



Language Positioning Within Peer Discourse in Dual Language Classrooms

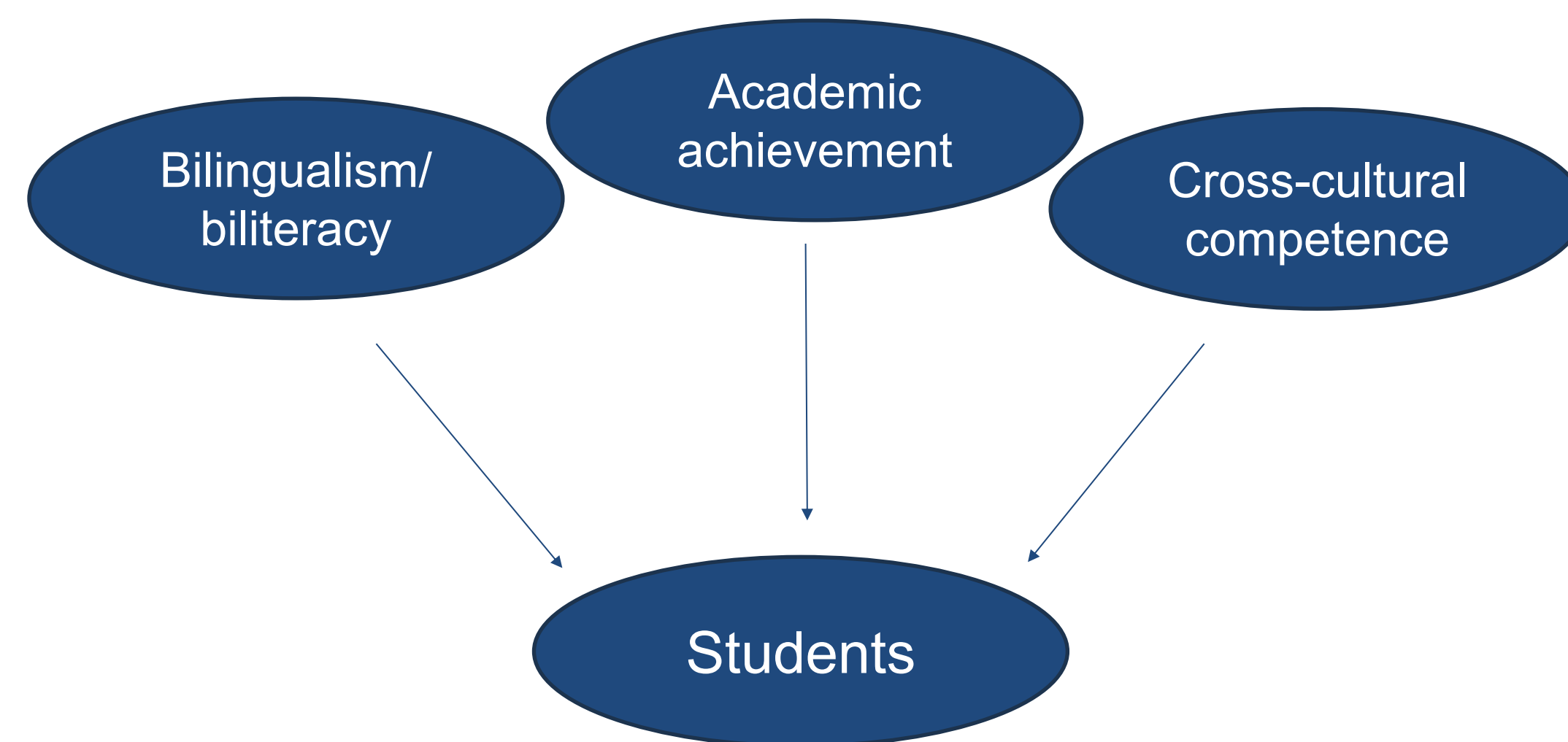
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With Dwight Bellizzi Dual Language Academy Principal Anthony Davila and Faculty Advisor Dr. Robert Cotto Jr.

