuing jobs in language immersion programs must also have a strong understanding of how language is acquired, and how it can be cultivated in a classroom through daily practices. Recent studies on the early development of the bilingual brain suggest that the acquisition of language primarily takes form as a result of exposure and experiences in more than one language (Genesee, 2015; Mohr et al., 2018; Rohde, 2015).

Educators that understand the progression of language in the primary grades can then begin exposing their students to content that is presented using multilingual structures of learning. An example of this in a kindergarten setting may appear with a teacher reading a text that uses both English and Spanish words. Students exposed to language in this form begin to develop the meaning of words in other languages through the uses and explanations of text. Educators also used language conventions through small group conversations. This language process helps to guide students as they communicate new meanings with each other making sure students can have continued opportunities to develop linguistic competence in the desired language (Genesee, 2015).

The second reoccurring attribute connected the development of language through the practices that educators utilize to facilitate early literacy in a dual language setting. Students

were exposed to daily elements of literacy practices that use an explicit and systematic layout that addresses reading, through activities that include speaking, listening, and writing in dual languages (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). Examples of these practices included age-appropriate writing activities linked to a story that was read and discussed in a whole group setting. Students could discuss story elements and simple words that describe experiences in the story. This process also teaches students how to check for understanding by using questioning, and allows student's access to leveled readers in the language of instruction.

The third attribute considered the role of the teacher in fostering cross-cultural awareness. An example of the teacher's role in cross-cultural awareness was noted in the connection of meanings that students acquire while learning new vocabulary. The teacher provides instruction on the different meanings that each culture may assign to a word to help students understand how words relate differently. The teacher also provides opportunities for students to use those new meanings in their various forms through modeled phrasing of each meaning in a conversational small group setting.

The parental influences can also correlate with the third attribute. Parental influence and impact on learner outcomes that parents taking part in these programs help to support (Hickey & Mejia, 2014). An example of this attribute is noted in the interactions that parents have at home with their children who are learning a new language. Parents take part in the learning process by reading to their children in their native tongue at home. They could also make labels using objects around the house to help their child connect word meaning with print in both languages. Research indicated that children who entered immersion programs with strong literacy competencies in their native tongue were more successful in attaining literary content in an added language (Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Rohde, 2015).

The fourth attribute of relevance focused on what students already knew before they entered a dual language program. This critical attribute provided a better understanding of the role that a student's current knowledge in their native language had on their ability to translate learning from one language to another in immersion instructional settings. Previous research on the development of emergent literacy suggested that children begin to understand the functions of reading long before they have access to a given text (Rohde, 2015). Learning to read begins with early exposure to alphabetic principles, awareness of sounds, the representation of that through visible print and the way it is communicated orally in a child's native tongue (Rohde, 2015; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016).

Children that entered immersion academic settings with these abilities in their native tongue were easily able to transfer their knowledge from one language to the next (Goodrich et al., 2013). An example of this attribute was seen in children who entered kindergarten with a strong understanding of alphabetic principals. As they began to learn the alphabet in another language, they were able to decipher sounds when learning to make simple words or decode them while attempting to pronounce a new word. Teachers that have an early understanding of what students already know in their native tongues are better equipped to determine the level of instruction they need as they learn a new language (Rohde, 2015; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The identification of these four relevant attributes and the organization of the supporting research provided a better foundation towards understanding the impact that teacher-knowledge about specific practices had on the early development of dual literacy.

Historical Context of Dual language

In the United States, the instructional value of dual language programs continues to evolve as a way of addressing the growing language differences that exist within the United

States. The necessity for dual language was once viewed as an added skill essential to specific professions in the job market. Progressively the views of language acquisition and the need to speak more than one language have changed in countries where migrants who are pursuing a better life have moved their families. As a result of the growing multilingual society that now represents the American culture, "progressive educational policies based on geographical realities and economic opportunities" are now supporting dual language instruction in their schools (Mohr et al., 2018, p. 11).

Today, dual language programs have nationally grown in acceptance as a means of providing the next generation of learners with a global advantage for communicating with others (Adams, 2016). While such programs have been implemented differently around the world, they are intended to serve students whose first language is not English. The initial idea of this type of program began in 1965 at a school in Montreal, Canada (Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Leite, 2013). The process that Canadian school administrators utilized to attain this level of language acquisition began with the full immersion of the French language in kindergarten and then a progressive tapering in later grades with an added increase to English (Leite, 2013). The successful outcome was visible in a student's ability to speak French because of their participation in a dual language immersion program.

The traditional roots of these types of language-based programs in Montreal helped provide the blueprint for other immersion offerings here in the United States (Leite, 2013). The United States in a similar manner began dual immersion programs under the same premise in the twentieth century in the state of Florida and California (Leite, 2013). The only difference was the language selection was not French but rather Spanish using the same layout. The goal of these

dual language programs was to present dually divided language instruction using an equal percentage of the day.

In recent years, many schools in the United States have begun adapting and creating curriculum that is dually functional for bridging the cultural learning gap that continues to exist in today's classrooms. These new curriculum offerings no longer aim to provide foreign language electives for students pursuing college upon completion of high school. Instead, the curriculum offerings are beginning in grades as early as pre-kindergarten and are being offered as fully immersed language curricula that teach English speaking learners general content in the language they are attempting to learn (De Jong, 2014; WIDA, 2013).

The available research on early reading supported the current need for quality immersion programs that promote high-quality reading instruction for dual language students in the early Grades PK–1 (Watson & Wildy, 2014; Rohde, 2015). According to Castro (2014), the available research was currently lacking a "comprehensive theoretical framework that describes how learning develops in young dual language learners" (p. 697). Therefore, it was imperative to consider how previous research on reading development could be adapted to address the development of early reading in dual language learners.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

The following section provides findings of previous research on the instructional models used for immersion programs. Also discussed are the domains of learning that are utilized by educators to facilitate student learning outcomes. These instructional models are important because they addressed areas of practice that previous educators found to be vital for the development of biliteracy in early childhood and can be utilized to inform the current literacy practices of educators in immersion settings.

Instructional Models

Instructional settings where language is the driver for all other modes of learning require that educators have a strong knowledge of language development (Genesee, 2015). Educators who teach in the foundational grades utilize these instructional models to guide the types of practices they apply. One instructional model that is often used in both traditional and immersion classrooms is the emergent literacy framework.

In a study conducted by Chan and Sylva (2015), this instructional model was used to identify and examine the early development of language in both groups of English language learners (L1) and second language learners (L2). Using this model, Chan and Sylva (2015) explored the contributions that code-related learning and oral language skills provided towards the development of early reading. Their research was also aimed at providing early detection and intervention models for educators working with L1 and L2 types of learners. The study first began by analyzing a similar literacy model constructed in the late 1990s by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998). The model proposed by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) provided a strong layout of early reading developmental domains for L1 students and as a result, provided a useful outline for the enhancement of another model towards L2 students under the same layout. The Whitehurst and Lonigan (2003) models were further extended to include these four notable attributes: language use, literacy environment, demographic variables and at the center of the framework were the students' home influences as they contributed to their development of language skills (as cited in Chan & Sylva, 2015).

In early literacy development, a child's first language plays a vital role in the acquisition of a new language. Lynch (2008) emphasized the parental relational role that a child's home has in the development of their linguistic skills (Lynch, 2008). The results of Lynch's (2008) case

study suggested that children's linguistic assets begin to take form at home in their native tongues prior to entering a formal academic setting. Educators who understand the connection of home language on student literacy development can help foster those literacy skills better and serve as a bridge between students learning at home as well as at school (Castro, 2014).

Chan and Sylva (2015) also suggested, that the building of literacy for L1 and L2 students take form using previous knowledge in the learner's native tongue and connect it with the domains of literacy in their new language of acquisition. The conceptual model of emergent literacy development used by Chan and Sylva (2015) follows an early trajectory of reading development for L1 and L2 students. The grades observed for noting the progression of reading began in kindergarten and ended with third grade. The study looked at the common variables that connect the cross-linguistic and environmental influences with reading attainment in these grades. These common variables were then used to identify their relationship with the five domains of early reading development. (Chan & Sylva, 2015; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2003).

There were several key elements of the research topic. First was the need for a general understanding of what language is and how it develops in early learners. Second, was the role of the teacher in facilitating a learning environment that supports dual language acquisition. Third, was the influence of the parents and the home environment on their child's learning outcomes. And finally, the last key element was the student's prior knowledge before entering immersion programs. This prior knowledge was essential for the research because it helped to provide a clear picture of how learning is influenced by these other components already existing in a students' life before entering school. Educators who are exposed to such knowledge in their training may have the needed preparation to guide the ongoing dual literacy development of their students as a result of this information (Brown, 1994).

Research Literature Claims by Relevant Attribute

Language development. The emerging themes from the research literature on how a second language is acquired focused on the presence of the early domains of literacy and the environment of exposure. The literacy domains represented alphabet principles, awareness of letter sounds, verbal exchanges, and symbolic representation when making new connections within the content of (EL) emergent literacy development (Clay, 1998; Fosnot, 2013; Rohde, 2015; Watson & Wildy, 2014). The development of phonemic awareness and letter recognition requires that students receive daily exposure to activities that allow them to identify letters and utilize their sounds (Jung et al., 2016; Rohde, 2015). Classrooms that provide guided scaffolding and daily opportunities for students to have access to text, listening centers, alphabet naming, and pairing help encourage the development of early language skills.

Chan and Sylva (2015) provided an example of exposure to early literacy skills in a dual language classroom using twelve kindergarteners who were receiving Mandarin and English instruction in a small group setting. The children were exposed to listening comprehension activities, daily oral exchanges in both languages, visuals picture cards to develop vocabulary and writing translations that utilized code-related skills. The students were then assessed using cognitive measures that focused on word recognition, comprehension of text from one language to another and phonological awareness. The results indicated that children exposed to instructional practices that address phonological skills, and vocabulary with visuals as well as listening materials showed a higher development of early dual literacy skills in comparison to those classrooms that did not provide instruction in those specific areas (Chan & Sylva, 2015).

The acquisition and development of a new language is a complicated procedure that is impacted by the hereditary qualities of an individual. Everyone is born with some intrinsic ability

to communicate, but it is the surrounding environment that helps produce a model of what communication should sound like to others (Chan & Sylva 2015; Jung et al., 2016). In the early years, communication begins with nonverbal cues that evolve with exposure to things that are seen and heard from parents. Children seem to show a positive development in their open dialect when they are constantly interacting with others in conversational forms and through literacy-rich environments (Jung et al., 2016).

Instructional practices. The development of language is further supported by the instructional practices that educators utilize for teaching dual language learners. The most prevalent themes from the research focused on instructional practices that provided opportunities to connect languages based on their common attributes. An example of these common attributes was identified in languages that share similar meanings to words (Mohr et al., 2018). Teachers seeking to provide instructional practices that make connections from a child's first language to their instructional one can include dual language music, books, and technology in their teaching practices (Genesee, 2015; Mohr et al., 2018).

Another example of these instructional practices in a kindergarten classroom would be a teacher reading a simple story that utilizes English and Spanish words. The teacher could model identifying word meanings through the illustrations and the identification of known words in the children's first language (Mohr et al., 2018). The teacher could also provide instructional practices that allow students guided opportunities to orally retell the selected story using conversational elements of both languages. Instructional practices in early dual language settings are most effective when children can see them modeled by their teacher, hear them spoken, and are provided with learning opportunities to use them in the classroom (Genesee, 2015; Mohr et al., 2018).

Parental influences on learner outcomes. The themes from the research regarding parental influence on language development and learning range from what parents do to assist in their children's new development of language and to how they view the importance of these dual language programs. Parents are their children's first teacher; therefore, the value parents place on education is such a significant component of their success in the classroom (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013). The research by Kavanagh and Hickey (2013), depicts parents as valued stakeholders in the success of their child's development of a new language and their ability to use the language dually at home. Additional supporting research by Schwartz and Palviainen, (2016) advised that parents as partner teachers incorporate the new language their child is acquiring at school within their home environment as a way of bridging the cultural gap that may exist between the home and the school community.

Parental support in the classroom is equally as influential in their child's learning outcomes. Parents that cultivate strong professional relationships with their child's teacher help to create a strong support system for their bilingual learner. An example of an influential relationship between the parent and the teacher can be volunteering in the classroom as a way of learning a new language with your child (Mohr et al., 2018). Children like mirrors mimic what they see in front of them. Parents who model the excitement of learning a new language become the greatest examples of those reflections upon their children (Mohr et al., 2018).

Teachers' role. The noted themes, which emerged from the research literature, associated teacher knowledge and preparation, with the application of dual language in a classroom. The role of the teacher is vital in the classroom as they become the facilitators and overseers of these early learning environments. Teachers who have a robust pedagogic reference frame understand the value of literacy and are better able to promote its functions within their

daily learning structure (Madera, 2015; Rohde, 2014; Sorin, 2013). Recent findings concerning high-quality early childhood education settings suggested that teacher and child interactions were among the most vital in the early years of children's academic matriculation (Jung et al., 2016) Therefore providing educators with teaching options that support dual language development in the areas of literacy are needed for students' continual success in these programs. Providing access to effective dual literacy practices for current and future educators that include knowledge of classroom arrangement as well as instructional learning measures can benefit literacy development in dual learners

Previous research focusing on early learning environments also suggested that the setup of a classroom is equally as crucial to the development of early literacy as the content it promotes (Fosnot, 2013; Genesee, 2015). This is especially true for children who enter dual language programs and come from a lower socioeconomic background where exposure to language may be limited. Classrooms set up with an array of books, learning manipulatives, vocabulary-rich experiences provide students with learning exposures needed to support the development of literacy (Fosnot, 2013; Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Hickey & Mejia, 2014). Providing access to effective dual literacy practices for current and future educators that include knowledge of classroom arrangement as well as instructional learning measures can benefit literacy development in dual language learners.

Student prior knowledge. Past learning influences how new learning occurs; therefore, it is essential for educators first to assess the knowledge that their students already have when they begin school (Brown, 1994). All children enter school with variances in the languages they speak and in the connections they can make as a result of their exposure to early content (Crump, 2014; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The value of considering a student's prior knowledge in

their acquisition of a second language is a noted characteristic of the cross-linguistic transfer. Cummins (1979), introduced the development of language using his Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis (DIH). According to his research, Cummins believed that minority students could transfer oral skills from one language to another only if they had a strong foundation in their native tongue (Cummins, 1979; Goodrich et al., 2013).

Cummins' (1979), hypothesis also took into account length of exposure in both languages and a student's motivation to learn a new language. The research surrounding the (DIH) was updated in 1981 by Cummins to include the value of rich experiences in both languages as they are also essential to the cross-linguistic transfer of dual learning environments (Goodrich et al., 2013). Early childhood teachers that facilitate and create new ways in the classroom to connect prior learning with new learning help to maximize and extend student learning capabilities in both languages (Goodrich et al., 2013). Research conducted by Genesee (2015) suggests that adults who learn two languages at an early age have "neurocognitive advantages" that extend beyond comprehension skills (p. 6). Related research on dual language learner outcomes suggests that students who are fully immersed at an early age in a second language develop skills in that language that make literacy skills transferable and comprehension possible (Barac, 2014; Genesee & Fortune, 2014). The benefits of language immersion are not only visible in the development of reading competences, but they are also present mathematically in the enhancement of early problem-solving skills (Genesee, 2015). In a review of the literature that supports academic growth in student content areas in the higher grades, findings suggested that a weighted percentage of students who took part in a similar immersion program outperformed their peers in the areas of reading and math (Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

The present literature, however, supported the need for additional research in lower grades to determine the full impact of immersion programs on student learning in the early areas of literacy development (Castro, 2014; Chan & Sylva, 2015). A challenge within this review of research was the need to identify which immersion literacy practices might be best suited for promoting early dual literacy development starting in kindergarten. Although much research was available for addressing the needs of the older immersion students, a gap still existed in identifying those that are supportive in the lower grades (Castro, 2014; Chan & Sylva, 2015).

Review of Methodological Issues

Methodological issues are elements within a study that researchers need to consider when determining what methods to apply within their study. These considerations were important to identify and address early on within this study because they revealed the limitations associated with the methods selected to support the gathering of research (American Psychological Association, 2020). An effective approach to addressing potential methodological issues was to examine previous research studies for issues with data collection tools, sampling, and other design elements.

The selection of issues for the present case study began by looking at prevalent methodological issues that were identified through the research matrix. The grouping of methodological issues was first organized by their research methods. The categories were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research design. The selection of issues was narrowed by the design most applicable to the case study. For a researcher, the ability to note commonalities in the limitations resulting from those previously identified issues in other studies helped to make the present case study better. This was accomplished by guiding the methodological approaches

used in this study to ensure the accuracy of collection tools, dependability of subject selection, and the correct structuring of an allotted time frame for the research process.

The following paragraphs discuss previous research on early literacy development in second language learners. The selected methods and challenges were explored and the areas of limitations that were noted in each design are discussed. The first study selected utilized a mixed research design to examine how emergent development of literacy occurs in a second language (Chan & Sylva, 2015). The researchers began by studying the emergent literacy skills of English language speakers. Chan and Sylva wanted to see if the development of early reading skills in one language could easily transfer to another as a result of classroom exposure to phonological awareness and code-related skills development in kindergarten students (2015). The focus of the research also included the general impact of bilingualism and cross-linguistic transfers from English dual language learners to Chinese. Lastly, it included literature reviews on the potential influences of a child's home environment were added to address the beginning stages of language development in children.

Initially, the emphasis of early literacy behaviors was assessable to children in academic settings in Hong Kong because their curriculums were structured to promote early biliteracy development. Children as early as three years of age are immersed in dual language academic settings (Chan & Sylva, 2015). The challenges encountered within the research were a result of conflicting research outcomes that could not determine what domains in literacy led to later reading success in both languages. Assessment tools were also included as a challenge in this study. There were limitations to the types of available assessment tools that could be utilized to accurately measure the domains responsible for early reading in two languages.

In a study by Mendez, Crais, and Kainz (2018), the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to identify how the use of bilingual vocabulary in a preschool classroom setting benefited early learners as opposed to receiving vocabulary instruction in only one language. Pre and post data assessments were first given to randomly selected design groups as a way of establishing a baseline for later comparison of the data collected results. The instructional groups were comprised of Spanish speaking children that were randomly selected to receive instruction in one or both languages. The study utilized a cultural and linguistic (CLR) approach to student language development and vocabulary enhancement that was provided to preschoolers in a small group setting (Mendez et al., 2018). The methodology used was evidence-informed shared reading practices that focused on teaching 30 English words three times a week for a total of 5 weeks.

The approach within the study was led by the trajectories of the assessed student's growth in the areas of language development as a result of their exposure to cross-linguistic understanding and meaning that was attained from weekly exposure to new words in both languages (Mendez et al., 2018). The results of the study supported the use of bilingual vocabulary instruction for students learning to connect meaning from one language to another favoring bilingual vocabulary as an instructional approach in the place of English-only for increasing vocabulary that supports dual literacy skills (Mendez et al., 2018). The study's noted limitations were a result of having small participant numbers which impacted the researchers' ability to generalize the results to the larger population of preschool children. The findings were limited as a result of the research not being examined during classroom instruction and therefore could not be associated with the classroom practices that were used to teach vocabulary outside of a small group.

The transfer of initial skills from one language to another was addressed in a third study by Goodrich et al. (2013). The research presented in their study was aimed at evaluating how language transfers take place through the development of emergent literacy skills. The researchers used pre- and post-emergent literacy measures to examine children's initial skills in one language as a preliminary baseline that would later be compared after children were exposed to a second language. The data collection came from a preschool comprehensive test that measured phonological and print processing skills in early childhood settings. These formative assessments were given to students that were born in the United States but were able to speak Spanish. These types of students fell under the research category of heritage speakers or language minorities which, is a name given to children whose parents speak the target language of origin (Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Goodrich et al., 2013).

The study's objective was to identify through these assessments the level of language skills needed to ensure proper literacy transfer of foundational skills from one language to another. The researchers conducted experimental interventions on 94 randomly chosen students who were receiving instruction in Spanish and then in English. The selected students were exposed to two preschool curriculums that focused heavily on literacy. The design measures provided the study's Head Start programs with an opportunity to utilize data in a way that would serve not only to identify students at risk for later reading development but also to create intervention placements for their at-risk learners. The research findings also provided a supporting validation of the influences that early quality exposure to emergent literacy skills play on the future reading trajectories of students (Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Hoff, 2013). The results of this study suggest that students' preliteracy skills from one language to another are interdependent and are highly cultivated by instructional practices that support their combined

uses within the classroom (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Hoff, 2013). The study, however, did have limitations, the first was reflective of their small sample size making detection of moderations within the study difficult. Also, the issue of cross-language transfer was not fulling addressed by the study suggests that having an extending duration of this research may provide a clearer connection between language transfers of early literacy skills (Goodrich et al., 2013).

