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Valuing Multilingualism: Differences In Perceptions Of Students In World Language Classes Versus Students In ESL

Kazusa Yamashita
Hamline University

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VALUING MULTILINGUALISM: DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF
STUDENTS IN WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSES VERSUS STUDENTS IN ESL
CLASSES

By

Kazusa Yamashita

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota

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Primary Advisor: Ann Mabbott
Secondary Advisor: Garrett Smith
Peer Reviewer: Claire Eder

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Background of the Researcher

I was born in Japan but at an early age of six, my family moved to Kenya for three years where I was placed in an English-speaking school. I spoke Japanese at home with my parents but at school, the language of communication was English. I then moved back to Japan and attended public school for six years but spent my high school years in Cambodia at an American international school. Growing up bilingual, I switched between speaking English at school and with my friends, and speaking Japanese at home with my family. Although my multilingual background might seem unusual for some, there are many more bilingual and multilingual speakers than there are monolinguals in the world today and statistics point to a future where “pluralism” is the norm (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012). In a country such as the United States that was founded by immigrants, and continue to attract immigrants, the languages spoken at home other than English constitutes about 26% of the population (American Community Survey Reports, 2015) and this is projected to increase (Ortman & Shin, 2011; Oh & Fligni, 2010).

Although the concept of multilingualism is complex, the simple definition of multilingualism can be an act of engaging in an acquisition of a language other than their native tongue. As the world becomes increasingly connected through the advancement of technology, the need and benefits of multilingualism and multilingual individuals become increasingly clear. With the ability to access information and people from across the globe, more individuals are becoming multilingual and their ability to navigate between different languages, cultures, and societies are recognized as assets in a globalized marketplace.

I started teaching Japanese four years ago in an urban middle school in the United States. Every time I meet a new person and disclose my profession and what I teach, the common reaction is of amazement by the fact that students are required to take a foreign language in middle school, (most seem to have taken it in high school), and the options given to my students. Many believe that my students are so lucky to have a language like Japanese as an option. They say “what a wonderful thing to have students becoming bilingual so early!” Recent research has shown that there are multiple benefits of being multilingual (Bhatia & Ritchie 2012; Diamond, 2010; Engel de Abreu, Pascale, Cruz-Santos, Tourinho, Martin & Bialystok, 2012; Okal, 2014; Portes & Schaufli, 1994) and combined with the economic assets of being multilingual, parents in the U.S. today value foreign language education (Rivers, Robinson, Harwood & Brecht, 2013).

In contrast, my time in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes has not been so jubilant. While pursuing my license in ESL, I was exposed to many ESL classrooms and heard many stories from ESL teachers. Although there are plenty of people who praise students for being in a world language class, there are not many that hold the same attitude towards students in an ESL class. The favorable view of multilingualism promoted in schools is commonly practiced through the provision of world language classes for monolingual English speaking students and ESL programs are commonly categorized as remedial classes. Therefore, unlike the world language class where students are praised for their language acquisition, English Language Learners (ELs) are viewed as requiring support to overcome a deficiency. In this context, I have met students that are embarrassed about being in ESL as they seem to identify themselves as “lacking” compared to other students. But why should that be so? Why do the ELs feel the need to

hide the fact that they are in ESL class? They are in the process of becoming multilingual just like the students taking world language classes. In fact, the ELs might already be bilingual if not multilingual before they arrive to the United States. Although being in ESL class was not glorified in my international schools, multilingualism was valued and schools acknowledged that all students including ELs had something to contribute to the community. There were many students who spoke different languages and our unique cultural identities were accepted if not celebrated.

Learning about the U.S. history of multilingualism has thus been very intriguing. The fact that this country was founded by immigrants seems to me a good enough reason to value multilingualism. However, attitudes towards multilingualism has been mired through the fluctuating attitudes towards and against immigrants, and further compounded by discriminatory policies (Ovando, 2003; Salomone, 2010). One hostile manifestation against multilingualism was the English-only movement in the late 1990s which resulted in English-only instruction policies in several states. The use of non-English languages as “un-American” marginalized multilingual students within the school system (Blake & Kramsh, 2007) and they continue to be pressured into becoming monolingual English speakers (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), shed a light to the state of ELs in schools in the U.S. Before it, ELs as minorities remained invisible behind the statistically aggregated numbers. With the implementation of NCLB, ELs were categorized as a group that needs attention. Visibility of the state of ELs has raised awareness of the presence of ELs and imposed school responsibility for the success of their ELs. However, the standardized tests required by NCLB has constructed the narratives of “failing ELs”.