Introduction & Background

Goals of Dual Language Education



Dwight Bellizzi Mission & Motto

- "Our purpose is to educate the whole student, academically, socially and emotionally to develop competent, multilingual and bi-literate, and culturally responsive, global citizens..."
- "I'm bilingual, what's your superpower?"

Dwight Bellizzi Schedule

- Students rotate every other day between Spanish and English classrooms; in theory, all communication occurs in the designated language of instruction

Rapid Growth of Dual Language Schools in the U.S. (1980-2022)

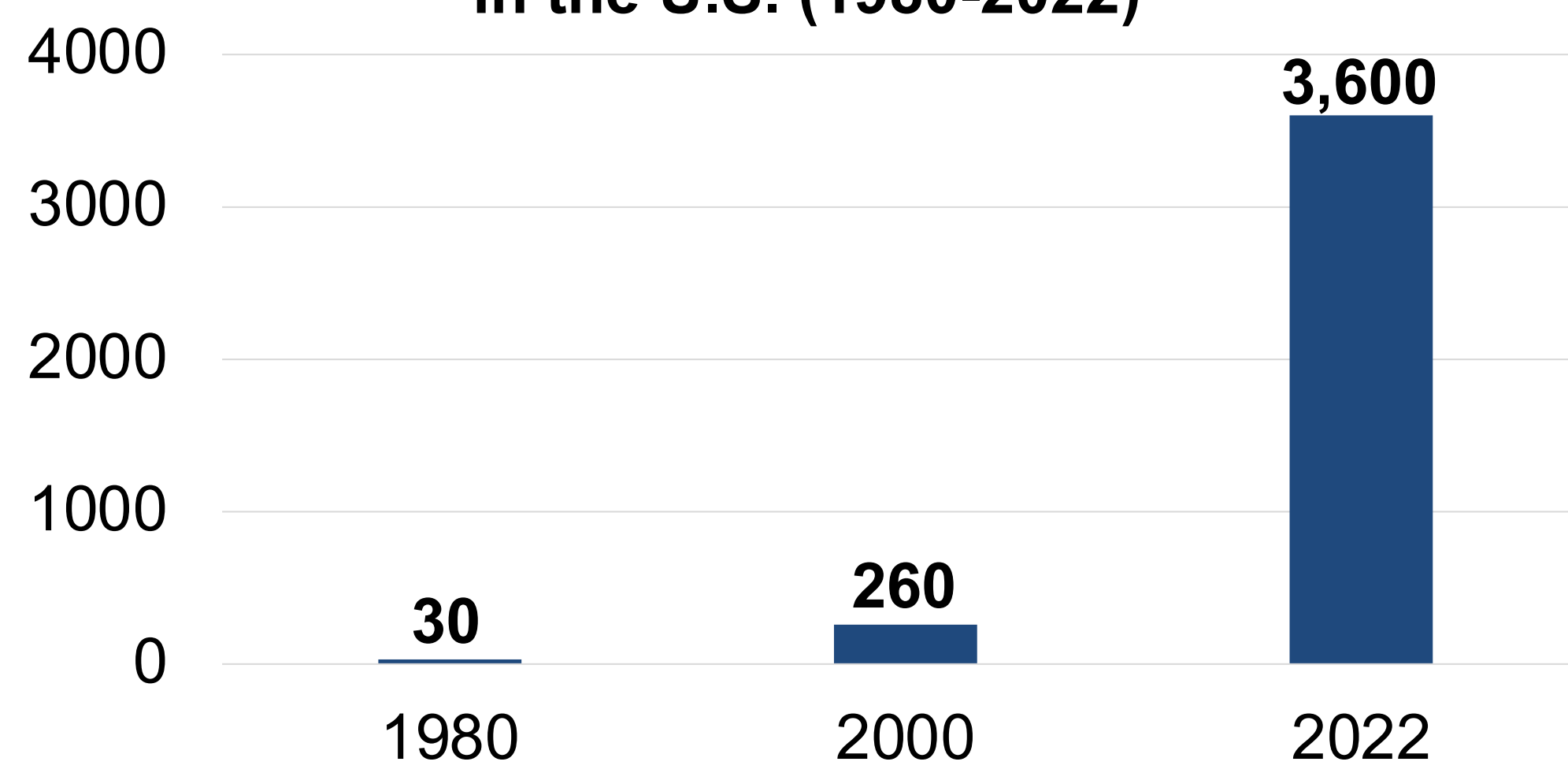


Figure Description: Over forty years, dual language programs in the U.S. have increased in number from 30 to 3,600 programs

Research Questions

1. How does the implementation of the school's formal structure, a 50-50 language immersion model, influence the classroom atmospheres where informal peer interactions occur?
2. How do students discursively position themselves and their peers as bilingual or monolingual speakers?

Significance of Research Questions

- Bellizzi creates the school's formal structure for how the school should operate in-theory, but the school may be unaware of how their structures manifest in practice, specifically in peer interactions

Gap in the Literature

- Sociolinguistic research tends to offer findings in the form of descriptions without providing interpretations
- My project offers interpretations of data

Problem According to the Literature

- Dual language school structures separate languages of instruction; this can contradict a school's goal of bilingualism and biliteracy
- These structures are the context for peer interactions
- Student interactions affirm these binary structures, which has implications for how a student understands their emerging identity