In 2016, another case study was utilized to examine a similar academic transfer that began with children in kindergarten and extended to eighth grade (Burkhauser, Steele, Slater, Bacon, & Miller, 2016). The study followed the learning trajectories of over one thousand students. The collection of data through assessments and their results were used as comparable measures for identifying the benefits of dual language instruction over time. Academically the results suggested that children who began the dual language instructional process in kindergarten exhibited higher levels of academic proficiency in the core domains of literacy. These findings correlate with the first research in their shared belief that exposure to a partner language produces better learning outcomes for dual language learners. The noted limitations related to this study were identified by the authors suggesting that the assessment tools utilized to measure the level of proficiency were all done using different variations of the test. While the collected assessment data did address language and core proficiency measures the different translations used to interpret the test were not accurately translatable in some parts of the assessment for immersion languages in Chinese and Japanese (Burkhauser et al., 2016).

Synthesis of Research Findings

Synthesis in research is defined as a culmination of relevant findings that utilizes prior research and knowledge to incorporate a cohesive mixture of newer content within the available

research (Wyborn et al.,2018). The goal of synthesizing prior research findings is to utilize the previous knowledge to support the development of new integrated ideas. These ideas stem from commonalities that appear to be shared among the previous research findings. In the areas of dual language development, one of the most frequented ideas of biliteracy development pertains to a child's initial understanding of early literacy in their first language (Goodrich et al., 2013). Children's initial knowledge of language serves as an important tool for identifying future reading risks and trajectories in DLL (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Hoff, 2013) Cross-linguistic proficiencies are highly dependent on a learner's proficiency in their first language (Castro, 2014; Cummins, 1979; Rohde, 2015). Children who enter academic settings with strong L1 knowledge are at a better advantage for language skills to transfer to their L2 (Chan & Sylva, 2015; Goodrich et al., 2013; Mendez et al., 2018).

Castro (2014) contended that early language exposure helps facilitate future learning behaviors in children and the meaning they assign to their learning. Additional commonalities found within the research literature were reflective of the types of literacy domains most prevalent in successful early reading outcomes. The following are a list of these domains that were utilized in early pre-reading instruction: phonological awareness, knowledge of print, exposure to vocabulary (Chan & Sylva, 2015; Goodrich et al., 2013; Mendez et al., 2018). Children in academic settings exposed to more than one language can distinguish phonetic sounds better than their monolingual peers (Barac et al., 2014). Early reading skill development is heavily dependent on the early expansion of a child's phonological abilities (Barac et al., 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). Similar research supporting these earlier claims suggested that language minorities or children exposed to another language early on have transferable skills that can serve as a benefit in their ability to acquire dual literacy (Hoff, 2013). Phonemic awareness

was a noted cross-curricular tool that children were able to apply in both languages as a part of a cross-linguistic transfer (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hoff, 2013). In two similar case studies, which addressed the development of dual language learning, neuroscientific measures were used to determine the impact that dual language exposure had on the developmental domains of children (Genesee & Fortune, 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). The findings suggested that as early as infancy children who are exposed to dual language can distinguish phonetic sounds better than infants who were only exposed to one language (Barac et al., 2014).

The commonly noted findings also suggested a correlation between language development and early emergent literacy formation. Children who come from homes where exposure to vocabulary is present develop a stronger cross-linguistic connection from their first language to their instructional language as concluded in these studies by (Barac et al., 2014; Mohr et al., 2018). The value of vocabulary was also present in the research findings of Mendez et al. (2018). In this study, the preschoolers who took part in the small group bilingual learning approach towards vocabulary had a better understanding of word meanings and usage. These students scored higher in the standardized assessments that were given in comparison to their peers that were provided instruction in only one language instead of two. The use of two languages as a part of the learning process allows students an opportunity to connect meaning using a cross-cultural and linguistic approach to learning (Mendez et al., 2018). These shared commonalities found in the research play an informative role in addressing dual language development in early learners.

Critique of Previous Research

Critique of previous research provides an evaluative breakdown of the research that is currently available in a particular body of work (Nordquist, 2018). The topic that was analyzed

through other evaluated works pertained to dual literacy practices and how structured applications within the classroom support biliteracy development in the primary grades. This critique began by first analyzing previous studies on dual literacy development, followed by a closer look at the practices that were linked to the early acquisition of a second language in an immersion setting. These previously compiled collections of research offered a clear connection to phonics and early language skill development in dual language learners.

The research conclusions, however, were limited to only comparable test scores through their selection of research design (Goodrich et al., 2013; Mendez et al., 2018). Although their data provided readers with an educational viewpoint on dual language instruction, the research lacked access to other relevant factors that affect the way learning takes place such as: teacher implementation of dual literacy practices, program practices, and parental influences towards the ongoing development of dual literacy. Considerations of dual language learners and their home connections were limited in each identified study. Much of the research focus was on the instructional language of the child and not on the other factors that support student learning holistically. The previous research also limited the amount of research it shared on available curriculums as well as teacher training in a dual language. Teacher content knowledge and execution of dual instruction was not consistently emphasized throughout the available research. The studies also provided a limited viewpoint on the learner outcomes because the data collected focused more on the testing grades that began in third (Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016).

As a result of these limited findings in the areas of early childhood literacy development, many researchers provided recommendations within their study to provide added focus in collecting data on language minorities in early childhood settings (Goodrich et al., 2013; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The variances in the assessment outcomes were also worth noting

as these types of immersion programs were not measured using a universal assessment screener, useful in measuring not only the learner outcomes but also the program functions (Hoff, 2013). Extensive research on methodological practices and measures needed to be explored to expand upon what was currently known in the field of dual language instruction. These considered measures were also applicable to quality assessments, specific to the nature of learning within the realm of immersion (Castro, 2014; Goodrich et al., 2013; Wardle, 2008.).

The research studies reviewed on dual language programs mainly addressed immersion practices from the perspective of Spanish native speakers entering academic settings as a means of acquiring the English language (Barac et al., 2014; Burkhauser et al., 2016; Mendez et al., 2018; Mohr et al., 2016). Their research design, therefore, was limited to one process of language acquisition instead of exploring how language transfers between both. Equally as important was that the study samples utilized from these studies did not focus their research on groups comprised of English natives who were immersed in the Spanish language (Mohr et al., 2018). The implications of such findings may yield a better understanding of what linguistic transfer looks like in early reading trajectories. A final consideration of the previously discussed research considered the assessment tools utilized to collect data. The studies all lacked a shared component in the area of assessment. These variances made it difficult to interpret findings or to identify the targeted measures from one group to another. The results of such comparable limitations may have led to an interpretive bias within the conclusive research (Goodrich et al., 2013). The improvement and enhancement of this category needed to include a more consistent form of assessment that measured critical foundational skills necessary to identify language developing targets and instructional dual literacy practices in early childhood (Genesee, 2015; Goodrich et al., 2013).

Chapter 2 Summary

The value of bilingualism continues to rise in a society where people no longer communicate through a shared language approach (Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). This was especially true for educators teaching in the 21st century where schools were shifting to meet the growing demands of its global learners (Mohr et al., 2018). The opportunity to be exposed to new languages at an early age shifted the expectations of how knowledge was acquired and presented a new opportunity for communication to exist.

In the past, curriculum was designed to embrace the modalities of one language and dismiss its connections to another. This statement was also true for language programs and their continual development as more research became available in the areas of instructional learning. Immersion programs, as a result of newer content, aimed to educate students in various forms that supported students' development of biliteracy skills within the classroom (Genesee, 2015). The goals of these dual language settings were to create bilingually proficient learners to go out in the world and be successful contributors within the diverse economy (Chan & Sylvia, 2015). The emphasis of immersion instruction was not only on the attainment of language but also on the awareness of culture for the learner, especially at a moldable young age. Therefore, a need for research still existed because many dual language programs lacked the necessary content knowledge needed to facilitate the foundational elements of early reading. Children who were matriculated in these programs still needed strong academic support in their native language to become proficient in their second one (Mendez et al., 2018). The growing need for academic support requires educators to be prepared adequately in dual literacy practices to facilitate learning that prepares students in the areas of early literacy development.

Chapter 3: Methodology for Qualitative Research

Introduction

This chapter provides the rationale and outline for the methods used to explore what literacy practices could be implemented to improve dual literacy development in second language learners. The goal of the research was to explore strategies that educators teaching in language immersion programs could utilize to develop literacy practices that yield dual literacy results in early childhood reading. The first approach in dual literacy development is to identify a contextual relationship between two languages that could help provide a bridge between reading comprehension from one language to another (Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The research method used for this study was a qualitative case study approach. According to Creswell (2014), researchers conduct case studies to develop a deeper understanding of a process through the collection of data that is analyzed throughout a period of time. A case study research design was beneficial for exploring the current teaching practices that were in place in a kindergarten through first-grade language immersion setting and potentially shed light on the practices most beneficial to the development of early dual literacy skills.

Researchers often used various means of research designs as a way of collecting and organizing their findings to address possible answers to their research conclusions. Many researchers select unique methods to explore their studies choosing between qualitative and quantitative designs, while others find that their research can be best addressed through the combination of both designs. The selected methodology used for this case study was a qualitative approach to investigate the literacy practices currently being used to teach language immersion students how to read in kindergarten through first-grade. Qualitative case studies are bounded or defined within the established limits of a study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). This case study

focused on dual literacy practices that were implemented in kindergarten and first-grade immersion classrooms. The researcher looked at how educators in these selected settings used current practices to support the development of reading for dual language learners. The intent for conducting a qualitative case study was to identify practices in literacy that were most effective for teachers to use when teaching dual language learners how to read. The best way to develop a deeper understanding of the available practices for immersion educators was to gather data using different types of tools. The variations in data collection tools offered an in-depth interpretation of meaning for problems that were being studied (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009).

Creswell (2014) advised researchers avoid using only one form of data collection because it limits the level of understanding a researcher can attain within their study, therefore data collection for this case study used various tools. The collection of data included a demographic questionnaire, an observation balanced dual literacy documentation form, a semistructured interview process with open-ended questions, and a focus group with open-ended prompts (Creswell, 2014; Nagle & Williams, 2013).

A qualitative research methodology was used in this case study to gain access to how educators interpreted their current knowledge of literacy practices in dual language settings. The observations provided a detailed account of how the practices were used within these specified settings. The interviews provided background on the educators' experiences in literacy and views about their effectiveness as different practices were applied during their instructional time. The focus group allowed educators to collaborate and share similarities as well as differences in effective literacy practices with their immersion peers. The collection of these accounts using observations and interviews yielded an in-depth view of which practices supported the development of dual literacy in kindergarten through first-grade language immersion classrooms.

The case study's qualitative approach addressed research through a lens of understanding that assigned meanings to both social and human problems through a philosophical interpretation of how learning occurs (Creswell, 2014). This type of research methodology focused on a group's or an individual's viewpoints which always values the inductive style in the research process. The inductive form of reasoning meant that early interpretation of the research was first viewed through the collected data of those involved in the participant pool. The data collected was limited to the general instructional literacy practices of kindergarten through first-grade immersion educators. The inductive style of reasoning was further informed by the ongoing themes that were associated with the educators' experiences and current supporting research on early dual literacy practices (Creswell, 2014). The methods researchers use in a qualitative process involve interviews and questioning, a form of data collection that is typically gathered in the setting being studied, and then followed with an interpretation of the collected data and results (Seidman, 2006). The application of a qualitative methodology was useful for gaining and establishing an understanding of how specific practices in dual literacy helped students develop better reading outcomes in immersion K–1 classrooms.

Research Questions

In recent years, a growing number of bilingual studies in the area of early literacy development have shed light on the need for further research to be conducted in the areas of dual literacy and on the instructional practices that support their growth (De Jong, 2014; Flannery, 2015; Mohr et al., 2018; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). The need for further research is currently being informed by the literacy testing results of immersion students and the available parts of training afforded to educators tasked with preparing them for these assessed literacy measures in a second language. Research conducted by Mohr et al. (2018) suggested that testing data

measuring early literacy development in second language learners provides evidence of an instructional gap in the classroom uses of effective literacy practices. Castro (2014) argued that the issue stems from educators not fully understanding the learning development of children in dual language settings. Many of the educators who took part in this literacy data collection attributed the learner outcomes as a direct result of their limited teaching exposure in dual literacy practices (Castro, 2014; Mohr et al., 2018; Rohde, 2015). While these educators had received formal training in literacy during their college years, newer exposure to dual literacy practices was not included in the general practices of the teaching profession (Castro, 2014). In recent years, with the inclusion of these types of immersion programs in public schools and the continual growth of English second language learners, the need for dual literacy instructional practices is becoming a necessity for all learners (Castro, 2014; De Jong, 2014; WIDA, 2013). Hence my research question became: What can teachers do to implement more effective teaching of early literacy skills to improve dual literacy development in second language learners?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore what literacy practices teachers could implement to improve dual literacy development in second language learners. Further exploration of their instructional practices focused on how educators previously applied these literacy skills in immersion type settings and on the identification of available program instructional-based offerings that helped support these academically driven dual literacy practices. The researcher used a qualitative case study research design to analyze the influence that the current literacy teaching practices had on the development of dual literacy in Grades K–1.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The educator participants, for this research, were chosen from two different elementary schools. One elementary school was privately owned and was considered the preliminary model of immersion programs in the state. The private elementary school was in a suburban residential area. This was the first school to offer a full language immersion program at the elementary level in Grades PK–3. The school's accreditation came from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS).

The public elementary school was a Title 1 public school located in a suburban residential area. This school shared a similar immersion curriculum structure as the private school. A high percentage of the students who attended this school were on free or reduced lunch. This school was one of the 23 district elementary schools in the state and had been serving the community for over 57 years. The school's accreditation came from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Student enrollment was 566 with a student to teacher ratio of 14:1. This elementary school was the first public school in the state to include a language immersion academy within its regular elementary school setting. The immersion academy offered Grades K–1 and continued to add another grade level with each fiscal school year as a part of the program requirement (Clarksville Montgomery County Schools, n.d.). The same curriculum that was used in the private school was shared by the public school through a language program called Addalingua. Both school immersion programs also used the total one-way model of immersion instruction. This model provided students with full language immersion content taught in the language of instruction only.

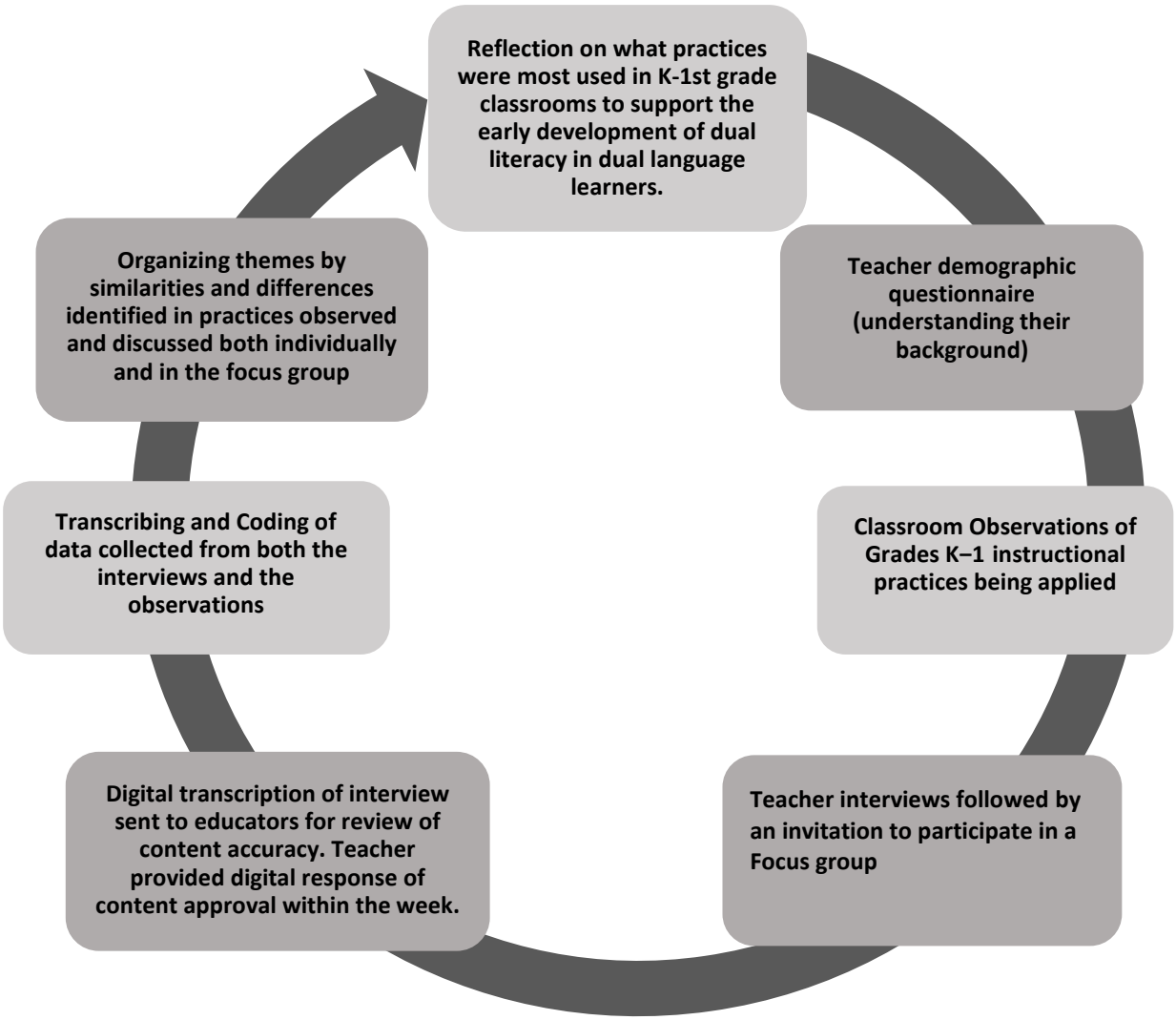

Figure 1. Case study research design. The Data Collection Sequence represents the sequence of methods that was used for data collection and is based on the case study design offered in Creswell (2014).

Sample, Sampling Method, and Related Procedures

The participant's samples for this study taught kindergarten or first-grade. The sampling method used was purposeful sampling with a maximum variation approach to ensure that diversity was part of the selection process (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2006). The target population of immersion educators helped to determine sufficiency and saturation. The sampling

in the public and private elementary schools was consistent with educators teaching in language immersion programs in Grades K–1 who had a minimum of three years of teaching experience. The criteria for participants in the sample included both genders and all races which ensured better discretion for those willing to participate in the study.

To ensure that the study yielded a deeper level of understanding it was important to use more than one form of data collection to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented (Creswell, 2013, 2014). The first document that was sent out to both principals and program administrators was the email permission to conduct the research study at their schools (see Appendix C). Another follow-up email was sent with an email solicitation letter asking for volunteers from the kindergarten through first-grade immersion settings along with an attached participant consent form (see Appendices B and C). Participants were asked to sign and return all forms no later than a week from the date received stating if they wanted to participate in the study.

Data Collection

The qualitative case study research design provided a structured approach towards gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences that immersion educators had with dual literacy practices (see Figure 2). The research design used two partner immersion programs with similar literacy practices to gain an understanding of how educators in these programs interpret their ability to implement practices that support dual literacy development in their students.

This case study design began with an approach called purposeful-sampling that offered different immersion-educator perspectives of literacy practices in Grades K–1. The design was used to gain a better understanding of the experiences of immersion educators and their students as a result of structured applications of dual literacy practices. The research design followed a

sequence that began with an introduction letter to the research site administrators and principals explaining the case study (see Appendix C). A subsequent email solicitation letter asking for volunteers from the kindergarten through first-grade immersion settings (see Appendix D). An emailed demographic questionnaire and consent form was then sent out to all of the participants in the research sites who taught in Grades K–1 (see Appendices E and F). Observations were requested and scheduled with willing participants in the selected grades; two of the three kindergarten classrooms were observed and two of the three first-grade classrooms were observed (see Appendix G). Face-to-face and phone interviews were scheduled after observations of literacy practices were concluded (see Appendix H). The six teachers who participated in the public school interviews also participated in the focus group after the individual interviews were concluded and transcribed by the researcher (see Appendix I). Participants were sent digital copies of their transcribed interviews by the researcher and asked to respond within the same week via email to ensure they approved of the accuracy of their transcribed documentation. The coding and triangulation of collected data took place after the participants reviewed and approved their transcribed interviews via emailed responses indicating their approval to the researcher (see Figure 1). The coding and triangulation of the gathered data were then concluded and themes that appeared to be repetitive within the collected data were organized by previously identified attributes that aligned with the conceptual framework of this study (see Chapter 2).

Instrumentation

Case studies use multiple approaches for collecting qualitative data to better inform understanding of the study (Creswell, 2013). The use of demographic questionnaires, observations, interviews, and a focus group not only served to enhance the level of understanding

but the culmination of the data also provided a consistent measure of dependability within the study (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2006). After permission to complete the study was obtained, the case study began with a request to have willing participants complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F). The questionnaire provided the educators' background and historical reasoning for their views on literacy. After educators completed their questionnaires, the researcher conducted literacy block observations of willing participants to observe the current literacy practices that were being used within kindergarten through first-grade language immersion classrooms.