Expected to take standardized tests beyond their acquired English level, ELs suffer being marginalized. These marginalized minorities are commonly regarded as “deficient” compared to the dominant norm group (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Ford, Harris & Tyson, 2000). As teachers’ beliefs and attitudes shape the culture and practices of the school (Nelson & Guerra, 2014), educators viewing these students through the “deficit perspective” has harmful effects for the academic success and confidence of the students (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2000).

Schools are a reflection of society and the ideologies of society infiltrate our school systems. At the same time, schools are a unique environment where students are exposed to these ideologies, and where students can meet other people from diverse backgrounds. I believe that schools can create their own culture where all of the members of their community are valued. Therefore, it is important to add to the existing literature on ELs and shed some light on the state of multiculturalism in schools to inform schools to create an inclusive community where all students can succeed. As such, this study investigates how multilingualism is valued in a school by examining how teachers perceive students in ESL classes compared to world language classes. I also end this section with a pertinent question posed by Blake and Kramsh’s (2007) on multilingualism: “How can we define language education in such a way as to convince American parents, administrators, and politicians that knowledge of languages is not just a luxury of the elite, but an essential component in the survival of democracy in the United States and, considering the role of the United States plays in the world, in the survival of the planet?”

Role of the Researcher

As stated in the previous section, I worked as a Japanese language teacher at a middle school in a mid-sized, urban district in the Midwest. The school became an International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme School in 2012. One of the criteria for being an IB school is that a language acquisition class is part of the core curriculum and all students are required to take a language class (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014). Therefore, I have exposure to all of the students taking a world language class in sixth grade.

I also have a teaching license in ESL and have had exposure to ELs within my building during my student teaching hours. In completing my student teaching hours required for an ESL licensure, I was also able to experience the functions of ESL classes in different schools within the district.

Guiding Questions

My study aims to identify how multilingualism is valued in a school through comparing the teachers' perceptions of students taking world language classes and ESL classes. By understanding the perceptions of teachers towards students engaged in becoming multilingual, the study intends to provide information on how multilingualism is perceived by the school community. It also aims to uncover how some of these perceptions might be created and displayed within the school community. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide information so that school communities become more aware of the environment surrounding multilingualism and how schools can promote multilingualism within their community. Therefore, the overarching research question for

this study is: How are the students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community?

Summary

Previous experience in ESL classes and world language classes have exposed me to some discrepancies between the attitudes towards students in ESL classes and world language classes. Although they are both in language acquisition classes, the perceptions of these two student groups appear to differ greatly. I believe that there is a benefit to multilingualism and that in a globalized world, multilingualism is a skill that should be promoted in schools. Therefore, I would like to research why and in what ways these differences might arise. This study focuses on the teachers' perception of students in ESL classes in comparison to students in world language classes to understand how multilingualism is valued in a school community. Understanding the development of these perceptions provides an opportunity to assess how the school can better promote multilingualism.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter One, I introduced the background of the researcher in order to highlight how I became interested in the topic. Chapter Two, the literature review, provides the framework for my research, and defines some of the theories related to my topic on multilingualism in schools. Chapter Three, outlines the research methodology, including participant information and data collection. Chapter Four presents the results of the study, and Chapter Five is a discussion on how this study furthers the conversation on promoting bilingualism in schools.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

The aim of this study is to analyze the teachers' perception of students in ESL classes compared to students in world language classes in order to understand how multilingualism is valued in a school community. By understanding the perceptions of teachers towards students engaged in becoming multilingual, the study intends to provide information on how multilingualism is perceived by the school community and how these attitudes shape the school environment.

This chapter first investigates the benefits of multilingualism and the reasons why it should be valued in schools. Secondly it focuses on the deficit ideology and how educators need to move beyond the deficit paradigm. The third section discusses how attitudes and beliefs of the teacher affect the practice and culture in a school. Lastly, the researcher identifies the gap that exists in current literature as one surrounding teachers' perceptions on multilingualism.

Benefits of Multilingualism

The definition of bilingualism and multilingualism has been long contested. Is one considered multilingual if one knows how to greet others in two or more different languages? Or are individuals only considered multilingual if they can hold conversations with a native speaker of the language? Or yet is it necessary to be able to conduct a business meeting in a language other than their native tongue to be considered multilingual? Many linguists have contentious definitions of what categorizes one as bilingual and multilingual (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2013; Liddicoat, 1991) and although this is an interesting point of investigation, the focus of this research is merely on the perceptions of students who are trying to become multilingual. To this goal,