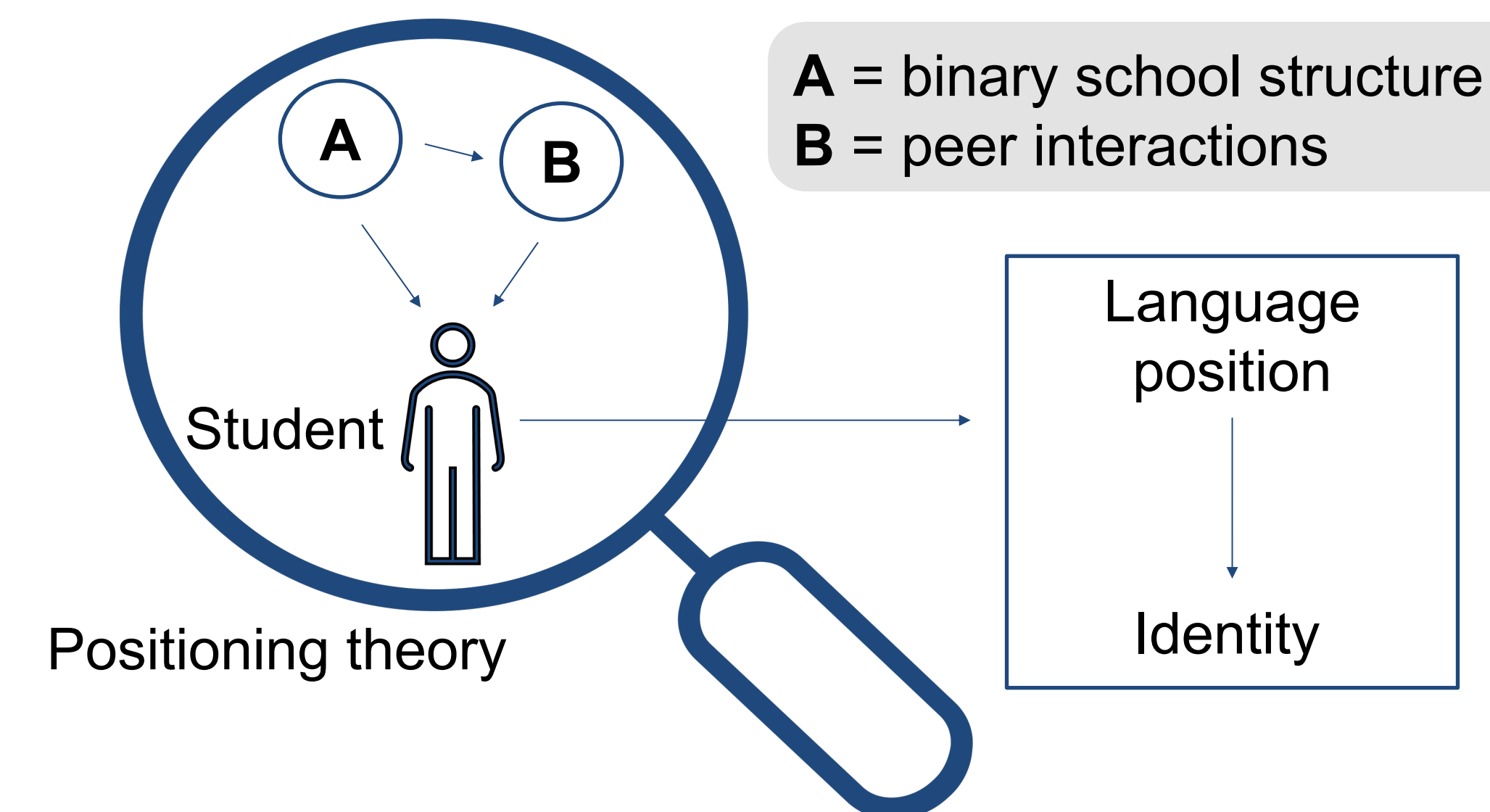


Figure Description: Through the lens of positioning theory (magnifying glass), student language positions are influenced by two connected forces: binary school structure (A) and peer interactions (B). Language positions contribute to identity construction

Methods

- Qualitative methodology
- Observational methods
- N = 18 third-grade students in classrooms 1 and 2

1. Reach out to Mr. Davila about my project
2. Create deductive codebook and observation protocol
3. Conduct observations at Bellizzi in classroom 1 (Spanish) and classroom 2 (English)
4. Analyze (sociodiscursive linguistic analysis) and code data (deductive & inductive process)
5. Deliver findings to Bellizzi

Guiding Principles

- **Positioning theory** (critical framework) = considers how individuals are positioned in conversation
- **Community-based research**
- **Ethical research practices**

Native Languages of All Bellizzi Third Grade Students	Number of Students
English	36
Spanish	27
Other Language	1
Total	64