The observation documentation tool served to inform the research by allowing the researcher to document concrete evidence of practices observed during the allotted time (see Appendix G). The instrumentation used for the research collection phase was created based on my knowledge as an early childhood immersion educator. The observation tool also included literacy domains from the monolinguistic district observation version and was adapted to address the research question within a dual language literacy block (Teachers Pay Teachers, 2019). Lastly, the researcher used semistructured individual interviews with open-ended questions and a structured focus group with prompts and meeting guidelines to ensure consistent collaboration among all participants (see Appendices H and I).

Demographic Questionnaire

Each willing participant received an emailed Qualtrics survey to gather demographic information (see Appendix F). The questionnaire was designed to provide information about the educator's teaching background and views that historically shaped their academic ideologies about dual literacy development. The information gathered from the demographic questionnaire placed the experience of the participants in a meaningful order that connected their past with

their present and provided the researcher with a possible glimpse of their future practices (Seidman, 2006). The information gathered from these questionnaires provided a foundational starting point for the researcher on how to proceed when extending the conversations to learn more about the participant.

Observation Tool

The researcher requested and was granted available observation times from willing participants of two educators from each grade to be observed during the educators' instructional literacy block. The observations lasted between 60–90 minutes to view more than one literacy practice applied by the educator within the allotted time frame. The researcher used an observation documenting form that had three columns where notes can be documented when listed practices have been noted (see Appendix G). The top of the form provided space to document if it was a public or private school, the grade level, the time, and the date the observation took place. The components listed in the observation form have been adapted and modified from the current Tennessee balanced literacy classroom observation checklist (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). The first column provided the researcher with components to look for or consider throughout the observation classroom time. The second column allowed the researcher to document evidence of observed teacher practices. The third column provided extra room to document reflective notes. The use of observations provides researchers with another supporting resource for understanding the research question (Creswell, 2014).

Individual Interview Guide

Individual, face-to-face interviews adhered to a question guide that addressed current teaching practices in dual literacy settings (see Appendix H). The questions were semistructured

and provided educators with opportunities to express their personal experiences and knowledge about their content area. The questions were framed to expand upon the participants' level of preparation and future expectation of newly acquired practices. The guiding objective of the research was to provide questions that informed the research without added bias or influence from the researcher's part (Seidman, 2006).

Focus Group Guide

The focus group consisted of six kindergarten through first-grade educators. An agenda was used to organize the focus group discussion (see Appendix I). The agenda began with a brief introduction by the researcher of the intent of the focus group. Focus group norms and expectations were explained to the participants, who then were given a chance to properly introduce themselves and provide their educational background in teaching immersion in the primary grades. The researcher began by asking the participants the prompts from the agenda. Each participant answered each question and shared their experiences throughout the focus group discussion. Participants were also provided with follow-up opportunities to expand upon thoughts from their previous interviews. The goal of this focus group was to allow educators to openly share with their peers, information about the practices they were utilizing to support dual literacy, and provide them with a collaborative platform.

Data Collection

Case studies require data collection to deepen the understanding of the research subject (Creswell, 2014). This case study used the current teaching experiences of educators to identify which ones were most effective in teaching children how to read in dual language settings. The best way for the researcher to document and collect these experiences from immersion educators was to utilize several steps to collect the data. The first step was an email invitation to all

kindergarten through first-grade immersion educators to participate in the study. In the second step, willing participants completed a demographic questionnaire and returned it one week from the day received. The third step required permission to observe their classroom in their allotted literacy block times. The fourth step was the face-to-face individual interviews with the selected participants that were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. The final step was an audio-recorded focus group discussion that the researcher then transcribed the recording after the session concluded.

Participant Invitation

Once the emailed permission (see Appendix C) to conduct research form was submitted to the school's program administrator and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Concordia University−Portland, the following steps took place. An emailed solicitation letter was sent to each elementary school asking administrators to share it with their kindergarten through first-grade immersion educators (see Appendix D). The emailed invitation asked interested educators to respond via email to the researcher one week from the date of receipt. When the first responses to the educator invitation yielded limited participants a second invitation was emailed to the program administrators and principals at both elementary schools to ensure the population sample was met for the study.

Demographic Questionnaire

The next step in the data collection process was to email demographic questionnaires to willing participants in kindergarten through first-grade. The email requested that all questionnaires be completed and returned a week from the day they were received (see Appendix F). The researcher used purposeful sampling to select qualified participants based on the selected criteria. Personal information such as the participant's name, email or phone number was only

used to contact the participant and schedule an observation as well as interview times. Each participant accepted in this phase was emailed a consent form to participate in the study which was then signed and returned directly to the researcher via email as a scanned digital attachment. The participants returned consent forms a week from the date received and the researcher printed and filed the provided document in a safe location (see Appendix E).

Observation

The next step was to ask two immersion educators from each grade if their literacy practices could be observed during their allotted literacy time frame. The researcher spent approximately 60–90 minutes observing and documenting noted literacy practices used by the six educators being observed (see Appendix G). Participants were provided a copy of all observed documentation from the researchers' classroom visit. Information collected from the observation balanced dual literacy form was also used by the researcher to provide clarification or extend understanding during the individual interviews.

Face-to-Face Interviews

The fourth step in the data collection process was to conduct the individual, face-to-face or phone interviews. Once participant consent forms were signed and returned, the researcher began and recorded individual interviews. Two educators from each school in Grades K–1 were invited to participate. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were conducted in either the educator's classroom or via phone. The questions for the interview were semistructured with open-ended prompts (see Appendix H). The interview guide included follow-up questions to aid in clarifying participant responses as needed by the researcher. All responses and conversations were audio-recorded and noted in each interview guide in case technical difficulties arose during the interview process.

The interview process provided the researcher with candid responses that expressed the current experiences of the interviewee, making each interview meaningfully authentic to the individual taking part in the process (Seidman, 2006). The purpose of the interview was to collect data on what immersion practices that early childhood educators believed were the most useful for teaching literacy in dual language settings based on their experiences in these classrooms. The data collected from these interviews provided the researcher with effective information about how reading was taught for dual language learners and how these practices may be improved if applied consistently.

Focus Group

The fifth step was the facilitation of a focus group session which was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The focus group consisted of six participants. Solicitation to join a focus group took place during the individual interviews. The researcher asked the participants if they were interested in taking part in a focus group later once all individual interviews had been completed. Once six participants agreed to continue in the study, a follow-up email with the date, location, and time was sent to all the willing participants. The focus group did not exceed 60 minutes and followed an agenda to ensure a structured process was in place. The researcher began the focus group by introducing the intent and establishing the norms and expectations for the focus group (see Appendix I). Participants were given a list of open-ended prompts to discuss and share within the group throughout the session. The researcher ensured that all participants had an even amount of time to share and that responses were kept respectfully and professional within the session. The researcher chose to ask clarifying questions to ensure recorded information was authentic to those responding in the group. Participants were asked to share information about their teaching experiences in immersion programs. Participants were also

asked to share resources and specific practices with each other that they found were the most beneficial for the development of dual literacy skills. The researcher prompted the participants to discuss noted differences and similarities between practices shared among the group during the session. The ability for educators to be given a platform by which their instruction is further informed based on the collaboration and experiences of their peers can equip educators with informed possibilities to enhance their teaching practices (Mohr et al., 2018).

Member Checking

The final step in the collection of data was member checking. Solicitation to take part in this final step took place at the end of the focus group interview. The researcher asked the participants if they were interested in taking part in a follow-up review of their transcribed documents. Member checking was included by the researcher after the focus group interview to ensure participant responses were equally represented and conveyed in the transcribed document. All focus group participants agreed to participate in the follow-up reading feedback of the transcribed focus group document. The researcher used email to send the transcriptions to all six participants and requested in that same email that within a two-week time frame of receipt all feedback be emailed back. Participants were asked to view the transcription and freely add comments before resending the transcribed document. As each transcription copy was returned the responses were printed and used to identify any areas that may have required further explanation from the original focus group transcription. The participant emailed responses provided positive feedback and reaffirmed the value of previously made points within the transcribed documentation. The use of member checking allowed participants to view the collected data and make informed judgments based on what they were viewing (Creswell, 2013).

This final step supported the credibility of the research by ensuring that all information collected and transcribed was accurately portrayed within the research process.

Purpose of Sequence

Collecting demographic background on the participants provided an informed starting point for understanding the participants' background and their views that shaped their present experiences in the classroom. Utilizing observations to deepen that understanding provided a visual description of how educators view and apply their current knowledge of literacy development with their daily use of these practices (Creswell, 2014). Providing individual time for educators to discuss and candidly share how they feel about dual literacy provided an additional piece to the puzzle that clarifies behaviors, selection of practices, and even why they chose to use them when attempting to teach dual language learners how to read. The focus group shared an equally important role in this sequence by providing a platform for educators to collaborate and reflect with peers. The focus group also provided an extended opportunity to identify common themes in the shared responses (Creswell, 2014). Concluding the sequence with the focus group provided an opportunity for knowledge to be extended and shared about a common issue or concern. Educators who assumed areas that were invalid for the development of reading in dual language settings might find they are essential to their student's success. Therefore, the ability to share and learn from others who work in similar settings not only informed the research but also the participants who were taking part in the session.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis in case studies varies in distinction based on what the researcher is trying to understand within the context of the research (Creswell, 2013). In this case study, the researcher sought to understand what educators could do to implement more effective practices for teaching

early literacy skills to dual language learners. The researcher first began by analyzing reoccurring themes within the collected observation documentation sheet. The most frequently reoccurring practices that were observed during the teacher's literacy blocks were chronologically organized and grouped. The second analysis of data came from the recorded interviews and the focus group session. The researcher transcribed all the recordings. The transcripts were chunked and coded using constant comparison with additional observational findings to ensure the saturation of data (Creswell, 2013; Moser & Korstjen, 2018; Seidman, 2006). The transcriptions of the participant's experiences were coded by chunking each transcript strictly correlating to the research question, using constant comparison, then looking for patterns and their relationships with each other. Initially, the transcripts were coded by description for their occurrence by the participants when they described actions related to early literacy development. Additional coding was applied to the participants' described responses. Next, the educator responses were coded by applying instructional strategies utilizing phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

Coding similarities were used to note emerging themes from the participants and to develop thematic categories of linking patterns between the participant's actions and responses with the types of literacy practices that were used (Creswell, 2014; Chan & Sylva, 2015). The researcher used emergent analysis to examine whether the participants' perspectives evolved as new ideas were added within the research study (Creswell, 2014). Coding similarities noted in the themes that emerged within the participant responses were grouped with each transcription. Comparable codes from individual interviews, observations, and the focus group were analyzed and synthesized to build five themes (Creswell, 2013). The practices shared by immersion

educators were coded by type of practice example. The teaching of letters and sounds fell under explicit phonemic awareness/phonics instructional practices.

The participant responses to the interview questions in connection with the observed practices and the focus group discussion provided additional background information on the participants. Interpreting the meaning of the immersion educators' teaching experiences and practices required awareness of my personal experiences in the classroom to counterbalance any personal bias. The interpretation was derived using the preunderstanding of early literacy practices as a point of reference. Defining and describing the participants' experiences began with the individual educator, then confirmed, disconfirmed, or extended by the observations to arrive at key patterns and a mutual interpretation of meanings.

Limitations of the Research Design

Limitations are factors that take place in a study that the researcher cannot control (Simon & Goes, 2013). In this case study, one of the first identified limitations was the distance between research sites. The participant teaching districts in this study were five hours away requiring prior planning so that the teacher literacy blocks would be available for observation. Teacher access was another limiting factor due to the educators' general school responsibilities. For example, on the date of the scheduled private school observation, a school assembly had been called and the kindergarten observation time had to be changed. These access factors in the private school required rescheduling the individual interviews to be completed via phone rather than face-to-face. In the public-school, the general school functions such as the district's testing schedules, teacher observations, and regular academic functions of a general school day made scheduling difficult. This researcher provided flexible after school interview times to ensure participants could be available outside of their demanding work schedules. An additional

limiting factor was simply the weather, which required interviews to be rescheduled for two of the public-school participants as a result of school closings.

Validation of the Research Design

Validation in a qualitative research design establishes credibility and ensures that the data collected accurately portrays the authenticity of the research process (Creswell, 2013). Eisner (1991) suggested that researchers use various forms of data to sustain or challenge what is interpreted from the research. The collection of data should be as dependable as the source it from which it was attained and that transferability exists between the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, the validation of a study becomes a process in pursuit of accuracy that is supported by the authenticity of a researcher's collected work (Creswell, 2013). The validating process for my case study began with a relational building of trust (Creswell, 2014). The educators I observed and collected data from were individuals who have held positions as classroom teachers, in both immersion and non-immersion classrooms. The approach to this case study was taken from the lens of an educator that understands the process of teaching literacy in both a non-immersion setting and in an immersion setting. Therefore, the participants needed to understand the reason behind the case study and the vital role they would play in the possible future literacy learning practices of other educators.

Additional validation of the results came from the classroom observations, individual interviewing, and the triangulation of that combined data. First, the use of purposeful sampling ensured participants were evenly represented (Seidman, 2006). Second, the use of predetermined semistructured interview questions provided a measure of authenticity in the research process (Creswell, 2013). Next, a focus group session allowed fora follow-up questions to clarify and extend knowledge to validate the research process. Audio recording the interviews ensured

accuracy in the transcribing process. Lastly, the triangulation of data provided an opportunity to connect different sources of collected findings as a means of validating possible outcomes.

Credibility

In a case study, validation and credibility are important components for supporting and answering the research question. These two terms are interchangeably reflective of each other and provide a standard of truth for solidifying a study's outcomes. One approach that is used in qualitative studies and is suggested by other researchers to be an important procedure for establishing credibility is a process called "member checking" (Creswell, 2013). The use of member checking in my case study allowed the participants to confirm documented information from the shared transcripts. The application of this process enabled the participants to view the collected data and make informed judgments based on what they are viewing. For example, the immersion educator participants in my study were asked to take part in a focus group that helped to review, the data collected, and recorded interview responses. They were then asked to provide feedback on the accuracy of the transcripts from their perspectives to ensure their words were captured accurately, and their viewpoints were represented correctly throughout the gathering process. This method ensured that I was able to successfully capture the points that my participants shared regarding their practices.

Dependability

Dependability provides a case study with another blanket of validating support about the trustworthiness of the collected data. Others who read the content can see how the study's themes are connected and accounted for in the study (Creswell, 2014). Transferability, in this context, plays an equally important role in providing a reader with findings that present commonalities or shared features that can be transferred from one setting to another (Creswell,

2013; Yin, 2009). In this case study, detailed and descriptive content was provided to help readers make informed decisions about the dependability and transferability of the study results.

Expected Findings

Case studies often require researchers to look closely at how the study's entity interacts with its surroundings (Creswell, 2014). In an immersion program, the range of these interactions may reflect the schools they function in, the longevity of the program, the teaching experiences of the educators, and even the relationship they share with other non-immersion educators. I expected the study's findings to show that most immersion teachers use the same reading practices that monolingual teachers in early grades use to teach children how to read (Goodrich et al., 2013). The findings within this research were expected to show the impact that a limited understanding in a child's native tongue had on the learning of a new language and that literacy practices are not the only components needed for the future development of biliteracy skills. Many of these immersion programs begin with an emphasis on speaking and listening, and while these elements are essential to later comprehension, they are not as instrumental as targeted instruction for the development of reading skills (Hickey & Mejia, 2014).

The scope of these likely conclusions was equally expected in the developmental learning levels of the children. Some students learn to read regardless of the types of practices they were exposed to in early reading. The results were expected to indicate that only a limited number of educators' literacy practices did not support the development of reading in both languages. However, the main emphasis of the study was expected to reveal that many immersion educators do not have a clear understanding of which literacy practices would promote dual reading capabilities in second language learners. Therefore, while learning to read in a second language

can be influenced by other factors, literacy practices were expected to provide a stronger argument for their effectiveness on reading outcomes.

Ethical Issues

Qualitative research is an interactive approach to research collection. Researchers work closely with the participants and are firmly embedded in their daily functions as well as settings. These interactions required an ethical standard to be applied by the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the participants and to establish a measure of trust. The researcher maintained all participant information private only disclosing the collected research to the participant it was gathered from. The observation tools were copied and shared with each observed participant. The researcher ensured that pseudonyms were used to maintain participant privacy throughout the research collection process. Anticipating ethical issues through each phase of the research process helped the researcher plan and prepare for each occurrence (Creswell, 2014). All data was stored on the investigator's personal computer, secured by password, and not uploaded to any cloud service. All personal information, recordings, and transcripts were kept private at all times and all study documents and data will be destroyed 3 years after the conclusion of this study.

Conflict of Interest Assessment

As an early childhood educator in a similar language program, I have a professional association with the teaching profession. However, the teachers involved in the study only had access to me through the data collection phase. My connection with the participants did not have any influence on their current positions. I held no administrative power over any of the participants and therefore could only use the research to inform the educators of what literacy practices were available to support dual literacy development in their classrooms and were useful

for informing their practices once the research collection phase was completed. While I remained working as an immersion educator during this process, my classroom practices and experiences were not included in the study results. I had no professional or personal connection to the private partner school chosen for the study. The only relationship was that my current immersion program was partnered with theirs because they were the immersion model for the state of Tennessee.

Researcher's Position

The main purpose of the study was to explore the current practices in literacy that were being implemented in early childhood immersion classrooms. The consistent applications of these practices or lack thereof provided an informative baseline for immersion educators of how these effective practices may be used to develop early literacy skills in Spanish second language learners. I conducted a descriptive case study from the perspective of an immersion educator that has worked closely with literacy development in Grades K–1 with both educators and their students. Through this study, I sought to understand how educators felt about their current teaching practices and what practices they observed to be the most effective in their students' development of dual literacy. The intent of this case study, therefore, was not to identify what types of immersion programs benefited dual language learners but rather to identify what practices in these programs supported the development of early literacy from one language to another.

Chapter 3 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore what teachers can do to implement more effective practices for teaching early literacy skills to dual language learners. The research question sought to identify practices that teachers can implement daily to improve or facilitate

dual literacy development in second language learners. A case study focusing on educators was conducted to better understand the instructional practices and learning perspectives of the participants through the applied teaching practices that were in use in two immersion programs. To gain an understanding of educators and the practices they used for literacy development in these immersion programs, observations and structured interviews were conducted using educators from two different academic settings. Educators from both a public school and a private school were participants in this study. Additional information was collected from a focus group session that supported the credibility of the study's documentation. The facilitated focus group provided the participants with an opportunity to be candid about their own shared experiences and teaching practices. The collected written responses from this focus group provided a deeper interpretation of the educators' experiences and the application of their practices. The goal of this study was to accurately report both in writing and orally the views that the participants' presented. The conclusive goal for this case study was to provide an account of these literacy practices in an objective way that strictly reported the experiences and literacy practices of the participants involved in the chosen immersion programs.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the most commonly used literacy practices and their role in developing dual literacy in Grades K–1. The research question for this study asked teachers to identify the literacy practices they were using to support the development of dual literacy in the early grades. I used a qualitative research design to document authentically the observed literacy experiences and practices of each participant. This chapter explains how the case study's data was compiled from classroom observations, participant interviews, and a focus group. The interviews and observations were organized by school and grade level. The participant responses were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using a method of constant comparison. The coded data were then analyzed to select the key themes that help to answer the research question.

The impetus for the study evolved from my teaching experiences with kindergarten and first-grade language immersion students, as well as my desire to understand which early literacy skills best support the development of dual literacy in second language learners. To determine the effectiveness of the current applications and uses of dual literacy practices in the foundational grades, I conducted interviews, observations, and a focus group with immersion teachers from both public and private school sectors. My role as the researcher was to provide questions and elicit responses from each participant about the types of literacy practices, they used to ensure that dual literacy development was supported in their literacy blocks. Participants were also asked to discuss the literacy practices they considered most valuable for biliteracy development and their use of data in informing the types of reading practices they would utilize for their students. Each participant was provided with an interview setting that was supportive of their

ideas along with a platform that allowed them various opportunities to candidly share their knowledge of each stated literacy practice.

Each of the interviews began with an introduction to the research question and an overview of its intended purpose. I also provided each participant with background information regarding my prior experiences in teaching literacy and my intent for pursuing my doctorate. Each interview concluded with as needed follow-up questions to help clarify understanding of comments made by the educators throughout the interview process. At the conclusion of the interviews, participants were notified that they would receive a copy of their transcribed interviews via email. This final element, member checking was added to ensure that their responses were accurately noted in the transcribed document.

Description of the Sample

A total of eight immersion teachers volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Solicitation emails for volunteers were sent to two elementary schools that had Spanish immersion programs in the state. One of them was a public elementary school and the other was a private school. Six of the immersion educator participants taught kindergarten or first-grade in the public school and the other two educators came from the private school. The sample from the private school represented one kindergarten teacher and one first-grade teacher. Each participant was first required to complete an emailed Qualtrics survey to gather demographic information before scheduling their face-to-face interviews.