multilingualism is defined as an individual engaging in the act of acquiring a language other than their native tongue. Under this definition, the multilingual students in question include both students in world language classes and students in ESL classes. The study intends to advance awareness of multilingualism in schools and to help schools promote multilingualism within their community for both native and non-native English speakers. In the early years of the development of language acquisition theories, some theorists believed that it was detrimental for a child to be brought up multilingual as simultaneous exposure to multiple languages would interfere with language acquisition. This has now been widely discredited and recent conversation has shifted to a discovery of benefits of bilingualism (Bhatia & Ritchie 2012; Diamond, 2010; Salamone 2010). In addition to the obvious economic benefits of being bilingual, research has shown cognitive benefits such as bilinguals' unconscious practice in using the executive function of the brain (Bhatia & Ritchie 2012; Cox, Bak, Allerhand, Redmond, Starr, Deary & MacPherson, 2016; Diamond, 2010; Engel de Abreu et al., 2012; Portes & Schauffler, 1994). Additionally, bilinguals exposed to different cultures are more perceptive and intellectually flexible (Okal, 2014).

In the process of being multilingual, individuals are not only exposed to the language but the culture and values associated with the language of acquisition (Okal, 2014; Salomone, 2010). Therefore, when schools engage in multilingual education, it engages in multicultural education. Multicultural education provides students understanding of knowledge construction and the reasons behind the principal of looking at experiences from diverse perspectives (Banks, 1993). It reveals to students the interconnectedness of the world and helps establish their own place in the world. In

effect, multilingual education develops students' communication and intercultural literacy required to navigate in an intercultural society. In this age of globalization, a new kind of citizenship is required that recognizes the need of citizens to maintain their commitments to their cultural communities as well as the national culture (Banks, 2001). Additionally, Arslan and Rață (2013) postulate that in building attitudes of respect for cultural diversity, students would be stimulated into fighting discrimination and intolerance which is important for a healthy democratic nation.

Even though the national attitude towards immigrants and foreign languages sometimes seem hostile in the U.S., the general public values foreign language as an important component of education and citizenship (Rivers et al., 2013). This attitude is met with support from researchers who have shown that there are benefits for students to be exposed to foreign languages early on in their life (Kissau, Adams & Algozzine, 2015). Kissau et al. encourage stakeholders to expand foreign language learning programs and to remove the optional nature of foreign language instruction in middle schools. However, their study also demonstrates that even though teaching of foreign languages is valued, they concurrently affirm the importance of English.

In general, the benefits of multilingualism are applied in recruiting monolingual, white English-speakers in becoming multilingual. This is not surprising in that in the history of U.S. language education, the concern of students' language development is mired in the debate surrounding U.S. cultural identity (Ovando, 2003; Salomone, 2010). Even though the benefits of multilingualism are proven, the emphasis is placed on offering languages classes for monolingual English speakers who already fit the established American identity. ELs are denied this American identity due to their lack of

mastery in English, the dominant group's language. The purpose of learning English to become multilingual therefore emphasizes the importance of learning the language of the nation. Thus, their assets are concealed by the perception of their anomaly and insufficiency in the language. In general, although ELs have a higher proficiency of multilingualism than their peers that have acquired a language in world language classes, the benefits of multilingualism are viewed only in relation to the dominant group. While ELs with their multilingual skills can be models of the benefits of multilingualism, they are perceived as deficits and their full potential is not utilized.

Deficit Ideologies

Due to mandatory testing imposed by NCLB (2002), more attention has been paid to the academic state of ELs. It is often the case however that rather than celebrating the success of these students, the emphasis is on their deficiency. All ELs no matter their background are expected to complete their grade-level standardized test after two years of U.S. schooling (NCLB, 2002). Not surprisingly, the statistics therefore weave a narrative of ELs' failure to academically succeed at their grade level (Abedi, 2004). Without access to the language, ELs face barriers to learning content in a dominant English school system. This environment of high-stake testing undermines multilingual education (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). Foreign language education has decreased in elementary schools especially affecting schools that have a high percentage of minority students (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011).

The deficit perspective exists when the norm is constructed and maintained by a population marginalizing culturally different groups as culturally deprived or disadvantaged (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Ford et al., 2000; Ford & Grantham, 2003).

Historically, this deficit perspective led to marginalization of populations through unequal, unjustified development of policies and practices designed to discriminate against these populations. In schools where students are placed in different classes according to their “intelligence,” the sole reliance on test scores for placement decisions have limited the realization of the potential of non-white students (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2000). Cultural values reflected in schools marginalize students that differ with the culture implicitly taught. These students not adhering to the norm culture are deemed unintelligent or ill-behaved (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). This deficit perspective can exacerbate misunderstandings and influence the misconstrued beliefs about minorities’ ethnicity and intelligence. Deficit thinking further faults the individual students or their families as the cause of their marginalization rather than the teachers or the education system (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Walker 2011; Weiner, 2006). This deficit paradigm is harmful for ELs as their full potential is never truly realized and they are regarded as burdens to the school system.