Native Languages of All Bellizzi Third Grade Students by Percent

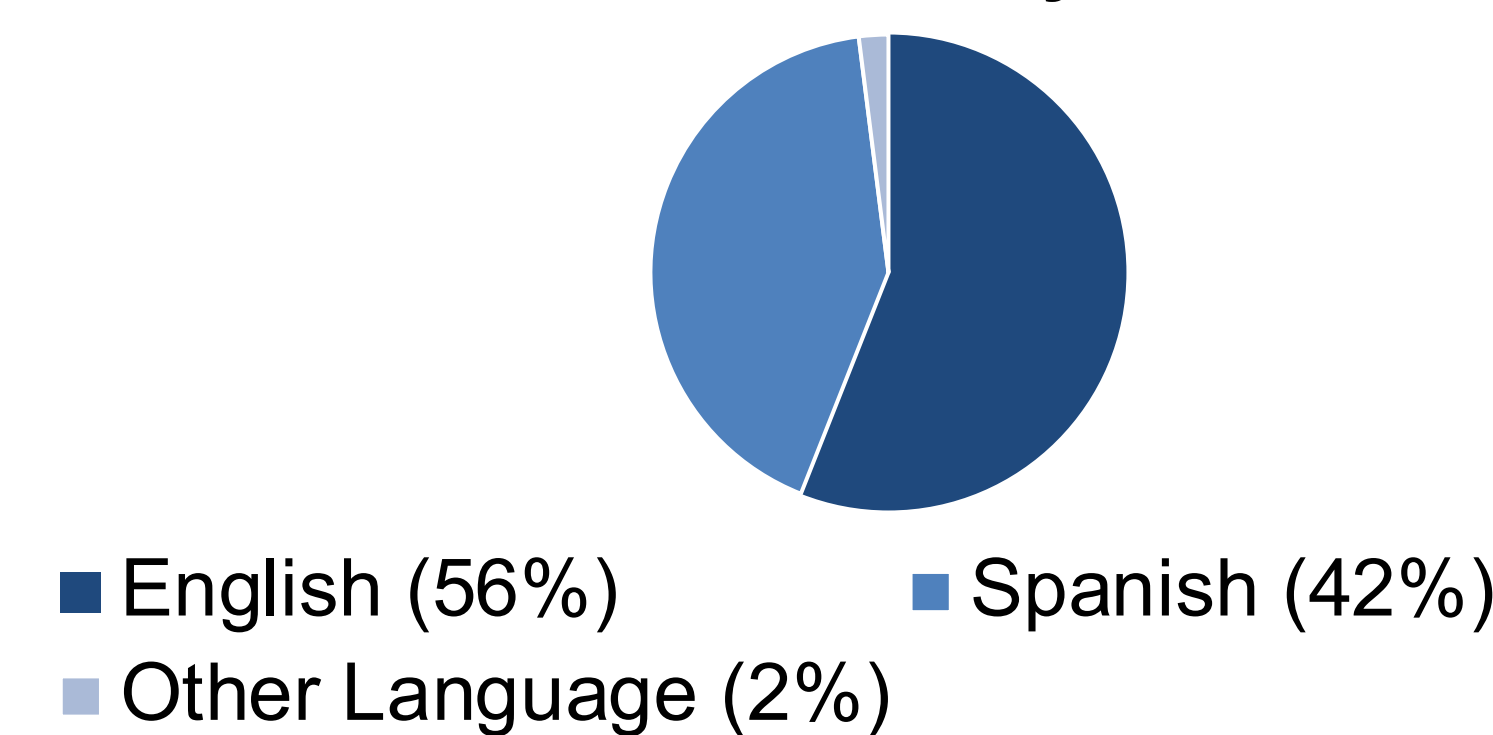


Figure Description: Of all third graders at Bellizzi, 56% are English-native speakers, 42% are Spanish-native, and 2% are native to another language

Findings

Sociodiscursive Linguistic Findings

1. Translation = student translates a statement made by a teacher or peer

Teacher: "Cierra tus ojos" ... **Student A to peer:** "Close your eyes"

2. Language code-switching = student switches between languages consecutively

Student B: "Does anyone have a lápiz?"
Student C: "Veinti-six, veinti-seven, veinti-eight"

3. Using a language different from the conversational context = student speaks in a language that differs from that spoken throughout the conversation

Student N: "Look, I made it flat like a pizza" ... **Student A:** "Tienes que hacer un círculo"

4. Private communication = student speaks to themselves

Student E: reads to himself in English
Student K: reads to herself in Spanish

Classroom Atmosphere Findings

Differences

- The Spanish space was much louder and more energetic in comparison with the English space
- Students and the teacher spoke in 'Spanglish' in the Spanish space but in English in the English space

Similarities

- The same students acted as leaders across both spaces (observed bilingual students)
- The same students were quieter across both spaces (observed monolingual students)

Conclusion & Implications

Conclusion

- Despite the formal structure the school establishes to separate the two languages, the discursive behaviors emitted by students within informal peer interactions reflect bilingualism
- Students simultaneously position themselves and their peers as either monolingual or bilingual speakers

Recommendations for Bellizzi

- Students are already informally engaging with translanguaging in linguistically separated spaces
- However, formal translanguaging spaces promoted by the school would encourage students to use their full linguistic repertoire

Limitations & Future Directions

- Limited time frame
- Unable to observe and record all concurrently occurring student interactions and extract long quotations without using a recording device
- Students may have behaved differently because of my presence in the space (researcher positionality)
- Future research should consider student language positions in a translingual atmosphere

Acknowledgments

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