Demographic Data

All the gathered participant demographic data is represented in Table 1. I used pseudonyms to ensure participant privacy was protected throughout the research collection process. The data collected from the participants focused on their overall years of teaching and

general educational background, in Grades K–1. The data displayed in Table 1 also provides an overview of the participant age, gender, ethnic identity, educational degree attainment level, years teaching in the immersion program and current grade. The demographic tables are divided into two sections the first section in Table 1 summarizes current demographic information about participants in the public-school Immersion programs. The second section of Table 1 summarizes the demographic information that pertains to the private school immersion participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Sex	Ethnic Identity	Highest Degree	Years Teaching In Immersion	Current Grade Level
Public School Spanish Immersion Program						
Maria	35–45	F	Latina Puerto Rican	Masters	1	First
Rick	35–45	M	Latina Puerto Rican	Masters	2	Kindergarten
Liz	40–54	F	Latina Puerto Rican	Bachelor	1	First
Krystal	40–54	F	Latina Puerto Rican	Bachelor	1	Kindergarten
Carol	35–45	F	Latina Mexican	Masters	2	Kindergarten
Nancy	35–45	F	Latina	Masters	2	Kindergarten

Name	Age	Sex	Ethnic Identity	Highest Degree	Years Teaching Immersion	Current Grade Level
Private School Spanish Immersion Program						
Anny	25–39	F	Latina Columbian	Bachelor	2	Kindergarten
Carmen	40–54	F	Latina Columbian	Bachelor	3	First

Table 2 provides the total number of years each participant has taught in traditional classroom settings, including grade levels and content taught prior to immersion. The final column of Table 2 displays the level of available training, practices, and professional development provided in the areas of literacy for immersion educators teaching in Grades K–1. The participants' years of experience and educational training experiences are also displayed separated by the public school and the private school participants.

Table 2

Participants' Overall Years of Teaching and Available Educational Training Experiences

Name	Years Teaching	Grade/Content Taught Before Immersion	Trainings on Teaching Dual Literacy
Public Immersion School Teachers			
Maria	16–18	Kindergarten (Traditional) non-immersion setting	Online training from Addalingua focusing on language development, District trainings but only in English literacy instruction
Rick	13–15	K–5 ESL-English second language learners	Addalingua, online videos, district trainings on literacy that focus on only a Mono linguistic literacy layout
Liz	10–12	K–5 ESL English second language learners	Online resources provided through Addalingua, district professional development for teaching reading in a general English only classroom
Name	Years Teaching	Grade/Content Taught Before Immersion	Trainings on Teaching Dual Literacy

Public Immersion School Teachers, cont.			
Krystal	10–12	Middle school Grade 6–8 ESL-English second language learners and SPED- Students with special needs educational development	Online trainings, videos, Addalingua with a focus only on teaching English to non-English speakers as opposed to teaching English speakers how to speak another language.
Carol	1–3	Kindergarten immersion only	Addalingua training, staff development with a focus on mono-linguistic instruction
Nancy	19–21	Kindergarten through second grade. Also worked as a literacy coach for six years in a traditional school	Addalingua trainings, professional development offered by the district, but the emphasis is only on English, not immersion. Books and the independent research of teaching literacy
Private School teachers			
Anny	4–6	High school chemistry teacher in Columbia and Pre-K teacher in the United States	Addalingua training, Estrellitas Phonics trainings available through the private school. Online modules and visuals
Carmen	7–9	Pre-K, through first-grade	Addalingua training, Estrellitas Phonics trainings available through the private school. Online modules and visuals

Methodology and Analysis

The criteria for selecting participant's practices were based on their experiences teaching literacy in the foundational grades to second language learners. The development of literacy requires a range of supporting attributes to be in place. The conceptual framework for dual literacy development (see Figure 1, Chapter 2) provides an example of those attributes and their relevance for their classroom uses. Effective dual literacy instruction requires educators to have a broad understanding of language development, instructional practices, teacher application of those practices, and the ability to assess current knowledge and its uses to drive future instruction (Goodrich et al., 2013; Rohde, 2015; Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). Each of the participants represented a broad range of educational experiences and knowledge. Utilizing a case study

approach provided an opportunity to observe educators in their classrooms applying specific practices and to have them shared during the interview process. The information from both the observations and recorded interviews allowed me to identify practices and ideas most commonly shared among immersion classroom teachers.

Case Study

The research data collected for this case study was gathered from both public and private school educators using a purposeful sampling approach. The information attained from the immersion educators focused on their prior experiences and the practices they utilized to support the development of dual literacy in their kindergarten to first-grade classrooms. The data collected through interviews and classroom observations focused on how literacy instruction was provided in kindergarten to first-grade immersion classrooms. As suggested by Creswell (2014) the experiences of the participants should align with the studied phenomenon. Each participant took part in individual face-to-face interviews as well as a concluding final interview in a focus group. The focus group consisted of six immersion teachers from the public school. The questions utilized during the focus group were developed to expand upon the participants' teaching experiences and the nature of literacy practices utilized to address dual literacy development.

Recording and Transcribing

Interviews were recorded using two different recording devices to ensure that information would be properly stored and to avoid the risk of a possible malfunction of either device. The first device used was a video recording and the second was a handheld recording device. The same devices were used to record the focus group to ensure participant voices were properly paired with their names once transcribing began. A notebook was also kept on hand to write

down details that held importance for the research. Transcriptions were completed using Google Transcribe, a free program offered through Google that allows users to download recordings and type as you listen. The program allows the user to pause, rewind, fast forward, and save as transcriptions are being completed. The process was tedious because two of the recordings were completely in Spanish and the transcriptions needed to be translated into English. For the two interviews that were completely in Spanish, I was able to slowly transcribe and complete the process, though it did take a little longer to ensure the accuracy of each translation.

Transcriptions were first individually sent to participants via email before coding to ensure that each participant's voice was accurately represented. Participants were asked to review their transcripts and to respond if they agreed with what had been transcribed within a week of viewing their documents via email. All participants were compliant with their transcribed responses and as a result, I was able to begin the coding process.

Coding

Constant comparison was a method used for each coded transcript. Predetermined possible themes were created based on the research question and evolved into narrow categories as each transcription was read. The shared participant experiences and observation notes were other avenues utilized in informing the types of themes that were developed throughout the coding process. The terms utilized for coding were specific to the research question, which was displayed at the top of each transcribed document. Each transcription had codes written in the comment boxes. The boxes were displayed on the side of each transcribed word document using various colors to help organize codes into specific groups. The selected phrases were statements or particular words made by the participants that aligned with the research question and

addressed areas of literacy practices noted in the conceptual framework. Codes were further developed based on the repetition of concepts and word correlations.

The color-coded transcripts were each printed and compared simultaneously to closely look for commonalities of shared ideas, teaching practices, and classroom experiences that addressed the foundational development of dual literacy. Documentation from the classroom observations was also reviewed during the coding process to further support the selected codes and to identify new ones. When the first two interviews were transcribed, I began with 10 selected codes developed from the theoretical components supporting the research question and the areas of previous research on dual literacy development. Codes were then combined to limit redundancy if they addressed the same areas. The more that transcriptions were reviewed and compared the easier it became to group as well as to identify evolving themes from the collected codes. The coding process was similarly applied with each transcribed individual and group interview, once documents were coded using another online system that paired all similar codes. The documented information was printed in color and stored with its interview transcription. All transcribed and coded interviews were followed-up with a written summative memo that displayed the date of the interview, participant name and pseudonym, the research question and the types of codes that were used. Coding revisions were included under the codes used section along with a brief detailed explanation of each revised code. The coding memo provided a complete summary of the participant interview experiences based on their shared responses during the interview process. Participant experiences were also included for the kindergarten through first-grade educators that were observed during their literacy blocks.

The coding memos included a section that summarized similarities between immersion literacy practices of participants in the same grade and those who taught in the grade above. The

memos also included sections that discussed the next steps, listed any emerging themes, and discussed setbacks that were noted throughout each process of the interview phase. The same coding process and accompanied memos were completed for both the individual interviews as well as the focus group. The organization of each transcribed coded and written memo provided an easier process for comparing selected codes. Similar codes were easier to detect and modify based on their alignment within the emerging themes and with the research question. The final coding memo included a summarized snapshot of the emerging themes.

Summary of the Results

The structure and synthesis of the emerging themes was a process that began first by analyzing how each of the emerging themes addressed the research question. The combined codes were then revised to reflect the actions of the immersion teachers developed into five main themes: (a) seek and undertake educational training experiences, (b) use applied teaching strategies, (c) use data to support instructional choices, (d) develop literacy teaching expectations, and (e) develop and work with home and school connections. Each theme was supported by other underlining codes (see Figure 3). The developed themes provided answers to the research question about what practices immersion teachers can implement when teaching early literacy skills to improve dual literacy development in second language learners.

The data presented was structured by organizing similar codes that were grouped into relevant, supported themes, and paired with their noted educator. Each set of codes was matched and arranged by theme. Subthemes were then compared to other similar themes. The process was then followed by an outline of each theme and subtheme that I could use to organize a graphic of the educators' noted experiences about teaching in language immersion programs. Percentages

for each theme were arrived at by the frequency of their noted appearance in the transcribed educator responses during the coding process (see Figure 3).

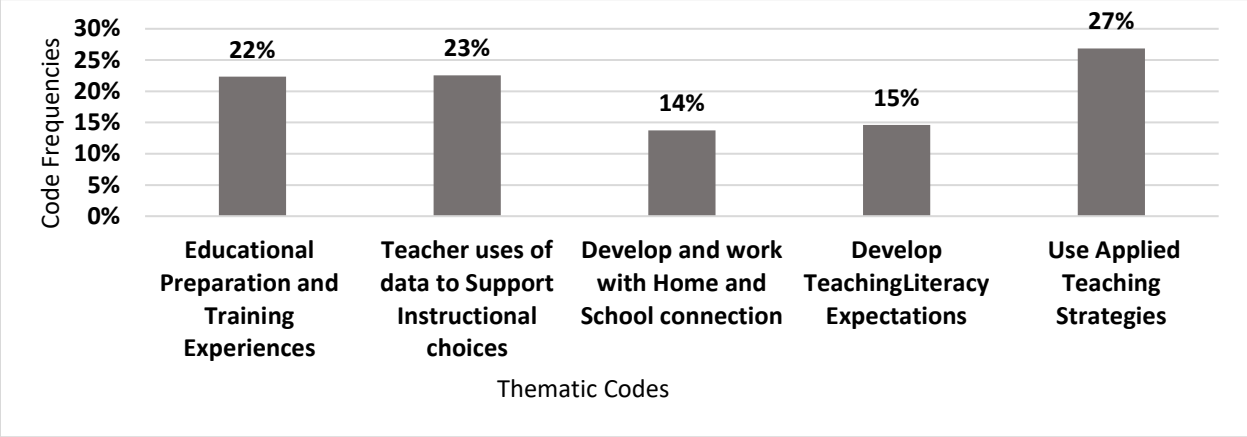

Figure 3. Thematic emphases of educator experiences based on coding frequencies.

Theme 1: Seek and Undertake Educational Training Experiences

Educational training experiences and opportunities are a vital component of instructional preparation and growth. Academic training experiences provide educators with opportunities to develop practices that keep their instruction current and relevant to what their students are expected to learn. According to Nancy, "educational training experiences that are specific to teaching literacy in a language immersion program are a missing component in the available training teachers receive during the school year" (Nancy, personal communication, January 7, 2020). As a result, language immersion educators are left to find other available resources to support a balanced development of dual literacy. Ana, one of the public-school immersion teachers, shared how not having currently available practices specific to their area of instruction causes her to revert to "prior knowledge of teaching experiences from her traditional literacy background in early childhood" (Ana, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Nancy explains, "because of the newness of these immersion programs the training experiences we are offered are limited or require further research from our part just to attain

applicable understanding of practices in dual literacy" (Nancy, personal communication, January 7, 2020). The main problem voiced by all participants was a notable available training gap in both teaching practices and resources that support dual literacy development for second language learners. Participants received basic educational training experiences related to teaching general literacy content. The training, however, was not specific in addressing what practices were needed to support literacy development in both a student's native tongue and in their daily language of instruction. During the individual interview process, each teacher was asked to describe the available training preparation they had received in the area of early literacy development. While each participant described recent practices, they had utilized during their literacy blocks, it was important to note that many of these practices were developed from their prior experiences with non-immersion educational settings. The participant responses as shown in Figure 4 show the educational, experiences, preparation, and training to support dual literacy development.

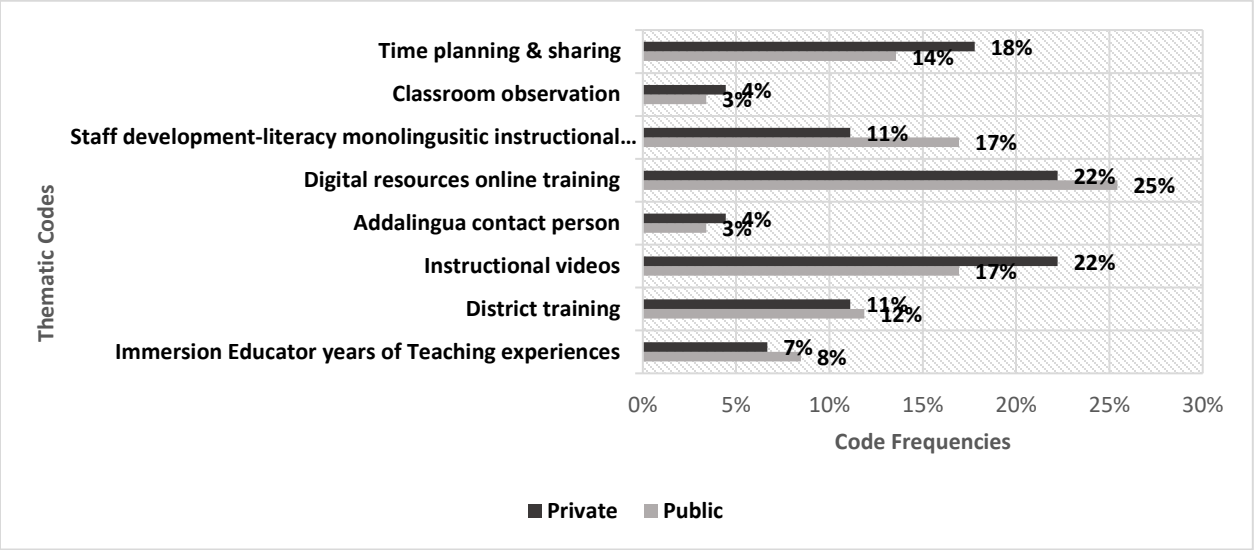

Figure 4. Educational preparation to support dual literacy development based on coding frequencies.

Prior knowledge and experience. To attain a better understanding of the levels of experience, prior literacy knowledge and educational preparation additional questions were added during the participant interviews. The immersion educators were asked questions about their current and past educational levels and training in literacy. Figure 4 provides the types of related literacy training and experiences participants shared in their responses. The participants who taught Grades K–1 in a traditional non-immersion setting relied heavily on prior knowledge attained through those teaching experiences. Many of the practices utilized by the immersion kindergarten to first-grade educators were derived from earlier research-based practices centered around literacy principals created by Marie Clay's reading ideologies and Douglas Brown's cognitive theories. The participants from both sites frequently attributed their prior experiences in traditional instruction as having an active role in how they taught literacy. Participants shared that those prior teaching literacy experiences helped them create literacy practices that supported reading in their current settings. According to Krystal "while my previous literacy practices had to be tweaked to fit language rules in Spanish many of the reading practices could be transferred from English to the target language" (Krystal, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Maria added a similar sentiment during her interview "The first couple of years of any new program content and resources are limited so as educators we have to tap into what we previously learned and know about literacy to begin making those connections" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019). According to Rick, who had been teaching English second language learners for over 14 years before becoming a kindergarten immersion teacher, "we rely mostly on what has previously worked as we continue to learn what practices are most applicable in dual literacy development" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). The sentiment is equally shared by immersion educators in the private school sector as noted in Ana's

response about her teaching experiences, “One of the greatest advantages educators have when entering dual language settings are their prior knowledge from their past teaching experiences” (Ana, personal communication, October 18, 2019). “This is because it helps us to fill in the instructional holes in the parts of teaching, we are seeking to improve by applying proven ideas in literacy that have worked in the past” (Ana, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Many of the educators interviewed relied heavily on those past teaching experiences to support the types of practices applied in the first two years of the immersion process.

Participants voiced the value of their prior knowledge in teaching literacy because they felt it was the best depiction of their applied reasoning for selecting particular practices in dual literacy. Nancy stated, that “while the program dynamics continue to change, in the growing field of language immersion education, its knowledge can be described as a revolving door, it serves as an evolving link with an ability to connect the old with the new” (Nancy, personal communication December 18, 2019).

Provided training. Most of the available training provided for immersion kindergarten to first-grade teachers in the area of literacy is guided by both the Addalingua program structure and the literacy model in the state of Tennessee. Immersion teachers receive all their Add-a-lingua training from online modules that include videos, assessments, and resources. The links provide opportunities to connect with program instructors via the web and to ask instructional questions. Immersion educators are provided with instructional resources that focus heavily on literacy only in the target language; additional resources are provided for areas of phonics and phonemic awareness development. The on-site program director and educators in these programs are tasked with aligning district expectations of a balanced literacy approach with those provided through Addalingua. Professional development is also provided weekly in the form of grade-

level planning, “which looks at literacy objectives, and helps teachers create lessons centered on developing those types of learning outcomes” (Liz, personal communication, October 28, 2019). Immersion staff is also required to participate in general district mono-linguistic training on literacy. While the practices applied by immersion educators may differ, “many of the components in the areas of literacy are transferrable for one language to another” and can be taught using similar layouts (Nancy, personal communication, December 11, 2019).

Theme 2: Use Applied Teaching Strategies

The development of dual literacy is highly dependent on the types of teaching strategies that are used to support early reading development. Teacher knowledge of these applied strategies is a key contributor to the process. The five public-school language immersion teachers that were interviewed were tenured professionals in the areas of early childhood Grades K–1. The two immersion private school teachers were not considered tenured at their current school of employment. The five public-school immersion teachers had individually taught for more than 10 years in a traditional K–1 non-immersion classroom setting. All the participants shared work-related experiences teaching English second language learners how to read and write only in English. Two of the eight participants had formally taught only in Spanish in their respective countries prior to teaching in America. In both public and private school interviews, the participants shared a commonality with exposure to mono linguistic teaching strategies that addressed the five domains of reading development. These domains are currently utilized in both districts as the foundational pillars for reading acquisition. The observed literacy blocks all contained elements of these five components: phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency (Rohde, 2015).

Vocabulary visuals. During the data collection process, four classroom instructors agreed to be observed. One kindergarten and one first-grade literacy block from each of the selected research sites was observed before scheduling individual interviews Both private and public school immersion classrooms that were observed during their literacy blocks using the balanced dual literacy observational tool, provided evidence of teaching strategies that were specific to the areas of phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, writing and reading comprehension. The private school kindergarten observation conducted in Anny's literacy block provided a mixture of strategies and resources utilized by the teacher to help students develop vocabulary in their target language. Rick, the public-school kindergarten classroom teacher, was observed using similar literacy practices for teaching vocabulary. The only difference noted in Rick's approach was that he added a digital component to his vocabulary cards. Rick included a PowerPoint with each vocabulary word displayed. The presentation included a picture representing the meaning of the word and an audio recording of him saying the word. The students in his class were observed viewing the PowerPoint presentation and repeating the words in response to Rick's audio example. Anny's approach only displayed picture cards with the vocabulary word for each picture shown in the front and its meaning revealed in the back. She began the lesson by introducing the picture first and then asking in Spanish what word the students thought the picture represented. Next, she wrote down the students' responses for each picture card shown. The words that were most reflective of the represented vocabulary cards she underlined on the board for the students and proceeded to give a more detailed description of each vocabulary word. The teacher extended this strategy a few minutes longer until students could identify the new vocabulary word independently. The vocabulary picture cards were then presented in a straight row. The teacher pointed to each card, as she modeled saying the

vocabulary word, and then used it in a complete sentence. Her final approach to this strategy included a teacher-created hand motion that students could utilize to help them remember the assigned meaning that was displayed on the back of the card.

The vocabulary strategy was utilized in conversation during a whole-group literacy lesson involving all students on the carpet. Whole-group generally referred to the instruction provided to the entire class in comparison to small group instruction that only includes a selected few. Literacy blocks include whole group and small group instruction. Small group instruction focuses on specific groups paired by the teacher to provide targeted instruction based on their assessed ability. In Carmen's first-grade classroom the vocabulary strategy was also used during the whole group while students were listening to the mentor text that the teacher was reading. Students would make the hand motion as they heard the vocabulary word used in the text as they sat on the carpet. Carmen explained that sometimes her students as they are learning the word will "use the hand motion to express what they are trying to say when they cannot remember the word" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). According to Anny "Teaching strategies that involve most if not all of the senses are ideal for children learning how to understand meaning from one language to another" (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019). This statement accurately described all four of the observed literacy blocks. The observed participant's teaching strategies involved visuals for students to see, retelling with picture cards out of order to help students retell the story, and the constant use of hand movements to express meaning and text-related content. In Maria's first-grade literacy block observation, students had small vocabulary notebooks that were kept in their desks as personal referencing vocabulary books. As Maria introduced the vocabulary words each week, she would model writing, drawing, and using the words for her students in complete sentences. The students would then write the

vocabulary words, draw a picture, and write simple sentences in Spanish using the word. Other observed literacy strategies were noted in Anny's kindergarten small group lesson. The name of the activity was called modeled echoes; an example of this strategy was observed in her small group reading rotation. Anny would read a short phrase and the students would echo it using the same level of expression and fluency. Modeling how to use the text to answer questions was another practice she used. Students were shown how to stop and ask questions about the given text as a way of gaining more understanding of what is being read.