While the global population becomes more multilingual and diverse, it is essential that students acquire the skills necessary to access this globalized world. It necessitates promoting multilingualism and rejecting perceiving our multilingual ELs through the deficit lens. This concept of shifting away from deficit thinking has been researched in regards to African American students (Walker, 2011; Booker, 2006; Ford & Grantham 2003; Ford et al., 2002; Ford et al., 2000) and Latino students (Aldana, 2016; Licona, 2013) but much needs to be added about our growing number of ELs in the U.S. As Ford and Grantham (2003) pose, it is necessary to deconstruct deficit thinking and move beyond to “dynamic thinking” so that schools may better support all of their students. It

requires a reexamination of the school and its policies as well as perceptions and relationships. It requires a transformation of a system that has long marginalized minorities from succeeding in schools.

School Culture and Identities

Student performance and achievement is affected by identification, engagement, relatedness and school belongingness (Booker, 2006). As EL populations are commonly marginalized from mainstream society, it is essential for schools to provide an environment of inclusion and acceptance to ensure their academic success. This section focuses on how the belief and perceptions of teachers shape the school culture which in turn affects students' school belongingness.

The beliefs of teachers are important in shaping the culture of the school as it affects the practices of the school (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Beliefs are powerful because they are deeply rooted within the individual and usually remain unspoken. They have a stronger influence on behavior than cognitive knowledge and are resistant to change (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Pajares, 1992). Moreover, Nelson and Guerra (2014) posit that personal beliefs have such a strong effect to the point of overriding professional knowledge when the two conflict. As stated in the previous section, deficit perspectives exist when the norm group marginalizes culturally different populations. Most teachers in the U.S. are white and the EL populations are usually people of color. Combined with the narrative spun through the failure of ELs to score sufficiently in standardized tests required by NCLB, the deficit perspective can affect the beliefs and perceptions of teachers. Therefore, even though schools carry missions of inclusiveness, teachers' personal beliefs through the deficit paradigm can lead to a

negative environment for ELs. The deficit perspective not only lowers educational expectations of students and hide student abilities but it can also hide teachers' abilities (Weiner, 2006). In this paradigm, teachers become resistant to modify their own practice and affirms the marginalization of the "deficient" students.

The practices of a teacher affect the sense of belonging and identities of students. Aldana's (2016) ethnographic study reveals how a school's values facilitated Latino students' engagement in school while the teachers' deficit thinking negatively impacted students' belonging in the school and their efficacy in the classroom. A similar study with African American adolescents has revealed the positive relationship between school belonging and student achievement (Booker, 2006). Pettit's (2011) literature review reveal the relationship between belongingness and academic success in the case of ELs. Booker's (2006) study demonstrate that even when African American students identify with the mission of the school, they could feel that the school environment marginalizes their own culture. This discrepancy is pertinent in the case of ELs. Even if students agree with the mission of the school, they could feel marginalized due to their own identity. Although there are dual language programs and language immersion programs, the majority of schools in the United States are English-speaking schools. In this sense, multilinguals differ from the norm by the fact that they speak different languages and face exclusion even if they believe in the purpose of the school. Their identity opposes the norm culture represented by the school. This is not the case in many societies where speaking multiple languages is deemed the norm, and monolinguals are regarded as misfits (Wardhaugh, 2010).

Their identity in question due to their multilingual abilities, ELs in the U.S. tend to lose or not develop their native language and become monolinguals (Fillmore, 1991; Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Salomone, 2010). This can hinder ELs' communication with their family members who are not fluent in English and distance them from their home community. Thus, ELs not only face marginalization in school but may also face alienation from their home community due to their identity clash. It is important for teachers to be aware of their own beliefs which creates the culture of the school. This culture of a school can be inclusive or exclusive affecting the academic success of students.

The Gap

Although there has been research conducted on the perceptions of ELs of their school environments (Kim & Garcia, 2014; Rodriguez, Ringler, Aposv & Bunn, 2009), not much research has been conducted on how teachers perceive the EL population or a comparison of how ELs might be perceived differently from students taking world languages. This might partially be the result of the lack of interest in foreign language curriculum as world languages is commonly offered as an elective and not considered as a core curriculum. It might also be a result of the students in world languages perceived as the norm thus not requiring much interest of study. Studies have shown that EL identities are heavily influenced by the educators and context of their environment (Harklau, 2000). Therefore, it is important to pursue how teachers are perceiving such students and to reveal the potential double standard of the promotion of multilingualism. If the school is to truly value multilingualism, all students who are engaged in becoming multilingual should be valued. The values of the school become crucial in creating an

environment of inclusion and acceptance of the students in the school. This inclusion and acceptance is necessary for all students to succeed. Therefore, the overarching question for this study is: How are the students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within their school community?