Phonetically, students were shown through modeling how to break words apart into syllables. Anny and Rick were both observed applying this strategy in their whole group and small group instruction. An example of a syllable phonics activity was noted in Anny's lesson. During whole group instruction prior to introducing the assigned vocabulary, Anny asked the students to help her clap out the syllables in each given word in Spanish. The first word she gave was "mapa;" students were shown how to clap for each syllable chunk and then slide the word together again and say the whole word. In this instructional strategy, she utilized cut up sentence strips and separated the chunks as the students clapped for them. The word "ma" was first to be displayed and the students clapped once; "pa" was then added, and the students motioned a number two to represent how many syllables were in that word. She then held up each syllable and had the students clap it, slide it together, and say it as the intended word.

Cross-linguistic strategies. Once students were able to speak the word orally in Spanish Anny asked them to think about a word in English that this word resembled. A young man in the back shouted "map" and all the other students gave him thumbs up in agreeance for his word choice. This common instructional practice was observed in all four of the observations repeated daily both orally and in written form. During her interview, Anny stated that cross-linguistic

practices are a daily occurrence in her literacy block I observed this practice more than once within her instruction. I asked the participant to expand upon her reasoning for repeatedly connecting words from the student's native language with those found in their language of instruction. Anny explained the value of cultural connections and their adapted worth in the classroom. "Children learn a lot more when meaning is assigned to the process, my job as their teacher is not to take away their first language but rather to connect it with their new language so that they see its value" (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Word walls. One of the noted similarities from each classroom that was observed was an organized display of vocabulary words on each word wall. A word wall provides an alphabetical display of high-frequency sight words that students are exposed to when learning to read simple text. All observed teachers referenced their word walls often within their literacy blocks. In both kindergarten classrooms, the teachers began their instruction by reviewing the letters, their sound, and then the words that students could find under each provided letter. The public-school immersion kindergarten teacher explained the vocabulary words to his students by introducing the reason for reviewing them daily. "Nuestra Pare de Palabras nos ayuda a poder leer," which translates to "our word wall helps us to be able to read" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). "These high-frequency words are important for developing early reading fluency" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). Many of the leveled readers that children are first exposed to when learning to read are created using simple sight words.

Once children learn all their letters and sounds, teachers progress to teaching them all their sight words. In all the classrooms observed, sight words were not only displayed but also reviewed. The teachers would provide a morning message that students would read as a whole group and then help identify all the utilized sight words. These words were also displayed in

literacy centers as an extended activity for students to orally practice with their teammates. Two of the kindergarten observed classrooms had created individual sight word notebooks that students kept in their writing folders and used when writing simple sentences. A noted strategy that was observed in the first-grade visit was the use of a yellow highlighter by the teacher and the students. Carmen would tell the students to "butter the important words or identified sight words." (Carmen, personal communication October 18, 2019). The students in Carmen's first-grade classroom were very engaged in this daily activity as I was able to observe during my visit. "My students utilize the buttering process as a visual reminder for identifying the important words" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). The continued use of these teacher modeled strategies helps students develop their learning toolboxes that can serve an equal purpose outside the classroom as students are learning to read in two languages (Genesee, 2015).

Theme 3: Uses of Data Support Instructional Choices

The use of data to support instructional choices provides another added measure for educators to use during their instructional planning periods. Data collection in all academic realms is an important part of the instructional process; it is a measure that was used by all educators to support the academic choices in their instruction (see Figure 5). In a language immersion classroom, data is utilized in the same manner. Teachers gather data both formally and informally on a daily basis. The results are then used to measure the effectiveness of their instruction based on the learning outcomes of each student. The uses of data, however, are not limited to the constant tracking of student progress; it is also used to identify the areas that will need to be retaught to ensure the learning process is being supported.

Instructional uses. "In all traditional and non-traditional classrooms, data collection guides both the levels of instruction and the frequency of its collected measures" (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). Language immersion programs are maintained in the same manner. "Immersion teachers at the elementary level use data to group students and address the deficits in language development" (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). According to Nancy, "data is most often used to identify the types of instruction needed to support reading development" (Nancy personal communication, December 18, 2019). The only differing element in the collection process is the types of data that are utilized. For example, phonics development is informally assessed weekly during small group instruction. Anny provides biweekly informal screening of letters and sounds in her kindergarten classroom. "Each student is given a document displaying all of the letters of the Spanish alphabet as students name the letter and make its sound, I highlight the letter to show mastery" (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

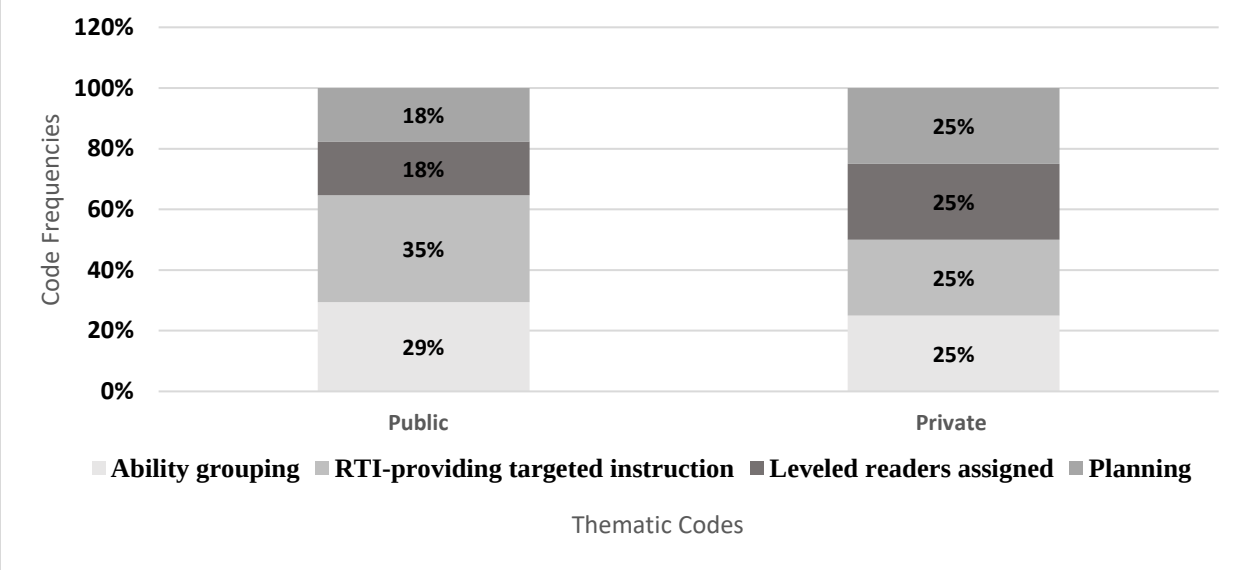

Figure 5. Teacher use of data to support instructional choices based on coding frequencies.

The frequency of these measures is due to the nature of how vowels and consonants are taught in Spanish. Once vowels are taught, a syllabic paring of consonants follows and when taught in paired chunks makes words. Carmen explained that "Children, therefore, are taught how to first identify the combined syllables when learning to decode and as they learn to encode during the writing process" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). These assessed practices differ greatly from the early reading and writing skills taught in a traditional kindergarten through first-grade classrooms. Students in non-immersion settings are taught how to separate sounds to make words and their collected measures require informal test measures that assess nonsense words in the place of syllabic chunks (Brown, 1994; Chan & Sylva, 2015).

In regular kindergarten through first-grade, traditional classroom teachers similarly collect data on letter identification and student knowledge of sounds, as these are prerequisites needed in early literacy development. These assessed measures begin to differ once words are made from one language to another because Spanish is foundationally a syllabic grouping of words, therefore decoding practices are measured using that format. Carol a kindergarten immersion teacher from the public-school site was observed using a checklist as a group of students went around in a circle identifying letters and their sounds in Spanish. The assessment recording sheet she used listed the student's names with boxes next to the names that identified if students had recognized all the letters and sounds or if they missed any. The assessment also was tiered based on student ability. Previous data was used before this assessment to group students. The students who had mastered letter and sound recognition were grouped with other students who, as a result of mastering that skill, were given a new goal of identifying syllable chunks in simple words.

The next area assessed for students who mastered letter and sound recognition was syllable identification followed by sight word recognition. The same type of checklist was also created to document student progress and use it as evidence to support mastery of that particular skill. During the observation process, Anny was noted reviewing results with her students and setting weekly goals to help students take part in their documentation of progress in each particular measure. Carmen's classroom displayed student progress on a small data wall that students could visually see to track areas of literacy growth such as mastery of letters and sounds, syllable identification, sight words, and reading levels. Similarly, Maria would look at the data results of her first-graders daily to ensure that students were receiving more instruction in the areas where data results had previously shown limited growth. According to Rick, the immersion kindergarten teacher, "Data is the driving force behind our guided instruction, we assess students daily through the uses of checklists to restructure the types of literacy practices we implement in our literacy blocks" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019).

Similar methods of data collection and uses were utilized in the two first-grade classrooms that were observed before conducting their interviews. In the public-school immersion classroom, data was collected weekly from student's independent practices and bi-weekly through formative assessments. The assessments covered grade-level targets that were being taught in both immersion and non-immersion settings. For example, during the week of the observation students were focusing on identifying story elements and using the text to support their responses. Maria, the first-grade immersion teacher had translated the common assessment that was given to her by her colleague that also teaches first-grade in a non-immersion classroom at the same school. Common assessments are shared by grade levels and are created to measure standards that have been taught to ensure mastery of targeted areas of learning. Immersion

students are not exempt from these assessments because they are taught using the same curriculum principles as their non-immersion peers. The only difference in these shared assessments is that the immersion teachers translate them so that the students can take them in the target language of their instruction. Maria stated in her depiction of this process that, Students were tasked to take the weekly text and draw pictures representing characters, setting, and major events. Independently students had to produce a written product in Spanish explaining their illustrated responses. The teacher used this common assessment to measure students' ability to comprehend text in their target language of instruction and their ability to encode words as they produced writing samples. During our interview, Maria provided samples of her graded common assessments. I asked her if she would be willing to share how those weekly measures influenced the practices she used in her daily application of literacy practices. Maria explained, "These samples guide the types of practices I implement for teaching story elements" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

For example, the graded common assessments for that week revealed to her that students needed more support in identifying major events in a text. This information meant that more modeled practices of identifying these types of events would need to be explicitly taught visually before reassessing students. The following is an example of one of the practices she used to reteach that objective. Maria explained that during her whole group instruction students were visually shown a think-aloud chart. The chart displayed a small thinking bubble in the center with lines connecting to it and when completed would explain selected events from the given text. The practices she used with this visual included questioning and modeling how the process of thinking looks for emergent readers. The provided sample she shared with me during the interview had been completed with the help of her students. "We collect data in literacy to

inform the areas we need to address with different practices or more of the same" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

In comparison to the private school, first-grade observation in which, the collected measures focused on decoding skills assessed during small group instruction. Carmen used running records to document this particular skill with her small group instruction. "Decoding is essential to reading fluency because those who can decode quickly can spend more time reading and understanding the text that is provided for them" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). "Students who lack decoding skills struggle with reading fluently because most of their time is spent trying to identify the sounds to make the word" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019). Carmen applies decoding practices daily in her instruction by modeling how to separate words using syllable chunks. "Identifying syllable pairs in words is so important for immersion students learning to read in another language that is why I do it with my students every day" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). "In small group, I use a syllable chart with all of the vowels in Spanish connected with consonants" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). The process requires her first to model how to identify each syllable chunk and then in written form to visually show the students how they are connected tapped out and used to make words. "In first-grade, we use a lot of three-syllable words, so students see me tapping under each identified consonant-vowel syllable pairing to make the word" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Decoding of syllables is a common practice in her classroom and she informally assesses their ability to identify the amounts of syllables present in words orally.

Data collection and the progressive nature of its measures are an important component in K–12 academic settings. Language immersion programs are no exception to this process. As

suggested by Carol, “Immersion teachers need to collect data to first establish a baseline for learning” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). The first areas that are assessed in kindergarten focus on what children already know in their native tongue. The process looks the same in a regular kindergarten non-immersion setting. While kindergarten teaching practices in general target phonics and phonemic awareness heavily throughout the year, language programs must first ensure that students are strong in one language before exposing them to another simultaneously. Carol explained that those early data collection measures become “instructional blueprints that show how learning could be bridged from one language to another” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). Anny’s interview extended that shared idea by suggesting that data collection “keeps us accountable to the individual learning process of the student, it informs the current practices and helps teachers improve them in a way that helps take them to their next level” (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Types of data collected in literacy. Language immersion teachers who participated in the study collected data frequently. In the areas of literacy kindergarten teachers from both private and public schools when interviewed shared similarities in the types of data they collected. The identified differences bordered on the frequency of their data collection because of district expectations and program targeted measures. The public-school kindergarten immersion teachers assessed letters and sounds every two weeks and documented mastery on the student’s foundational sheet that was attached to their report card. The foundational documentation sheet also included sight words and Spanish phrases that students were exposed to weekly during their literacy blocks. The foundational phonics assessments were given during small group rotations. Teachers kept track of individual progress by writing the date next to the assessed phonics skill and by highlighting only the mastered skills. The information was digitally transferred on to a

Google shared Excel spreadsheet that showed the assessed literacy domain, the date of assessment, and the teacher. The Excel spreadsheet also showed students grouped into three categories: green represents on grade level, yellow represents a possible risk, and red represents below the expected level. The Excel spreadsheet provided information on all students in the immersion program from both classes. Educators in each grade level also grouped collected data. Access to see student progress was only granted to the program director and the immersion teachers who used the data as part of their weekly planning.

Student data in kindergarten immersion classrooms were collected every 4 weeks in these areas of literacy: sight word knowledge, syllable identification, and writing. Teachers assessed the development of reading through a guided reading system (Fountas & Pinnell, 2010). In kindergarten, this reading assessment is usually given before the end of the school year to the students who had shown early mastery of their assessed foundational skills in these particular areas: letters, letter sounds, and their entire kindergarten word list. However, Carol shared that in her classroom she was able to give this reading assessment to five kindergartners early in the school year. “The students came in with very strong prior knowledge in their own language of letters and sounds so the transition of learning them in Spanish was so much easier” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). Since the reading assessment is given to all students at the end of kindergarten, all students including those already assessed will be tested to establish a reading baseline for their following year.

Documentation of student reading levels is kept in each student’s reading folder and given to the first-grade immersion teachers. Each student folder contains documented evidence of the assessed reading levels, the types of text used, and the running record scores attained from the assessment data. The teachers use the data from these reading assessments at the beginning of

first-grade to place students in their correct guided reading groups and provide reading instruction at the established levels. First-grade students received the reading benchmark three times a year and the teachers utilized the same folder system to track yearly reading progress.

Immersion kindergarten through first-grade teachers in both private and public sectors also utilized collected data from the Addalingua Language Proficiency Assessment (AALPA). This assessment is given to measure three domains. The first assessed domain is a student's interpretive level of understanding as they are learning to read. According to Anny, "comprehension is obviously important for reading in one language but for students learning another language, it becomes a vital necessity" (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Maria, the public school first-grade immersion teacher shared that before her students begin reading, she asks them to focus on understanding details about the text. "I always pose this question to my students, what is the point of reading if you don't understand what is being read?" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019). Maria makes this statement to help students grasp the point of importance associated with comprehension. Nancy, the kindergarten Spanish immersion teacher agrees with Maria that "all good readers need to understand what they are reading not just learn to read words but truly understand what is being read" (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019).

Krystal, the public-school immersion teacher, shares a similar ideology and uses the AALPA assessment results to tweak the instructional practices she uses based on the learner-assessed outcomes. Krystal enjoys seeing the results of the interpretive part of the AALPA assessment because it helps her to see what her students understand about what they are reading. "Comprehension is a transferrable skill if students can read and understand in one language, they can learn to do the same in another" (Krystal, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

Rick, the other kindergarten immersion teacher adds, “The key is to regularly check for understanding of provided text, the AALPA provides us great documentation of how it can be measured” (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019).

The AALPA language assessment measures three components of literacy: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. The first is a students’ interpretive ability. A students’ interpretive ability is assessed by how well students can comprehend what they have read. Comprehension is assessed by the answers the students provide to questions from the provided text in their target language. Students are assessed individually by the immersion teacher during the interpretive portion of the assessment. The student responses are documented by the teacher in their assessment form. The second component of the AALPA assesses how dual language learners utilize their interpersonal abilities. According to Nancy, “Speaking and listening are modeled practices that you will see in all immersion programs, teachers utilize this in all subject matters especially in the early grades” (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). The test is designed to measure student’s conversational ability in their language of instruction. Immersion teachers provide the assigned text and students are graded on their ability to retell and discuss orally with their peers the information from the text. Students are provided with pictures that they must group and explain to their peers as the teacher observes these interactions and documents student responses.

An example of the interpersonal part of the assessment would have students orally distinguishing between living and non-living things. Students would be provided with a T-chart and asked to group the pictures into their correct categories. Students would then have to explain to their partners why each picture was placed under the selected category. The third and final component of the AALPA assessment is the presentational component. This area of the

assessment addresses comprehension that is supported by written evidence. Maria compared this final part of the assessment as a culminating snapshot of students' progressive development in early dual literacy (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019). Teachers use the last component of this test to look at how well students support their responses using evidence from the text. They also look at how well students apply grammar rules and encoding skills in their responses. This portion of the assessment requires students to use the provided text to answer questions in written form.

In kindergarten and first-grade, the AALPA guidelines permit students to use illustrations accompanied by writing to support answers along with text evidence in their provided responses. Carol finds the third component of the assessment to be the most revealing of strong reading skills for children. "The presentational component of this given assessment provides a great glimpse of all the combined reading domains" (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). Once the text is read to the students in a small setting, a copy of the text is provided for each of them to use as they are answering the questions both orally and in written form. According to Carmen, the private school immersion first-grade teacher, "this is the part of the assessment when I can visually see the practices I have taught being applied" (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Carmen addressed how she observed her students utilizing the practices that she had previously modeled when teaching them how to find the main idea. Her students made general connections through their writing by providing responses that suggested they understood how to identify the main idea of a text. Carmen described this practice:

> One of the best responses I graded began with a phonetically age-appropriate written response in Spanish that included this translated layout in the student's work, First, the

> text tells us all living things need water, and then it tells us they need air, and the last thing it tells us is they have to be able to make more of themselves. I think this text is about identifying living things. (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019)

And Carol further described in the focus group that:

> The idea that children in Grades K–1 can be assessed only in their language of instruction can feel intimidating but when you see children successfully rise to the challenge you realize the value of incorporating specific practices in your instruction. (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019)

The types of data collected from the literacy assessments were identified by both public and private school immersion teachers as instrumental tools in selecting follow-up instructional practices. According to Nancy, "The types of assessments we use and the data we collect are so important to our daily immersion program functions, the assessments take us to the instructional drawing board and show us the areas where our instructional practices should be better" (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). One example Nancy gave about assessments and their effectiveness in improving the practices she utilized in her classroom pertained to reading comprehension. "The first time the students took the AALPA many of them struggled to provide responses that fully supported their stated ideas from the text" (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). Once the assessment data was organized and reviewed by all the immersion teachers whose students took the test the lowest scoring areas were tracked and discussed. "We sat in our planning time together and shared ideas about what literacy practices might improve our lowest areas" (Rick, focus group communication, January 7, 2020). In Nancy's literacy block it was suggested by her peers that she incorporate more practices that modeled questioning as the mentor text was being read to the students. "The assessment data also informed all of us as a

kindergarten grade level that we needed to place more emphasis on practices that help build vocabulary" (Carol, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Liz added, "assessments and data collection are even utilized when we are vertically planning with our first-grade partners, they help us to see where kindergarten is currently at developmentally in the areas of reading so that we can begin planning for their next level" (Liz, personal communication, January 7, 2020).