Summary

This chapter illustrates a general understanding of multilingualism and its benefits as it is a key component to the argument of valuing multilingualism. In addition to economic benefits, multilingualism has cognitive benefits (Bhatia & Ritchie 2012; Cox et al., 2016; Diamond, 2010; Engel de Abreu et al., 2012; Okal, 2014; Portes & Schauffler, 1994) as well as promoting multicultural education. Although the general public values foreign language as an important component of education and citizenship (Rivers et al., 2013), multilingualism is promoted for the benefit of monolingual individuals.

Deficit perspectives conceptually regard ELs as lacking or inferior in comparison to the norm group. The deficit perspective exists when the norm is constructed and maintained by a population marginalizing culturally different groups as culturally deprived or disadvantaged (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Ford et al., 2000). Combined with the environment of high-stake testing imposed by NCLB undermining multilingual education (Hornberger & Link, 2012, Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011), multilinguals are marginalized and their potentials to society are not realized.

The beliefs of teachers are important in shaping the culture of the school as it affects the practices of the school (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Teachers' deficit perspective therefore affect the school culture leading to the marginalization of ELs. ELs' identities are in question in contrast to the norm culture of the school. As student performance and

achievement is affected by belongingness to school (Booker, 2006), ELs' marginalization can negatively affect their achievement.

Research on the perceptions of ELs and their environments exists but not much has been conducted in contrasting the two different types of student groups both engaged in multilingualism (students in world language classes and students in EL classes). Therefore, the researcher identifies the gap in the literature as one of importance in furthering the discussion in the promotion of multilingualism in schools. The following chapter will discuss the methods of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: Methods

This chapter presents the method of research in understanding how multilingualism is valued within the school through analyzing the perceptions of teachers towards students engaged in becoming multilingual. This qualitative study compares the teachers' perceptions towards students taking world language classes and students taking ESL classes.

Research Question

The primary focus of this study was to analyze teachers' perceptions of their students. The study took place in the researcher's school where she had access to colleagues and had the incentive to conduct the study. The overarching research question for this study was: How are the students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community? In addition, the following sub questions guided the overarching research question:

1. How is multilingualism valued in schools?
2. How do the teachers in the school perceive students in ESL classes compared to students in World language classes?
3. How do disparities in perceptions influence the school culture?
4. How can a school create a culture/environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all?
5. How can we define language education so that multilingualism is an essential skill of the future?

Discussion of Methods

As the purpose of the study was to illuminate the teachers' perceptions, it was important to use qualitative methods. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research allows for the collection of data that are rich in description, natural representation and provides emic perspectives (Mackey & Gass, 2005). It allows for representation of meanings that people attach to certain phenomena (Cheah & Chiu, 1997). Teachers' beliefs are valuable avenues of educational inquiry which requires more exploration (Pajares, 1992). In order to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable such as beliefs, one-on-one interviews were used for this study. This interactive method allows the researcher to further investigate specific points of interest (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

The sample size is small and is specific to the location of the study. However, as perceptions and beliefs are deeply personal, there was a need to focus on a few individuals to get a good illustration of the school, which is in line with the expectation of qualitative research.

Setting and participants

The setting of the study is a mid-sized middle school, in an urban district in the Midwest hereafter referred to as School A. School A became an IB school in 2012. One of the criteria for being an IB school is that a language acquisition class is part of the core curriculum (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014). Thereby, all students are required to take one of the language acquisition classes: English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish, French, and or Japanese. While the latter three are classes under the Language Acquisition department, which will be referred to as world language in order to avoid confusion, ESL is considered its own department. While students are placed in ESL classes on as need basis, students enrolled in world language classes have the option to

choose from the three languages offered at the school. In sixth grade, all students take part in what is called a language carousel where they experience each of the languages for a trimester. This program exposes all students to the different world languages and allows students to make an informed decision as to which language to continue for the rest of their school career. Students can opt out of world language classes only if they either want to take Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes or are placed in remedial classes such as reading or ESL. It should also be noted that some students in world language classes are multilingual but the researcher has no accurate data of these multilinguals.

School A is located in a relatively wealthy part of the city with a predominantly white community. The demographics of the student body are as follows: White Americans constitute 52.3% of the student body, 34.7% African American, 6.9% Hispanic American, 4.2% Asian American and 1.8% Native American. ELs in the school constitute 10.6% of the student body. The ELs are predominantly Somali but numerous students from Spanish-speaking backgrounds and elsewhere are also present. ELs are also diverse in that they vary greatly in their exposure to the U.S. education system. While some are born and raised in the U.S., others are newcomers to the country with low levels of English, and in some cases with interrupted or lack of formal education.

The participants for the study were School A staff. The researcher interviewed six staff members in the school who have some knowledge of, or are engaged in multilingualism. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants involved in the study. Of the six, four are Language Acquisition teachers: Camille teaches French, Nels teaches Spanish and Ann and Shelly teach ESL. Larry teaches Language Arts,

commonly referred to as English, and is the IB coordinator for School A. Idir is an educational assistant with varying roles in our school. As a Somali native speaker, one of his jobs is to translate for Somali students and families. Aside from Idir, all the participants in this research are white. This was not intentional but reflective of the percentage of teachers who are white in the school.

Procedure and Data Collection

This study aims to understand how multilingualism is valued in school communities as schools are a vehicle to teach society's values. My study investigates how multilingualism is valued by studying how staff at School A perceive the differences between students in world language class and ESL class. As perceptions are at the focus of the study, the researcher employed qualitative data to analyze the perceptions of school personnel. Data was collected through short semi-structured interviews conducted with several of the staff over a school semester. There were also limited observational data collected in the forms of noting activities and materials related to multilingualism. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide information so that school personnel become more aware of the notion of multilingualism that they promote and how school communities can engage in valuing multilingualism within their community.

Observational notes were taken in regards to the materials that are accessible in the school. Materials include posters around the school, announcements made on the PA system and events that occur in School A (Appendix A). This data is interpreted as objects that influence the promotion of multilingualism in the school.

Specific teachers and staff described in the previous section were selected by the researcher for semi-structured interviews. Each participant was provided with a letter of

consent that outlined the purpose of the study and the right to refuse to participate as well as the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time (Appendix B). The participants knew before the interview that the topic of discussion was multiculturalism and were predisposed to discuss about the topic.

An interview protocol was used to ask open-ended questions allowing the participants flexibility about how they wanted to talk about the topic while having some structure and consistency of the questions (Appendix C). These questions were created beforehand and structured to control for consistency and biases resulting from personal relationship to colleagues. As qualitative research is often open-ended and is fine-tuned during the process of data collection (Mackey & Gass, 2005), the researcher started with some open-ended questions and followed up with more specific questions in order to dig deeper into the participants' beliefs. The researcher refrained from stating personal opinions about the issue and mainly attempted to reiterate the point of the interview to prompt further information. Interviews were recorded using an iPhone app, Voice Memos, with the permission of the interviewees. These recordings were then transferred to the researcher's personal computer and deleted off the researcher's phone for protection. These interviews were then transcribed to decipher the perceptions of teachers. After the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, both the audio recordings and the transcribed documents will be destroyed a year after the study is completed.

Data Analysis

The research conducted focused on producing qualitative data as the main goal was to reveal the perceptions of school personnel towards students in ESL classes and

students in world language classes. Observational notes on the activities and material produced in the school are used to analyze some of the potential overt displays of school culture. However, these data are not the main focus of this study. Following the protocol for critical ethnography, interviews were conducted to reveal insight to the perceptions and culture of the school and provide insight into the power dynamics of the school (Cheah & Chiu, 1997). These interviews were first transcribed in order for the researcher to derive common themes from the interviews. Then the researcher analyzed data with an interpretive approach to produce common themes to understand the world through meanings created by the participants (Cheah & Chiu, 1997).

Summary

This chapter outlined the setting and participants that were involved in the study in order to answer the overarching research question of: How are the students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community? As the main focus of the study is perceptions of individuals to uncover the school culture and the attitude towards multilingualism, it was important to collect qualitative data. Valuable lessons could be gleaned from the beliefs of teachers (Pajares, 1992).

The setting of the study is in School A, a mid-sized middle school, in an urban district in the Midwest. It is an IB school requiring all students to take a language acquisition course. The dominant student group is white and ELs consist about 11% of the student body. The participants for the study are six members of staff that work at School A. Their positions vary but they are somehow involved in multilingualism within the school.

This study collected data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants with some additional data collected through observation of the setting of the study. The main method for this study is a qualitative ethnographical method. The following chapter will present the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: Results

This chapter presents the data that was collected during the research to answer the central question of: How are the students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community? The data was collected through an observation of the school environment and one-on-one semi-structured interviews with staff within the school. The following themes emerged from the data: valuing multilingualism, viewing multilingual students as deficient and identity clash.

Valuing Multilingualism

A core tenet of the IB curriculum is international mindedness. As such the school makes an effort to promote the values of multilingualism. Some of these efforts are visible such as the word “Welcome” written in multiple languages at the office window. In the entrance of the school, there are directions as to how to enter in multiple languages including Spanish and Somali. In the hallways, announcements such as the book fair are displayed in Spanish as well as English. In this way, the school displays in multiple languages acknowledges the presence of students in the school that speak languages other than English.