Theme 4: Develop Literacy Teaching Expectations

The development of literacy expectations provides teachers with expected results in their areas of instruction. The preparation of instruction and the practices that are used by educators requires knowledge of the types of expected learning outcomes associated with their uses. According to Maria "teaching with the end result in mind supports the practices we will utilize to reach the district determined level of literacy expectations set for our students" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

Similarly, immersion teachers develop literacy expectations for their students in the same manner that traditional early childhood classroom teachers develop theirs. All teachers, regardless of their academic title, must follow state standards in their academic areas of instruction. In both traditional and nontraditional Grades K−1 settings, the State of Tennessee mandates that all teachers provide a balanced approach to literacy. While the implementation of these domains may differ in the structure of how they are implemented, the state requires that all five domains of literacy be present to best support the development of reading. These are the state-mandated domains for a balanced literacy approach: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Educators that have knowledge of district expectations can provide daily instruction reflective of these specified domains. Rick adds that in kindergarten we focus heavily on

> phonics, phonemic awareness and vocabulary in the first and second nine weeks of school because we know from experience that if students do not have those areas mastered they will not be able to comprehend or be fluent as we progress to reading simple text. (Rick, personal communication, October 27, 2019)

Carmen explains that her literacy teaching expectations are established by her program goals with the private school sector. “The goal is to facilitate instruction that supports a students’ ability to read and write in two languages one being English and the other Spanish” (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Carol described her development of literacy teaching expectations as a “prerequisite of instructional practices that insured students would successfully reach their dual literacy outcomes” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). According to Nancy, the development of literacy expectations is a commonality shared by all educators; “our literacy expectations provide a rationale for the types of practices we will use to develop the desired learner outcomes” (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019).

Theme 5: Develop and Work with Home and School Connection

The job of an educator is never confined only to their required classroom obligations. Education involves so much more than just the students; it also includes an academic partnership between their home and school. Examples of noted methods that immersion educators utilized to ensure these connections were actively in place are displayed in Figure 6. The practices shared by immersion educators for establishing relationships between learning at school and home are displayed by activity types. Each listing is organized using the percentage of frequency that their public or private immersion educator utilized to connect with the student’s home. The displayed listings are as follows: digital resources, parental opportunities to observe and receive training, dojo lessons provided digitally, and informative weekly newsletters (see Figure 6). Anny

believes that “Our strongest asset is our ability to build learning relationships from the classroom to our students’ home” (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019). Rick adds, “Teachers especially those in language immersion programs have to not only teach the child but also the parent because they don’t speak the language of instruction” (Rick, personal communication, October 27, 2019).

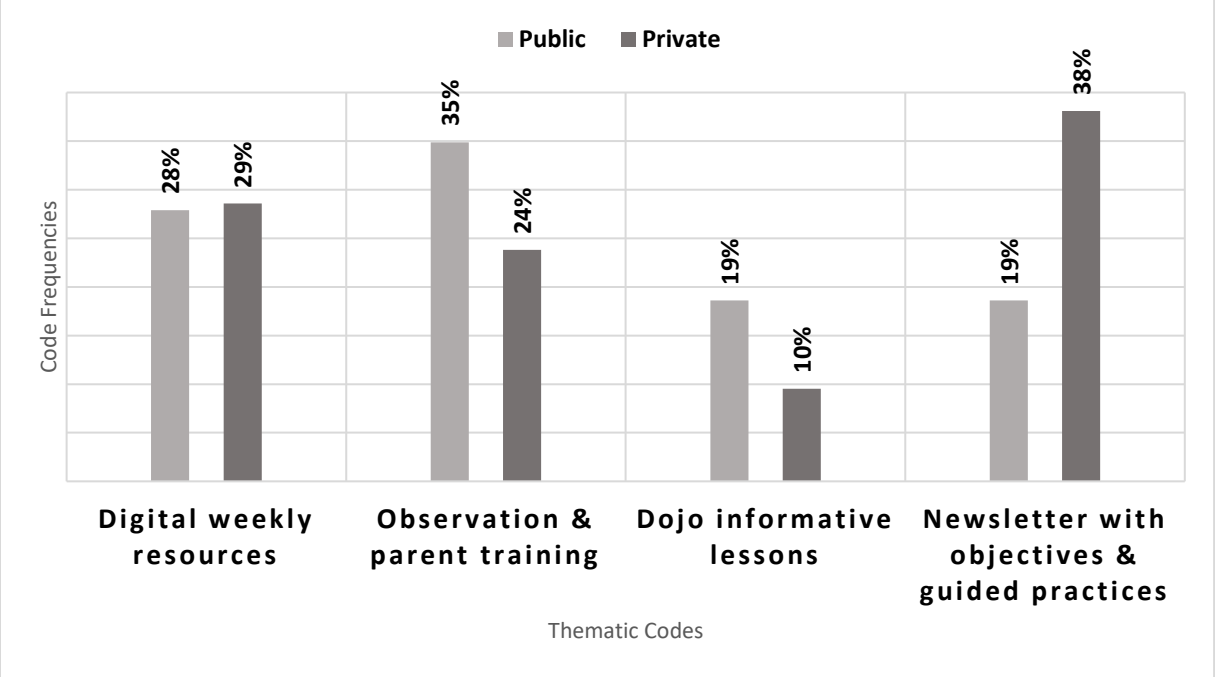

Figure 6. Methods to develop home and school connections based on coding frequencies.

Carol provided several examples of how those connections can easily be developed by immersion educators. The first was the creation of a newsletter that the parents could understand. “We teach in Spanish but what we teach can be translated in English and shared with the parents that way they know what our weekly learning objectives are” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). The second example was using digital devices to share weekly content. “I always send parents a recording of their children reading with examples of literacy practices that can be applied at home when their child is practicing reading in English” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019). The third provided example was the sharing of digital

resources that parents could listen to with their child and learn foundational literacy skills. “I have created several PowerPoint presentations that include me speaking so that parents along with their children can learn letters, sounds, and sight words in Spanish” (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2019).

According to Nancy, “One of the greatest components of these early immersion programs is that parents are able to visit classrooms and see firsthand how literacy is being taught in their child’s classroom” (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). She then adds that the visitations are followed by a meeting with the program director who goes over program learning expectations for that appointed time and also gives parents “resources that can be used to connect current classroom content knowledge at home from one language to another” (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). Maria adds in her follow up statement that the process of dual literacy development requires that immersion teachers learn to communicate daily with parents “because it truly takes a village to support this level of instruction at such an early age” (Maria, personal communication, January 7, 2020).

During the focus group meeting, all participants expressed the importance of these developing practices that connected learning from the school setting to an immersion students’ home. “The development of dual literacy in second language learners requires that all hands that are on deck be equally as involved in every aspect of learning” (Liz, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Liz’s statement emphasizes the type of partnership she felt supported the success of students in language immersion programs. Students in immersion classrooms, unlike traditional classrooms, do not come from homes that speak their target language of instruction. Parents who place their children in language immersion programs are required to support their instruction at home in their native tongue of English (De Jong, 2014). The shared resources that

immersion educators send home provides information that informs parents of what their child is learning at school in their target language of Spanish. The resources and teacher suggested practices also help parents understand the content that is being taught weekly. Parents are required to focus on nightly reading to reinforce literacy development between their home language and their school language of instruction. (Call et al., 2018). “The learning resources and practices we share helps our parents feel connected even though their child is learning a language different from their own” (Carol, personal communication” January 7, 2020).

Chapter 4 Summary

The results of the study were gathered by conducting face-to-face interviews with eight language immersion teachers from two different elementary schools. The interviewees came from two K–5 elementary schools, one public and one private that offered language immersion programs. The eight immersion teachers taught either kindergarten or first-grade in the selected school settings. A focus group with six of the eight teachers from the same public school was later included to complete the collection of research. At the conclusion of the interviews, a systematic structure of coding for each of the interview transcripts was completed. The process was again repeated with the focus group interview. The transcribed and coded responses were then consolidated using a method of constant comparison that revealed possible themes and their relevance to the study’s research question. The data was then sorted by consolidated codes addressing possible new themes that had elements of teaching experiences, applied strategies, data uses, learning expectations, and the home and school connection. In chapter 5, I present my analysis and discussion of the data, how it relates, differs, or coincides with the literature, and my recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter provides a reexamination of the research question and the main themes that arose from the analysis of the collected data. The study's results will be investigated and summarized based on their connection to relevant literature on the topic of dual literacy instruction, and then reconsidered within the conceptual framework that supported the study. Limitations and implications for current dual literacy instruction and practice will be discussed, as well as opportunities for further research that may add to our understanding of the types of literacy practices needed to support the development of dual language reading improvement in second language learners.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to explore what teachers could do to implement effective practices for teaching early literacy skills to dual language learners. The ability to identify how those practices may then be utilized would support improved teaching practices, leading to stronger reading capabilities for second language learners. As such, the study sought to answer this research question: How can teachers implement effective teaching practices of early literacy skills to improve dual literacy development in second language learners?

A social constructivist model framed the study to explicate the viewpoints of language immersion teachers entrenched in the academic environments of today's dual language classrooms. Social constructivism supports the sharing of knowledge through communal experiences and collective conversations that provide newer versions of learning practices based on those collaborative interactions (Creswell, 2013). The development of this interpretive model

derives its meaning from the immersion educator views and experiences with teaching practices that support dual literacy development in Grades K–1 (Brown, 1994; Creswell, 2013).

The development of reading, along with the four foundational attributes addressed in Chapter 2 were supported by the theoretical components that reinforced the established conceptual framework for dual literacy development (Brown, 1994). The following were the four attributes discussed in the study's conceptual framework: language development, curriculum, teacher's role, and student's prior knowledge in their native tongue. The conceptual framework contained three theoretical components that offered a supporting structure on which the analysis of data results will be discussed in the following sections: theory of planned behavior, linguistic theory, and the early literacy model. The theory of planned behavior provided a foundational overview of the attitudes, perceptions, and learning development associated with teachers, students, and parents. The theory-informed instructional practices based on behavioral influences of the participants (Hickey & Mejia, 2014). The linguistic theory addressed the understanding of linguistic principles that should be considered before teaching a second language. The theory was also used to explain the progression and acquisition of language development (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). The final theoretical component used to support the conceptual framework for this study was the early literacy model. This model looked at the five domains of literacy and was adapted to identify their roles in the types of practices that language immersion classrooms need to support dual literacy development in Grades K–1. These theoretical components served as the undergirding process of learning that occurs as children are learning to read and write in a language of instruction different from their own.

Separately these theoretical components have each addressed areas of development that are specific to learning to read in one language. The collective pairing of the conceptual

framework's attributes and their supporting theoretical components provide a basis for interpreting data related to the types of practices that support dual reading development in language immersion programs. Reading progression in second language learners is an integrated model centered on cognitive principals that focus on information processing, meaningful learning, and linguistic motivation (Brown, 1994). Although Brown developed the model in response to second language learners learning to read in English, it applies to all language learners learning to read in a target language different from their own.

This study used an exploratory, case study approach (see Chapter 3) to explicate educator views on classroom literacy practices that supported foundational dual language reading development in second language learners. Educators were asked to describe the types of practices they created and used in response to literacy data and expected learning outcomes for language immersion students in the early grades. Data for the study was gathered through individual interviews with Grades K–1 language immersion educators, and one focus group discussion that included some of the individuals. Both interviews and the focus group were guided using a semistructured format. The interview process provided a malleable format and an adjustable questioning framework that consisted of, open-ended questions, which permitted me to lead participants through their examination of the research question. (Creswell, 2014; Seidman, 2006; Vygotsky, 1987).

Data analysis of the study findings (see Chapter 4) led to five emergent themes: (a) seek and undertake educational training experiences, (b) use applied teaching strategies, (c) use data to support instructional choices, (d) develop literacy teaching expectations, and (e) develop and work with home and school connections. To summarize each theme:

1. Immersion teachers must seek and undertake educational training experiences to support the development of dual literacy practices they will utilize in their daily instruction.
2. Teachers will use applied teaching strategies daily during their literacy blocks.
3. Data collection is pivotal for supporting instructional choices and guiding the types of practices used in dual language classrooms.
4. Teachers develop literacy-teaching expectations based on district guidelines and curriculum alignment.
5. Dual literacy development is best supported when teachers create working relationships that communicate instructional practices between home and school.

Discussion of Results

The teachers interviewed for this study were dual language speakers and shared a plethora of teaching experience in the general field of early childhood education. They all had a diverse spectrum of content knowledge and were eager to discuss the practices they were currently using to support dual literacy development. The immersion teachers individually conveyed the significance of knowing literacy practices that support meaningful connections from a student's native tongue to their language of instruction. The interview process for each educator conveyed a willingness to identify teaching resources that would support biliteracy development in grades as early as kindergarten and beyond. The viewpoints of the immersion educators were framed within the context of their prior teaching experiences in non-immersion settings, commonalities were apparent in their selection of practices. Their common dual literacy practices will be discussed including how they relate to this study's conceptual framework. This section provides an interpretation of the relevant results and explains the significant effects of the

findings from Chapter 4 as they relate to the research goals, including practices and teaching implications. The layout of the findings was organized in relation to the five primary themes acquired from the coded data.

Theme 1: Seek and Undertake Educational Training Experiences

Educational training experiences were identified by all study participants as having a close link to their prior literacy preparation in traditional Grades K−1 classroom settings. These experiences included aspects of implemented literacy practices in the domains of phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. The inclusion of these reading associated domains in Grades K−1 immersion literacy blocks afforded these educators a balanced approach to teaching literacy similar to their previous experiences in non-immersion classrooms. Immersion educators felt a sense of accountability towards ensuring that similar reading outcomes were reflected in their non-traditional classrooms for Grades K−1. Through the implementation of these daily practices, they were ensuring that an early relationship between languages and their related meanings to concepts of print would exist in their literacy block. These types of replicated practices targeted the aforementioned domains associated with pre-reading skills. Students, however, were exposed to these areas in Spanish because it was their target language of instruction. These early foundational domains would serve as a precursor to success in later dual literacy development. According to previous research, early dual reading precursors are developed by exposure to reading behaviors, pre-reading practices, and early learning environments that support the development of a continuum in literacy (Chan & Sylva, 2015; Goodrich, 2017).

The different implementation of instructional practices developed from prior experiences that were offered by the study participants was expected. These implementations were made as a

result of limited educational preparation and instructional support based on the infancy of many language immersion programs in the State of Tennessee. In both the public school and private settings, immersion educators were provided instructional practices in literacy that mainly addressed the early reading needs of mono-linguistic learners. As a result, the participants articulated how many of the practices had to be modified to support literacy development in early immersion classrooms in accordance with Tennessee guidelines. The participants expressed the importance of prior literacy experiences and compared their prior knowledge of literacy as a gateway to understanding the general dynamics of applied reading instruction for second language learners. Dual literacy, at an early foundational level, is depicted within the context of having the ability to read and comprehend from one language to another (Genesee, 2015). The acquisition and understanding of reading were not considered by the participants to be problematic regarding student progression within Grades K–1. The area of deficit noted was in the lack of available training afforded to immersion educators teaching literacy in language immersion programs for Grades K–1.

The topic on which literacy practices were most applicable for supporting dual literacy development generated much discussion in the individual interviews and focus group. Dual reading knowledge, as expressed by the study participants, were more limited in immersion literacy blocks then they were in literacy blocks that focused on reading only in English. Immersion educators had to depend heavily on acquiring knowledge from their team collaborations while planning for literacy. Many of the participants shared how the lack of available dual literacy training resulted in collaborative conversations with their immersion colleagues that helped to create educational learning experiences within the established immersion programs.

Participants also relied on available online training videos provided by Addalingua, which is an organization that provides content for the immersion program. The videos from Addalingua provided examples of instructional practices they could use to apply within their literacy blocks. The videos focused their modeled instructional practices on the target language of instruction for the program. Lastly, the participants also pursued training experiences in literacy practices from district-wide professional development offerings to ensure that their applied practices were relevant and aligned with the state reading standards.

Theme 2: Use Applied Teaching Strategies

As discussed in previous studies addressing early immersion education, the development of reading was connected to a student's early exposure and application of vocabulary, phonological awareness, and concepts of print. (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Rohde, 2015). The participants in the study all shared daily uses of these domains. The kindergarten immersion educators all utilized in their literacy block a degree of practices involving: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The first-grade immersion educators utilized similar domains but focused more on extending the areas of vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension. These instructional domains were mainly demonstrated by both grade levels through constant modeling.

The study participants initially expressed teacher modeling of the literacy domains as a required visual example provided to the students to help them apply independently pre-reading skills in literacy. Hickey and Mejia (2014) described modeling in a literacy block as "hands-on experiences that help educators facilitate comprehension for second language learners" (p. 139). Teacher modeling provides students learning a new language with visuals, gestures, and simplified examples that make learning accessible for second language learners (Hickey &

Mejia, 2014). The immersion educators interviewed communicated that using modeling during the implementation of literacy practices can be accomplished in part by utilizing vocabulary picture cards and visual props displayed that accompany mentor text during whole-group and small-group reading. Vocabulary picture cards and reading props such as sentence strips help educators extend the language component when students answer questions about what they are reading. Participants also stated how they were able to utilize this conversational time of sharing to discuss the correct pronunciation of words and to address correct grammar rules in student responses. Good modeling of language and reading occurs via student interactions that are supported by guided examples facilitated by educators (Mohr et al., 2018). Word walls are another good example of visuals aids that participants utilized to help students identify word meaning and spelling.

In Grades K–1 immersion classroom settings, access to visual and auditory repetition of content is a necessity. Participants provided students with visual examples of writing and auditory examples of reading fluently in Spanish. Shared meanings between languages was another teaching strategy the participants utilized to help students make and extend connections. Beginning sounds that were assigned to words in both languages were emphasized by participants as helpful practices for helping students make early connections between words. Participants also included in their teaching strategies a constant reviewing of literacy features related to text that could be transferrable as students were learning to identify story elements in both languages. These transferrable literacy features are identified as practices that translate from one language to another and support the same practices such as: identifying the main idea of a story, sequencing and retelling of events, story genres, plot, characters, and author's purpose. Participants noted these features as the most commonly taught in their daily literacy blocks for

Grades K–1. Each participant explained how these practices were shared weekly as a part of their student's nightly homework so that parents could apply them in English at home.

Theme 3: Importance of Data Collection

A similar theme related to how participants selected relevant teaching strategies arose from the topic of data. Participants shared that classroom practices were guided by the literacy data results attained from weekly assessment measures. Literacy data was instrumental in guiding the types of instruction used and the variety of practices implemented to ensure success in dual literacy. Study participants shared the importance of data collection for supporting instructional decisions and guiding daily practices. The development of early literacy is monitored frequently through how students progressively begin to identify letters and sounds followed by a particular arrangement of words that carry meanings. In Spanish immersion programs, students begin with the identification of vowels, consonants, and then syllable chunks utilizing both to create words. In the study, participants stated they taught and assessed these skills weekly to ensure evidence from data collected supported student mastery of the measured skill.

The use of data ensured that participants were providing students with targeted instruction based on the collected results. Participants also shared that data collection played a vital role in their development of reading groups. Students were paired by reading ability based on their running record results and assigned leveled text that aligned with their identified ability levels. Data results helped participants prepare lessons that focused on the determined academic need in areas where students' scores appeared lowest. At those times when students appeared to need more help in skills addressing phonics and phonemic awareness, participants were able to provide more specific practices within their instruction. In places where the collected data

showed a gap in word fluency, educators focused their instruction on small group practices to address further development of decoding skills.

Theme 4: Development of Literacy-Teaching Expectations

Participants involved in the focus group discussed the relationship that exists between their literacy expectations and the district guidelines that they must adhere to, to ensure alignment within the provided curriculum. Literacy Curriculum is defined as an arrangement of knowledge and applied practices in areas of literacy deemed valuable by those assigned to create the curricula (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Districts utilize literacy curriculums to establish a general baseline for age-appropriate trajectories of foundational domains that universally embody reading and writing skills (Goodrich, 2017). In the State of Tennessee, curriculum is created using a balanced literacy approach. The methods utilized in a balanced literacy approach incorporate culminating modalities that are aimed at developing strong readers and supporting their life-long progression as proficient readers (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). As a result of district guidelines and the established balanced literacy curriculum selected by the Tennessee Department of Education, participants in Grades K−1 immersion classrooms are tasked with aligning their program expectations to the ones provided by the state. During the focus group interview participants teaching in immersion classrooms shared the difficulties they encountered with trying to equally support the expectations of their program and those set by the district in literacy. Students in immersion programs required greater levels of scaffolding because they were being exposed to content from a literacy curriculum that was taught to them using only their target language of instruction. For students who enroll in the immersion programs currently available in the state all their classroom instruction is provided only in

Spanish. They learn to read and write in their target language of instruction unlike their traditional peers who attend the same school but received the same curriculum in English.

In language immersion programs students are having to access what they know in their native language about alphabetic principles and translate that knowledge into Spanish. Participants teaching in immersion kindergarten classrooms expressed having to spend more time helping students make meaningful connections that were accessible in both languages. As students were immersed in their target language teachers had to introduce new vocabulary terms that had cross-linguistic meanings to ensure literacy was supported in both languages. These literacy curriculum teaching modifications were not only applicable in the classroom but also necessary in the student's home learning environment.

Theme 5: Working Partnerships between Home and School.