This past year during fire drills, the school announced evacuation procedures in English, Spanish and Somali. School A hired office staff that speak different languages to acknowledge and reflect the diversity within the student population as well as exposing the students to the different languages in a real-life context. Other ways that students are exposed to different cultures and languages is through the advisory curriculum. Created by the advisory committee in the school, the curriculum encouraged multiculturalism

through advising greetings in different languages and decorating doors with holidays from around the world.

In addition, there are ethnic celebration days at the school. There is a Native American Day, African-American and Soul Food Talent Show, Somali Day, Spanish Day and the newest addition, Asian Day. These celebrations mainly take place in the morning during advisory. The events usually consist of a short program discussing the history of the peoples and their cultures, cultural activities and eating traditional food. Students are required to sign up to participate in these celebrations and therefore, only the students who are interested in or identify with the culture participate in these events.

Similarly, this year, the world language department managed an international program during Family Day to showcase the diversity of languages and cultures present in our school. The students began by welcoming families and community members attending the event in their respective languages. Students also showcased their traditional clothes in a fashion show. These celebrations, posters and announcements are evidences of a school priding in their multiculturalism. However, many of the teachers describe the multiculturalism at School A as “disjointed”. When asked about multilingualism in the school, Shelly, the ESL teacher responds, “It’s not like a seamless cohesive school-wide thing. It’s just like pockets of a day or a class.” Nels, who teaches world languages, even expressed that these events are only “good lip-service” to the IB curriculum. Ann, one of the ESL teachers, describes “It’s more for the purpose though of educating people about different holidays than promoting multilingualism.” These displays of multiculturalism are great occasions for students to affirm one’s identity and yet it seems that some of it is more for the non-multilingual students to learn little facts

about the world without actually having to interact or acknowledge the presence of these populations within their school. If multicultural educational is to bring meaningful changes in schools, it must be conceptualized and implemented broadly not confined to activities for special days and occasions (Banks, 1993).

As the IB curriculum becomes the pillar of the school, one of the new manifestations of this is the 6th grade language carousel. Language acquisition courses are deemed a core class in IB curriculum and every 6th grader is required to take all of the world languages offered at the school. Students then decide which language to pursue in the following years. As Kissau et al. (2015) recommend, School A expands their foreign language learning programs and removes the optional nature of foreign language instruction in middle school. It should be noted however that even though this specific school values multilingualism, acquisition of a foreign language is not a high school graduation requirement. Camille the French teacher believes this is the number one hindrance to promoting multilingualism. If students' academic career is not depended on a class, parents feel less invested in the support for these classes. In any case, in school A each of the world language classes, have posters that are written in different languages to promote a sense of multilingualism. They are located in the basement level of the building and the classrooms are next to each other. These classes have been held in the same classrooms for at least five years.

In contrast, as Larry the IB Coordinator put it, the ESL classrooms are “on the first floor, right across from the main office. Yet at times I feel like that classroom could be considered the same, as traditionally special ed., dark corner in the basement.”. They are located on a different floor than the world language classes and usually are considered

separate from the language acquisition department. Due to the fact that there are fluctuations in the EL population in the school, the number of classes offered and how they are offered changes. The classes have been held in many different rooms around the building with the ESL teachers having to cart material into different rooms. With the direction of the district leaning towards more of a push-in model for ELs, ESL teachers are placed into mainstream classes as co-teachers without much extra time given to collaborate with these mainstream teachers. Therefore, while world language classes are promoted within the school as their own unique curriculum, ESL classes tend to be regarded as remedial classes that are in conjunction with other academic classes. The focus of ESL and world language classes differ in that ESL classes focus on academic content. It should be noted however that both students in world language classes and ESL classes are similarly engaged in becoming multilingual.

School A also offers a Spanish for Spanish heritage speakers class. Larry described this class as “a way of promoting multilingualism but that’s for a certain sect of students either the students came from our Spanish immersion elementary school that’s in our area or have a Spanish speaking background with their families.” As his comment reveals, this class is not offered only because there are students Spanish heritage speakers and that the school values multilingualism. Rather, the advocacy from the families of students who attended the Spanish immersion school made this class desirable for the school. This class therefore consists of native Spanish speakers as well as non-native Spanish speakers who have acquired Spanish as a second language. In contrast, Nels notes that “we don’t have anything like that for Somali.” This can be understood as part of the lack of interest in Somali by the school community as well as the dynamics of the