The development of dual literacy is best supported when teachers and parents establish a working partnership that connects the learning experiences from the classroom to a students' home. Immersion educators expressed the value of establishing working relationships with the parents to ensure learning was being equally supported at home. Each of the participants that were interviewed shared the types of methods they utilized to create school and home connections. Immersion educators utilized weekly communication methods such as newsletters, digital visuals with examples of daily content and reading websites in Spanish. Parents were also given access to daily communication links that they could sign up for free and have access to see pictures and recordings of their child throughout the day. The digital system that many of the participants used was called the Class Dojo communication system. Immersion teachers would post messages in English for parents to help keep them connected to their child's learning throughout the week. Student work was also displayed in the class application of the Dojo that

provided parents with literacy objectives, and practical learning practices that could be enforced at home to support those objectives in English. Language immersion parents were provided with opportunities throughout the school year to visit their child's school and observe how learning is taking place within their classroom. Content and curriculum information is translated and shared with parents by site program directors via email and during these quarterly visits to ensure parents are aware of curriculum expectations and supporting literacy practices they can utilize at home.

Discussion of Results in Relation to the Literature

The five attributes used to gather research for my literature review were (a) the early development of language, (b) instructional practices that support dual literacy development, (c) Parental influences on learner outcomes, (d) a teacher's role in the facilitation of dual language learning environments and, (e) the influence of prior knowledge in relation to student acquisition of new knowledge. These attributes address areas of the research that I will use to compare to the present research findings that may or may not support new developments in dual literacy practices.

Attribute 1: The Early Development of Language.

The first attribute examined the relationship between language exposure and classroom experiences that led to dual literacy development in early childhood settings. The attribute included teacher knowledge of student learning expectations based on age-appropriate practices that aligned with the early development of language. Previous studies addressing the progression of language and the bilingual brain suggested that the development and acquisition of language was a direct result of early exposure to learning environments that supported both languages (Geneses, 2015; Mohr et al., 2018; Rohde, 2015). Teachers entering immersion early childhood

settings should know age-appropriate practices that support dual language development (Genesee, 2015). Early development of language and its relationship with instructional practices was an area of great importance for the immersion educators that took part in my study. Participants expressed how knowledge of early language development was instrumental in guiding the types of language practices their students were exposed to daily. Carmen the private school teacher shared how having knowledge of age-appropriate expectations guided how content was presented in her literacy block. “Early development of language in immersion kindergarten literacy blocks looks like introducing new words through songs” (Carmen, personal communication, October 18, 2019).

Previous research suggested early literacy development is more likely to take place in classrooms where teachers know what emergent literacy is and how it develops in the early grades (Rohde, 2015). Ana provided two examples of age-appropriate practices that supported language development. The first example was a listening center that had simple text in two languages that students could listen to as they followed along with their storybook. The listening center supported the development of dual comprehension as students were able to connect content with its assigned meaning the second was visual vocabulary cards that students could use in their writing center. The cards provided vocabulary information in both languages for the students. “My students can read because they have daily access to these age-appropriate, language developing tools” (Ana, personal communication, October 18, 2019). As previously identified in the research, classroom language experiences that facilitate learning practices based on age-appropriate expectations support the progression of literacy development in second language learners (Chan & Sylva, 2015). In kindergarten, Rick used technology to support dual literacy development by providing his students with a computer center that had age-appropriate

vocabulary matching games. The games helped students learn words and their meanings in both languages. Each game provided simple text for the students to read along as the newly learned words were applied in the text. Rick's knowledge of emergent reading guided his selection of practice for helping his students use vocabulary meaning to develop comprehension skills as they are learning to read.

Attribute 2: The Instructional Practices that Support Dual Literacy Development

Instructional practices were identified in the research as instrumental for improving student early development of reading and comprehension skills. Previous research suggested that language was developed through the practices that educators used to facilitate early aspects of biliteracy. Student exposure to elements of text-based practices that were explicit and systematic was essential to the development of comprehension (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). Instructional practices were attained in academic settings from areas resulting in prior experiences, district trainings, observed examples, and through collaborations with peers. In my study, the immersion educators shared the impact that targeted training had in the areas of literacy they applied daily with their students. Rick explained, "That training opportunities provide immersion educators with new tools that guide the practices used to teach students how to read in two languages" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019).

Participants in the study shared how upon entering their immersion classrooms the trainings they received focused only on teaching in their target language. The provided online training from Addalingua was targeted for teaching students how to develop reading skills in Spanish. The videos showed participants how to use weekly mentor text along with vocabulary cards to help students make connections within their text. These videos, however, did not include practices that could help students make connections in English. Participants shared how their

previous knowledge of teaching literacy in traditional Grades K−1 classrooms helped them connect literacy practices to support students in both languages. During Liz's interview, she expressed how many educators enter language immersion programs with previous non-immersion experience in teaching in the early grades. "We take our prior knowledge of teaching literacy and modify the content to support understanding in both languages that is our baseline" (Liz, personal communication, October 28, 2019). District state trainings offered to participants were another opportunity provided for attaining instructional practices. These district trainings introduced an array of practices for early childhood educators in the area of literacy development. The only problem was that the district training focused only on teaching students how to read in English, not in Spanish.

For participants who attended these trainings, the missing component was trying to connect their relevance in both languages. Carol explained, "These trainings are great for traditional classroom teachers but for us, they do not offer a way to connect literacy practices" (Carol, personal communication, December 11, 2010). Participants, therefore, relied heavily on the ability to observe each other teach and the opportunities to collaborate with their peers about the types of instructional practices that were working and the ones that were not.

As with any profession, training is a tool utilized by agencies to maintain job proficiency and support newer practices as they develop within each profession (Puri, 2018). In the educational field experiences and trainings are equally as important for adapting and improving the types of practices educators use daily (Jung et al., 2016; Puri, 2018). Throughout the research, literature educators are required to have a unique understanding of the content they teach and the students they serve. Many school districts provide year-round training experiences to support student- learning expectations and to ensure that their teachers remain proficient in

their dexterity (Mohr et al., 2018; Rohde, 2015; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). Language immersion educators are no exception in the pursuit of educational training.

Attribute 3: The Role of The Teacher in Facilitating an Environment of Dual Language Development.

The role of a teacher in a classroom is as a key facilitator of student learning. Teachers are responsible for providing resources that help develop and support how students learn. In settings where students are exposed to two languages, access to multicultural resources are dependent on the teacher. Immersion educators must foster cross-cultural awareness in both word meanings and conversational forms (Goodrich et al., 2013). In the study participants shared how they created classroom settings where learning was displayed in dual languages. The participants provided text for their students in their reading centers that displayed content in both English and Spanish. Maria, the first-grade teacher, explained that cross-cultural awareness can also be reflected in a classroom's set-up as well. "I provide daily resources in both languages that are accessible to my students ranging from listening content, to visually displayed posters and text, it helps my students make connections" (Maria, personal communication, November 4, 2019). In Krystal's classroom, vocabulary visuals are displayed to help students identify items around the room. "Everything in my room is labeled to include the different flags from other countries around the world I want my students to learn how to say things not only in Spanish but in English as well" (Krystal, personal communication, December 12, 2019).'

Previous examples gathered from the research suggested teachers facilitated these forms of cross-cultural awareness through their instruction of vocabulary (Rohde, 2015; Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). Early practices involving cross-cultural awareness were identified through classroom literacy blocks. Participants shared how cross-cultural practices were evident during

their instructional literacy blocks. Anny shared how in kindergarten her students study community helpers. The lesson includes different text related to several community jobs in both languages. Anny then invites some of the community helpers such as cops, firemen, and mailmen to visit her class and talk to the students about their jobs. The students can ask them questions based on the content they have read about them. Many of the community helpers she invites, speak in both languages so students can practice their target language with these community helpers. “It was exciting to see the students referencing information from their weekly text to ask questions to our guest especially in a second language” (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2019). The role of a teacher in an immersion setting requires an ability to extend learning content from one language to another and to make those connections meaningful so that students can relate as they acquire new knowledge.

Attribute 4: Parental Influences on Learner Outcomes

Learning behaviors are developed from a child’s first exposure to learning which begins at home (Hickey & Mejia, 2014). Parent participation in their children’s learning is a vital part of their academic success. The support parents provide their child at home helps to extend learning from the classroom dynamics to the home. Participants in the study shared that parents who read daily at home with their children helped to connect reading from their home to the classroom. Liz explains that her first-grade students who are read to nightly as a part of their homework were more engaged as they were being read to in the classroom. “Students appeared to follow print better even in another language they also understand story elements better” (Liz, personal communication, October 28, 2019). Learner outcomes are further magnified in language immersion programs because parents must focus on reinforcing language development in their child’s native tongue. Immersion teachers provide the classroom instructional piece that focuses

on a child's target language, while parents must step into the role of educator at home. Previous research suggests that parents must support the development of the target language at school by maintaining a balance in the child's native language development at home (Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Huff, 2013). Participants in the study also shared how parents who place their children in immersion programs are willing to be involved in their child's teaching, they just need guidance on how to do so. Rick shared that as a part of his daily communication with the parents he provides digital examples of reading strategies that he uses at school that parents can use at home. "A lot of our literacy skills are transferrable, like teaching students how to identify story characters, main idea, and setting look the same in both languages the only thing different is the vocabulary" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). Rick includes vocabulary examples of story elements in both languages so that parents can see how as he reads so they are instructionally included.

In alignment with previous research, the participants from the study said that parental influences in student learning were key contributors to student success in an immersion program. "The process of teaching literacy becomes a deeper partnership with parents when students are learning two languages" (Liz, personal communication, October 28, 2019). Nancy explained that immersion parents have an important role in dual literacy development at home. "We focus on teaching their children to read in Spanish but they focus on reading in English at home" (Nancy personal communication, December 18, 2019). Participants in the study expressed how they worked diligently to ensure parents remained informed and equipped with learning resources that could be used at home to extend students learning.

Attribute 5: The Influence of Prior Knowledge in Relation to Student Acquisition of New Knowledge

Prior knowledge provides a general starting point for where learning will begin as students enter their early academic instructional settings (Brown, 1994; Crump, 2014; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). Children who enter school in kindergarten are assessed by their cognitive developmental levels and through alphabetic knowledge of common principles (Hickey & Mejia, 2014). These assessments are given to students to help educators understand what types of learning exposures students had prior to entering a school setting. Participants shared how students were all given an assessment prior to entering the program the assessment helped provide a baseline for student knowledge in their native tongue. Nancy one of the kindergarten teachers stated that since the first-year students who entered with low scores in their native tongue had a harder time transitioning to similar content in the target language Typically, children entering these programs are required to have strong skills in their native tongue before being exposed to those same literacy skills in the target language of instruction (Goodrich et al., 2013; Hickey & Mejia, 2014).

Anny shared that students who entered her kindergarten immersion class with limited proficiency in their target language required her to provide instruction in their native language to support their transition into a new language (Anny, personal communication, October 18, 2020) Previous research suggests, that early exposure to alphabetic principles and concepts of print support the development of reading in a child's native tongue (Rohde, 2015; Schwartz & Palviainen, 2016). Participants also shared how many of their students who entered the program with knowledge of their letters, and sounds were able to apply the same knowledge in their target language. Carol stated that her kindergarten immersion students who entered already knowing

their alphabetic principles were able to decode simple words in a given text. Children who entered school with initial skills in one language were easily able to transfer their knowledge from one language to the next (Goodrich et al., 2013).

Similarly, participants in my study expressed the difference they noticed with literacy outcomes of English speakers that entered their classrooms with strong early literacy exposure in their initial language. Rick referenced the influence of prior knowledge as students were receiving instruction in a second language suggesting "their process of learning Spanish appeared easier" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). According to Rick, "because they knew all of their letters and sounds in English it was an easier transition as they learned them in Spanish" (Rick, personal communication, November 5, 2019). The transfer of knowledge becomes evident in second language learners when students have a strong foundation in their first language (Brown, 1994; Hoff, 2013).

The Conceptual Framework of Dual Literacy Development

For this study, ideologies from three frameworks were joined to better understand the key factors that were involved in the development of dual literacy in the primary grades (see Figure 1, Chapter 2). The following were the selected frameworks: the theory of planned behavior, the linguistic theory, and the early literacy model. These collaborating theories addressed the development of language and literacy based on the following early learning influences in Brown's theory that included behaviors, exposure to language, and content in early literacy. The combined ideologies and influences were instrumental in identifying the foundational blueprints for the research-based areas of practice. The first component of dual literacy is the development of language, which begins with how it is acquired with instruction and how it varies as a result of the types of exposures children have at the onset of life with their parents, family members, and

caregivers. The first component includes the types of early language exposure children develop as a result of adult conversations, introduction to concepts of print and reading before entering academic settings (Clay, 1998; Fosnot, 2013; Rohde, 2015; Watson & Wildy, 2014). Knowledge of the influences these variances have on the progression of language helps educators determine the types of practices most effective for supporting the foundational development of dual language skills in early childhood classrooms. The second component of dual literacy addresses the curriculums and literacy domains selected by each immersion teacher to provide a balanced approach for teaching literacy successfully in a dual language program (Goodrich et al., 2013) The third component of dual literacy looks at the role of the teacher and level of literacy content knowledge. The teacher's role considers how literacy practices are developed based on content knowledge, and align with the curriculum to support student learning to read in two languages (Clay, 1998). The fourth component of dual literacy considers a student's prior knowledge and provides an analysis of how exposure to new knowledge will support early reading development (Chan & Sylva, 2015). In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how these four components of dual language development align with the data collected from the participant; observations, interviews, and the focus group.

Language development. Participants that took part in the study for both the individual and group interviews described the importance of immersion educators having a strong understanding of early language development. They shared how in kindergarten before entering an immersion program all students are given the same language screener. The screener allows the educators to see how well students can communicate competently, through cognitive and linguistic principles in their initial language. The participants in the study administering these assessments receive prior training by the program director. The language

screener training specifically targets the different levels of language developments as they related to age-appropriate measures in mono-linguistic learners. Participants were taught to carefully assess those areas because children's acceptance into language programs is reliant on their ability to have strong skills in their initial language before being exposed to another.

Curriculum. Four of the participant observations conducted before each interview provided visuals binders of grade-level curriculum guides. The curriculum binders included both the district literacy measures and the Addalingua curriculum language developing measures for second language learners. The curriculum guide from the public school observations in Grades K−1 included the literacy model for teaching literacy in the State of Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Participants shared that the curriculum guides were used during their weekly planning times with their non-immersion grade-level peers. "We meet with our entire grade level to look at content from the shared district curriculum in areas of instruction addressing literacy, math, science, and social studies" (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Carol added, "While we have our own literacy objectives with our Addalingua program we also take literacy grade-level objectives and combine them with our learning targets" (Carol, personal communication, January 7, 2020). The shared time of weekly planning allowed them to see areas of learning that could be modified to ensure grade-level expectations in literacy and general content areas were being met by all grade level educators. The Addalingua curriculum also provides planning resources and expected instructional pacing of content for students in the target language of instruction. Therefore, public school immersion educators for Grades K−1 met weekly at another scheduled time to create lesson plans based on the provided Addalingua curriculum. Rick stated that "the meeting times with his grade level immersion colleagues focused only on the

Addalingua curriculum and creating plans specific to the immersion students" (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020). The curriculum structure and planning times were also the same for first-grade immersion teachers. They followed the district general grade-level curriculum pacing assigned to them by both the state and the Addalingua curriculum. Maria stated " Knowledge and application of both curriculums keep us accountable to our, district, the immersion program, and our students" (Maria, personal communication, January 7, 2020)

Teacher's role. The role of an immersion teacher includes curriculum knowledge, balanced application of content in dual languages and the ability to understand the foundational development of language. Participants in the study shared how they had to have a thorough understanding of the curriculum provided by the State of Tennessee and the curriculum provided by their language immersion program. Evidence of their knowledge of the curriculum was displayed weekly in their lesson plans."Curriculums provide a pace and guideline for the content of our learning, showing us what to teach and when" (Maria, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Rick added that during teacher planning periods both curriculums were utilized to ensure students were receiving a balanced instructional approach in the weekly practices that would be used in literacy (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Participants also had to make sure that their instruction guided by these curriculums addressed each student's foundational knowledge of the content. Participants explained that once curriculum guided lessons were created the students were taught and provided opportunities in their literacy blocks to apply the knowledge. The participants would then assess informally using a general checklist of how students applied those taught practices and would use that student data to guide further instruction. Nancy, one of the kindergarten teachers, stated: "Knowledge and application of our curriculum keep us accountable to both our district and our

program" (Nancy, personal communication, December 18, 2019). During the focus group interview, participants discussed other parts of their teaching roles that were equally as important. Participants discussed taking part in district trainings that addressed literacy from a mono-linguistic layout. Each immersion educator from the public school takes part in signing up for any available trainings in literacy." One of our most significant roles as immersion educators is to teach and learn from each other" (Carol, personal communication, January 7, 2020). The participants sign up for targeted training in areas most applicable to teaching literacy and then focus on making modifications to meet the needs of their dual language learners. Rick the kindergarten teacher shared how he signed up for a training that focused on teaching vocabulary through word study. The strategies and practices provided in that training helped him modify and create a vocabulary PowerPoint that could be used weekly to display the new vocabulary words and add visual illustrations with oral examples provided by the teacher. Rick explained, " These trainings allow me to share current practices with my teammates and also to ensure our students have access to learning the same way their non-immersion peers do" (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Carol the other kindergarten teacher shared an example of sequencing cards she created for a mentor text that students could use to retell the story after it has been read listening on the carpet. The creation of the sequencing cards came from one of the practices shared in the district training for teaching children how to retell stories from a given text. " Our role as immersion teachers requires us to constantly create a bridge of instructional meaning from one language to another" (Carol, personal communication, January 7, 2020).

Student's prior knowledge. The study participants discussed how a student's prior knowledge was assessed before entering the immersion program. Nancy shared how much of

the classroom instruction at the beginning of the school year is guided by the data outcomes that those entry assessments provide. “Initially we assess all students entering kindergarten and first-grade the results tell us how to plan instruction and create a course of action that either supports or extends what they already know” (Nancy, personal communication, January 7, 2020). In kindergarten, the initial focus on prior knowledge has experienced change. Participants shared how during their first year of the program, their initial knowledge of what students knew academically before entering the program was limited. Participants expressed the difficulties in providing literacy support for students in a target language when they were not sure what levels of knowledge students had in their initial language. “We were teaching kids letters in Spanish and didn’t realize some of them did not know them in English” (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020. “We need to have an underlying idea of what knowledge is currently present as our students enter our classrooms” (Liz, personal communication, January 7, 2020). “ Access to what students enter my classroom knowing helps me personalize learning to best meet their academic needs” (Maria, personal communication, January 7, 2020).

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The purpose of this study was to gather data on literacy practices that Grades K−1 teachers in language immersion programs used for teaching early literacy skills to dual language learners. An early childhood professional’s knowledge of literacy is vital for guiding the types of instruction students receive daily. Many of the practices used in traditional Grades K−1 classrooms can be modified to support the development of reading in two languages (Jung et al., 2016). The initial introduction to reading and the practices used to ensure students reach the expected outcome in language immersion programs require knowledge of similar developmental

precursors in literacy (Brown, 1994; Hickey & Mejia, 2014; Wardle, 2008). Based on the findings, several implications for teacher practice, elementary education policy, and dual language theory are presented.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of my research was to explore what teachers could do in their classrooms to implement more effective practices of early literacy skills to improve the literacy development of second language learners. Identifying the necessary practices for dual literacy development is dependent on the results of assessing students using the current curriculum. Literacy development and the instructional practices used to support its progression are areas of learning that are essential to both traditional and non-traditional Grades K–1 classrooms. The development of literacy is not only defined by reading it also includes aspects of language that involve speaking, listening, and writing. This study may help teachers develop curriculum that facilitates dual language instruction. Developing a more cohesive curriculum will support biliteracy. While the applications of literacy practices may look different based on assessed student knowledge, and grade-level expectations, their daily implementation is beneficial in supporting a balanced approach to teaching early literacy. The data collected on the current practices used by teachers to support literacy instruction were grouped by grade level and literacy domain. The most used practices were taken from mono-linguistic literacy ideas and modified to address the needs of second language learners. “Since our programs are fairly new the practices, we use in literacy are derived from traditional literacy training provided by our school and the district” (Maria, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Participant’s implemented practices that involved these targeted literacy domains: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. In a general literacy block that focuses on a mono-

linguistic structure of teaching students how to read these specified domains are visibly present to ensure a balanced literacy approach.

Traditional educators include these literacy domains in their whole group and small group instruction. Students in traditional classrooms are provided with practices and resources to develop and support these early literacy skills based on the literacy guidelines set by their district. Immersion settings, however, focus more on each factor separately as immersing them in their target language is their initial focus. Rick the kindergarten immersion teacher "shared that students in their programs would benefit from an immersion curriculum that included similar structures of teaching literacy" (Rick, personal communication, January 7, 2020). Regardless of how literacy domains are included with a literacy block, educators need access to practices and curriculum that support the development of reading from one language to another (Jung et al., 2016; Rohde, 2015).

Implications for Policy

Policies in a school setting are established to support the academic structure of student learning. While language programs are not new to the academic profession, immersion programs are an emerging trend. To best address the limited training opportunities and practices that immersion educators have, policies that support in-school training opportunities can help address a visible need in early immersion programs. School administrators should focus on ensuring staff has access to ongoing literacy training. In the public school where six of the participants work training addressing literacy was targeted to meet the specific literacy needs of non-immersion teachers. Participants shared how while they took part in those trainings many of the general content could not be used directly to address the needs of their students. In addressing this level of support for immersion educators teaching are faced with a lack of practices specified for their

areas of instruction. The finding from the study helped to discover a need for several adjustments in policy. The three adjustments were to provide standard resources in dual literacy, integration of resources and standardized assessments. The first adjustment requires that learning content be assessable for integration. Immersion educators need access to text, audio, and interactive media in their target language to support their daily instruction. The second adjustment would be to provide targeted training for immersion educators that support how these resources could be integrated most efficiently. The third adjustment, toward impacting policy would be to have standardized assessments. These assessments would test the effectiveness and efficiency of the resources and the practices in use.

Implications for Theory

Theories in education provide opportunities for educators to think about the learning process and to understand how their application of theory supports the instructional choices that are implemented daily (Higgs, 2013). These educational theories provide educators with a platform to either accept or question the decisions that influence the policies that those in authority create to support their applied reasoning (Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018). Current theories of literacy development focus on one language at a time (Brown, 1994). Dual language development requires a simultaneous joining of both. Based upon my current findings early childhood learners are able to learn languages at the same time which has two significant benefits. The first is stronger development of cognitive and analytical skills as students learn to process content in two languages. The second is their ability to communicate fluently both orally and in written form. Children from early dual language programs retain fluency in both languages as they get older.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was restricted to Grades K–1 language immersion educators and the types of practices they used in their literacy blocks to support dual literacy development. The interviews and focus group included questions about the types of practices they used to support dual literacy development. Extending this research provides immersion educators with knowledge in areas that will support the development of further instructional practices to enhance student reading and learning opportunities in the classroom. In light of that, I have three specific recommendations for further research into dual literacy instruction in the early grades.

The first recommendation is to extend the research to reflect the students as the participants in the place of the teachers in the research. I would suggest comparing literacy assessments between non-immersion and immersion K–1 grade students. The data from these assessments can be used to support instructional practices and provide an opportunity for both non-immersion and immersion educators to collaborate.

The second recommendation is to extend the research to specifically look at how language delays impact a students' ability to learn to read in a second language. I would also suggest looking at the types of modifications that would be needed to support dual literacy instruction in the classroom for students encountering language delays. Lastly, I would recommend looking at the types of assessments that may be beneficial for identifying these types of early delays in children prior to entering dual language programs.

The third recommendation is to extend the research beyond literacy in language immersion programs and see how a second language influences all aspects of learning. I would include the types of teaching practices that support early math development. I would also

recommend that the research process include both teachers and students to provide more perspectives on the impact that second languages have in the classroom.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to expand upon the current research addressing early literacy, to provide educators in language immersion settings with practices in early literacy development that are currently available, and to identify practices used by the participants in the study. Participants were asked to answer questions about teaching experiences in early literacy, curriculums, and professional learning opportunities afforded to them by their school. Selected participants were also observed before being interviewed to include further documentation of practices. The observation tool aligned with literacy content standards that were developed by the State of Tennessee's balanced approach to teaching literacy (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Lastly, participants were asked to expand upon the observed practices and to explain the measures they used to identify the effectiveness of those practices towards supporting dual literacy development. Research from the study was used to identify traditional literacy practices in the reading instruction for Grades K–1, which was also applicable in language immersion classrooms.

The application of those practices within their literacy blocks provided participants with new ideas and opportunities to see how the integration of these practices supported literacy development in their classrooms. Participants were able to look at reading domains integrated within their district's literacy requirements and begin to identify ways to use and modify those practices within their classroom instruction. The results were easier to address because participants were able to actively share knowledge of literacy practices with their peers and discuss the outcome of each practice. The focus group participants shared how vital those results

would be if they were included in the shared training sessions held throughout the school year. Training opportunities in target areas of instruction are essential to sustaining and supporting content (Genesee & Fortune, 2014).

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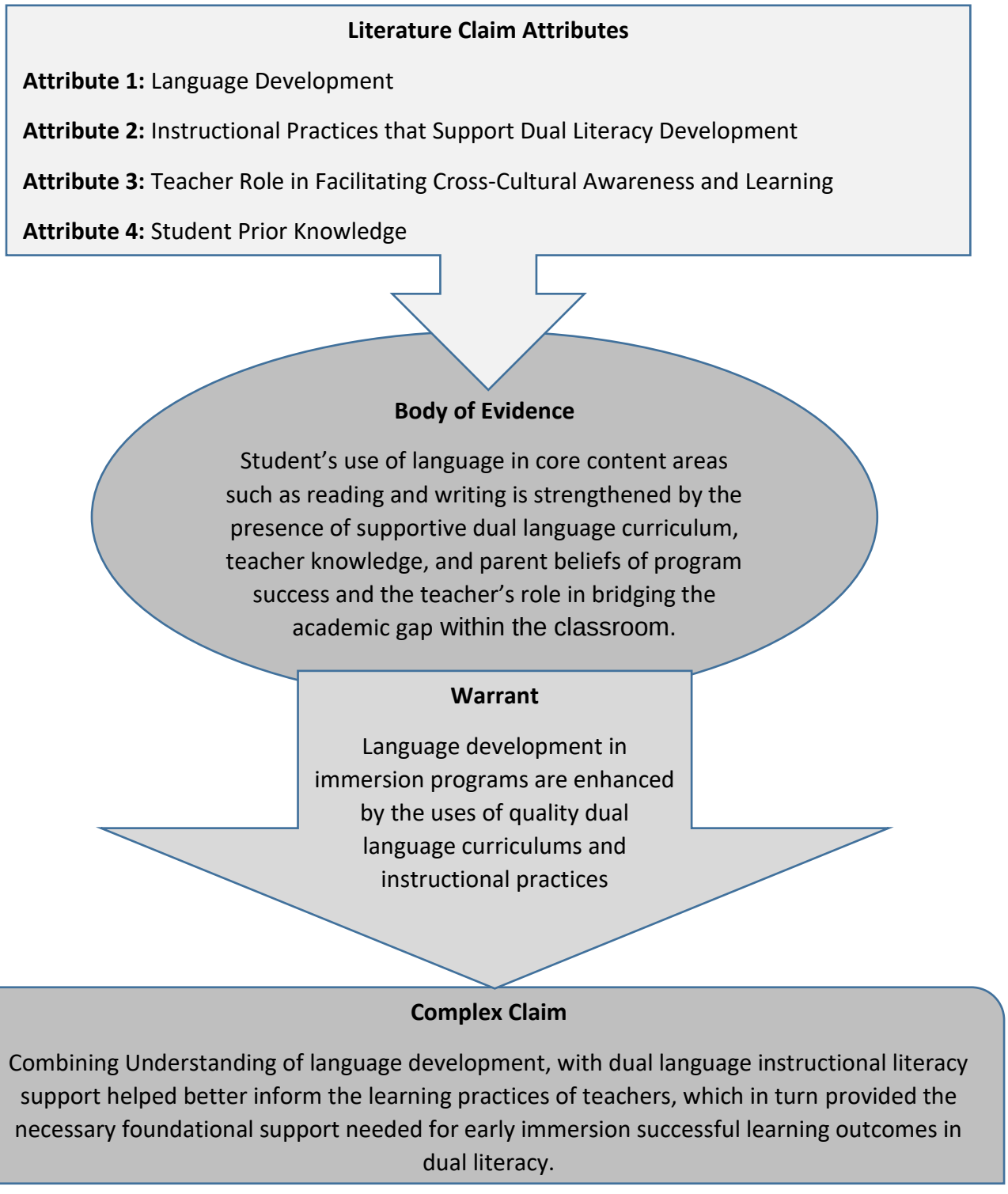
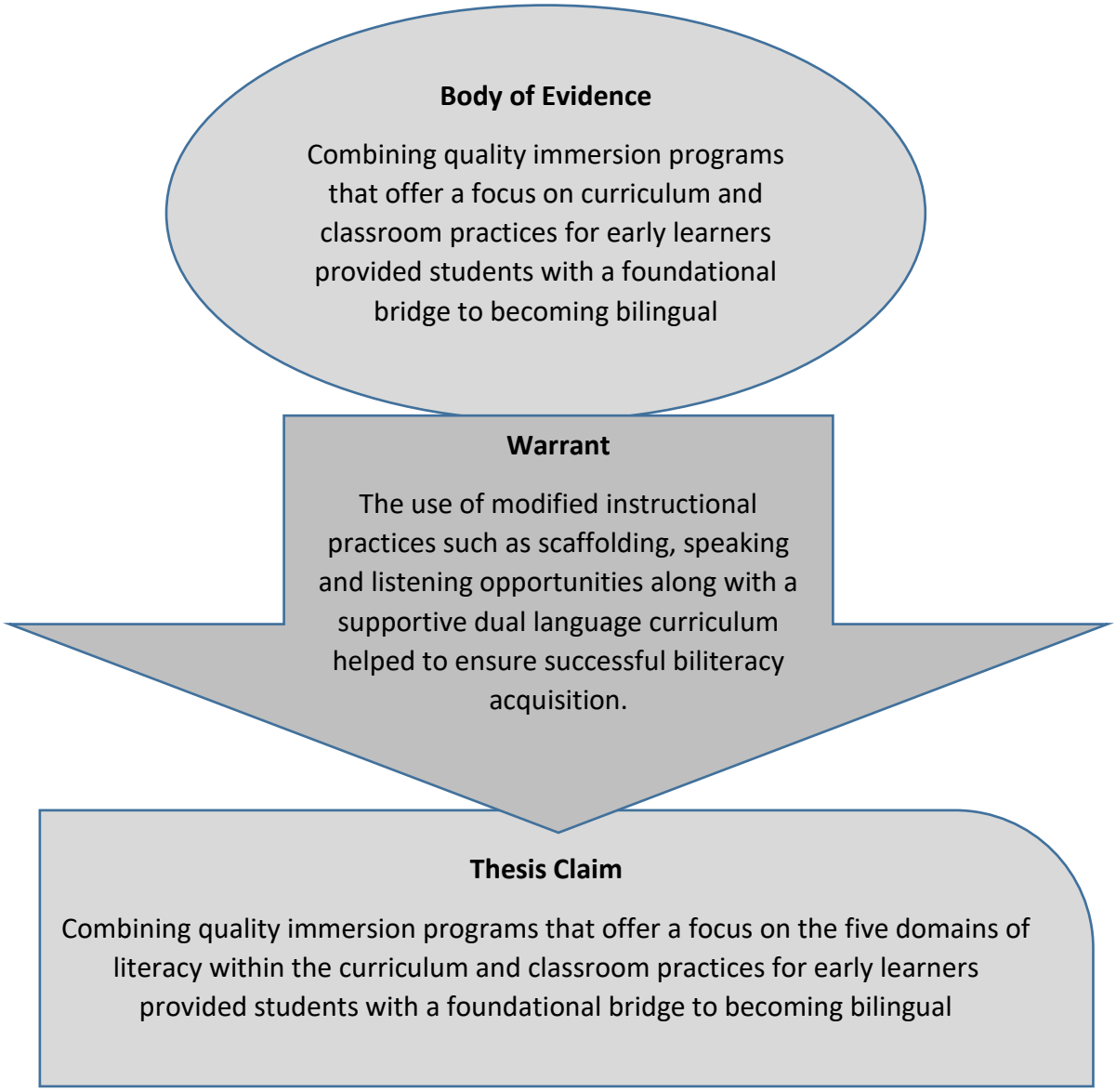
Appendix A: Argument of Discovery



The Argument of Discovery illustrates how attributes for this study come from the literature to support the claim (Machi & McEvoy, 2016)

Appendix B: Argument for Advocacy



The Argument for Advocacy illustrates how the body of evidence derived from the literature for this study supports the thesis claim (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

Appendix C: Email Permission to Conduct Research Study

I am writing to request permission to conduct research at [redacted]. I am currently enrolled in the Doctorate of Education program at Concordia University−Portland and am in the process of writing my dissertation and preparing to begin my research. My dissertation is tentatively titled, "Dual Literacy Practices for Dual Language Learners in Kindergarten through First." My interest in this topic developed from my own teaching experiences as a kindergarten immersion teacher at [information redacted] school.

I would like to recruit a combined total of four teachers from the [redacted] program. My research will include individual interviews, 2–4 classroom observations of literacy being taught and a focus group of those who volunteer to participate. After I receive IRB approval from Concordia University and if approval is granted by your institution, I will email an invitation for participation to you which can then be forwarded to the immersion teachers by your site administrators. I will choose my participants from those who volunteer. The chosen volunteers will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to me one week from the date received.

After I receive their consent form, I will send the chosen participants a demographic questionnaire and a consent agreement schedule form that allows 1−2 observations to take place during their literacy block prior to their scheduled interview date. If they agree to continue, I will set up a classroom observation day during their assigned literacy class time. The observation time will last 60−90 minutes to ensure that all literacy components are able to be observed during the scheduled time. Following the observations, I will then set up a face-to-face individual interview with each participant to last approximately 60 minutes in a quiet location in the school at the convenience of the participant. Information gathered from the classroom observations was shared with the participants during their scheduled interview time. After all the participants have been interviewed, I will arrange a time and place to conduct a focus group with all participants who agree to continue. Each interview and the focus group will be audio-recorded for transcription to be used for my research. Individual names will remain confidential, and only the participants' responses will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either your institution or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study is greatly appreciated. This approval will provide permission to Concordia University−Portland to publish my dissertation upon completion. I am happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. You may contact me at [redacted].

Thank you for considering this request in supporting me in my academic endeavor.

Sincerely,

Darlys Garcia-Marty
Concordia University−Portland, Doctorate of Education candidate

Cc: Dr. James Therrell, Dissertation Chair, Concordia University

Appendix D: Email Solicitation Letter

Dear Immersion Educator:

My name is Darlys Garcia-Marty and I am an Immersion Kindergarten teacher at [information redacted] school and a doctoral student at Concordia University−Portland. This letter is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral degree, under the supervision of Dr. James Therrell, Ph.D. This study has been approved by the Concordia University–Portland's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you agree to participate, I will follow up with an informed Consent Form for you to sign and return to me within a week from the date received.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore what teachers can do to implement more effective practices for teaching early literacy skills to dual language learners. The research question for this study is: What can teachers do to implement more effective teaching of early literacy skills to improve dual literacy development in second language learners? The aim of this qualitative case study research design is to understand what practices immersion educators find to be most beneficial in the early grades for the development of early dual literacy skills. In the quest to ascertain the current understanding and use of these practices in the primary grades, semistructured individual interviews with teachers will be conducted. Teacher observations will also take place during scheduled instructional reading blocks to document the types of practices used to teach children how to read. After the observations and interviewing of the participants, additional information was gathered through a facilitated focus group to allow the participants the opportunity to clarify their selection of practices and/or adjust their perspectives on their effectiveness while discussing them among their peers. The transcripts from the participants will provide the data to support the literacy practices most applicable for the development of biliteracy skills in the primary grades.

If you choose to participate in this study, an initial demographic questionnaire and observation consent form are attached. These items should take less than 5 minutes to complete. If the observation consent form is signed, I will ask that you include a good time to observe your literacy block a week prior to the scheduling of your individual interview. The allotted time needed for each observation was 60–90 minutes depending on the length of your schools' designated classroom literacy block. Following the classroom observations, I will conduct an individual interview using set questions with the ability to ask follow-up questions for clarification. The interview is set to take approximately 60 minutes in a private setting in the library or classroom. You will be asked if you would like to share any practices or online resources that you use in your classroom to teach reading. At the time of the interview, you will be asked if you want to continue to participate in a focus group. The focus group was conducted later after the individual interviews are complete.

The focus group will consist of six participants. When there are a confirmed number of focus group participants, a formal announcement was sent informing you of the date, time, and place of the focus group session. The focus group was conducted for approximately one hour. There will be open-ended prompts for participant discussion to elicit additional individual thoughts from the interviews. Each participant was prompted to have a conversation with each

other about their teaching experiences, exploring whether they are similar or how they differ. You will be given a list of the prompts to allow you to begin considering your responses. I will provide space to allow the participants' conversation to reach a satisfactory conclusion before moving on to the next prompt. Follow-up questions will be provided for clarification of your responses.

Thank you for considering taking part in my study. Your input is invaluable to the continued growth of the body of literature related to teaching in immersion elementary primary grades. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. If you call me and I do not answer, please leave a message.

Sincerely,

Darlys Garcia-Marty

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

Concordia University−Portland Institutional Review Board
Approved September 30, 2019; will Expire: September 30, 2020

Research Study Title: Dual Literacy Practices for Dual Language Learners in Grades K–1
Principal Investigator: Darlys Garcia-Marty
Research Institution: Concordia University−Portland
Faculty Advisor: James Therrell, PhD

Purpose and what you will be doing:
The purpose of this case study is to explore the current early literacy practices used in dual language settings and why immersion teachers use them to develop reading in the primary grades. I expect approximately eight (8) educator volunteers. No one was paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on [redacted] and end enrollment on [redacted]. To be in the study, you will need to: complete a demographic questionnaire; participate in an individual interview, literacy block observation, and focus group discussion. Each interview, as well as a focus group discussion, will take approximately 60 minutes. Classroom observations will range from 60-90 minutes. Participating in these activities should take less than three hours of your time. No one was paid for participating in this study.

Risks:
There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. Any personal information you provide was coded so it cannot be linked to you. I will record interviews and focus group discussions. The recording was transcribed by the investigator, and the recording was deleted when the transcription is verified and complete. In the transcriptions, the investigator will use a code and not your name or any other personally identifiable information. You will not be identified in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed three (3) years after we conclude this study.

Benefits:
There may be no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. The information you provide may help educators in immersion settings to improve their teaching practices and thereby help future students become bi-literate readers.

Confidentiality:
This information will not be distributed to any other agency and was kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us about abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety. Confidentiality is not a possible guarantee for those involved in a focus group.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions.

Contact Information:
You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Darlys Garcia-Marty at email [redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent: I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_____ _____
Participant Name Date

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

Darlys Garcia-Marty_____ _____
Investigator Name Date

_____ _____
Investigator Signature Date

Investigator: Darlys Garcia-Marty; email: [redacted]
c/o: Professor James Therrell, PhD
Concordia University−Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221

Appendix F: Demographic Questionnaire

Please return this within one week of receipt to [redacted]

Age____ Gender_____ Ethnic identity_____ Type of school: Public___ Private___

1. What elementary grade levels have you taught at that school?
2. How many years in total have you been teaching?
3. What is your highest degree completed?
4. How did you become an immersion teacher?
5. How are literacy components similarly applied in both immersion and non-immersion settings?
6. What current practices of literacy do you feel are best suited to support literacy development in the early Grades K–1?

Appendix G: Observation Tools

Balanced Dual Literacy Observation Tool - Classroom Visit

Name: _____ Date/time: _____

Public____ or Private____ Classroom Grade Level____

Component	Evidence	Reflection
Word Study/Phonics		
Shared Reading **Vocabulary-introduction** **Review or reference of book and print prior to reading**		
Interactive Read **Aloud**		
Differentiated small group Instruction		

Workstations addressing specific literacy domains **Phonics, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, vocabulary, fluency**		
Writing modeled Mini-Lesson		
Shared/Interactive Writing		
Independent Writing		
Lesson closure		

Follow-Up: What additional support do you request at this time when applying dual literacy practices?

(Teachers Pay Teachers, 2019; Tennessee, 2019)

Appendix H: Individual Interview Guide

1. On a range of 1 to 5 with 5 being highest at what level do you feel prepared for teaching literacy in an immersion program?
2. What daily practices do you use to foster the development of early literacy skills during whole group and small group instruction?
3. On a range of 1 to 5 with 5 being highest, how often do you use student data to inform your current literacy practices?
4. What specific training preparation for early literacy development are provided to you?
5. What are your literacy expectations for your immersion students?
6. What literacy skills do you feel children need to have to become dual language readers?
7. How does your school measure student early reading success in the immersion program?
8. What steps does your program have in place to help students who may be struggling with early reading development?

Appendix I: Focus Group Agenda

Establish intent, introduce objectives and purpose of the focus group, and follow-up discussion based on group commonalities of practices:

1. What current practices in early literacy such as explicit instruction in these domains: phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary are you currently implementing in your literacy block? (Explain your reasons)
2. Which of these practices do you find provides greater support for dual literacy development in your students?
3. Which applied teaching practices have you found directly influence the development of dual literacy in your second language learners?
4. Which of your current teaching practices provide the most support in preparing students for their dual language literacy assessments?
5. What resources do you find are essential to improving the learning outcomes of your dual language learners?

Appendix J: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

> As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

> ***What does "fraudulent" mean?***
>
> "Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics, and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.
>
> ***What is "unauthorized" assistance?***
>
> "Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:
>
> - Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test
> - Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
> - Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
> - Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University−Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association.*

Darlys Garcia-Marty

Digital Signature

Darlys Garcia-Marty

Name (Typed)

April 19, 2020

Date