power of language and its communities. In promoting languages, Idir and Nels both mention the conventional wisdom, “if you take another language, you make more money” is exhibited in the school. However, Idir also mentions that “A language being taught, offered at school then that means that the language is being valued and seem[s] official for the kids so... the other languages, doesn’t mean they don’t value...but they don’t see them as important for the kids, for the parents, for their future.” There is a belief that the languages taught in the school were chosen because society deemed them valuable. So, if there is not a direct tie with earning more money, they are not as seen as valuable. When analyzing the fate of the Indian languages, Mohanty in Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty & Panda (2009) laments the unequal power of languages. Languages of marginalized populations are discriminated and are marginalized while some languages gain importance. Spanish, Japanese and French gain importance by being offered as a class but languages such as Somali, even though there are many that speak the language in the district lack the same stature. In this school, many of the ELs speak Somali but their multilingualism is not seen as a benefit for the individual or the community. In addition, while there is not a risk of losing their native language when learning a new language in world languages, for ELs, English gains dominance to the point of the loss of their home language (Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Portes & Hao, 1998). While multilingualism is promoted in the sense of additive bilingualism in world language classes, subtractive bilingualism occurs for ELs (Salomone, 2010). School A promotes multiculturalism through its overt displays of multiculturalism, while the ELs are pressured in the subtraction of their undervalued home language. When a language of

EL is offered as a class, it is due partly from the support of families whose monolingual students have attended immersion schools.

Viewing Multilingual Students as Deficient

Shelly voiced “I don’t really feel like [multilingualism] is really built up enough as a skill that is valued. I feel like some of the programming here makes it seem more like it’s a deficiency instead of a strength.” It is not uncommon to find deficient beliefs among educators within a school (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). All of the staff interviewed for this project shared how ELs were perceived in a negative light in some sense. Some used the word “deficient” while others described how being different from the norm is viewed as a deficiency. Even though they themselves seemed culturally aware and refrained from identifying ELs as deficient, the participants were able to reveal the general perceptions of deficiency that existed within the school culture.

As was the case with the general attitude after the implementation of NCLB (2002), emphasis in School A is on the deficiency of ELs rather than the benefits of their multilingual skills. Ann verbalizes how “recent students end up being kind of frustrating to some people. Like they don’t know what to do with them or how to help them. And I don’t think that’s necessarily reflective on the kid.” The school’s perception of ELs depends on “how long they have been in the country and how much English experience they have.”

Historically, the school has been located in a wealthy predominantly white part of the city. The student population remains predominantly white but has seen an increase in number of ELs. It should be mentioned that these ELs have varying backgrounds; In addition to languages and ethnicity, some are U.S.-born second or third generation

immigrants, newcomers to the country, and some are Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Regardless of the diversity of these ELs, the school is adjusting to this new influx of students. The deficit perspective exists when the norm is constructed and maintained by white populations marginalizing students who are viewed as culturally deprived or disadvantaged (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Ford et al., 2000). In the school norm of English speakers and with expectations of high literacy skills, Larry explained “ESL students are sometimes seen as, who don’t have their buckets full yet so we need to fill in those gaps and fill in those buckets in order for them to hopefully, eventually at some point, to get to the point where they can do that.”

The importance of acquiring English in an English-speaking community cannot be denied. However, this notion of English importance is to such a degree as to Idir expressing,

I don’t know if [ELs] should have a voice. Because other than the voice that they need to learn English because in order for them to be successful in this country, where the majority of the people speak English, it’s all on them. The responsibility is on them...from that view point they are seen like having a deficit by the society and the school. (Idir, 2017)

Nothing becomes as important as learning English and any other skill is irrelevant. Idir describes “kids that are taking the world languages, they don’t experience... that they have deficits. They are not viewed to have deficits by the school. Or you know, or by society in general. But the kids who are learning English, they are viewed that they have issues and have a hurdle to overcome.” In schools where students are placed in different classes according to their “intelligence,” the sole reliance on test scores for placement

decisions have limited the realization of the potential of non-white students (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2000). When students do not speak English as their primary language, they are immediately viewed as deficient. The focus is the need for these students to work hard to become proficient in English.

There are high-stakes in learning English and teachers and students that are in ESL classes are “under the microscope” (Nels, 2017). The success of ELs in standardized tests are under scrutiny from all levels, school, district, state and nationwide. ELs need to acquire English in order to be deemed successful in a classroom. ESL teachers feel that “expectations are pretty high. Because we know what’s at stake” (Shelly, 2017). Some of these expectations are unrealistic in that NCLB required students to take standardized tests two years after their U.S. schooling began. This includes SLIFEs. The benefits of NCLB is that it highlighted a population that were formerly invisible to the public. However, as the interviews reveal, this acute sense of urgency and unrealistic expectation on ELs lead to their characterization of their deficiency. As a language teacher, Camille voiced the same concern as Ovando (2003) of how even when students are exposed to the language every day, academic content in a second language is difficult and language might remain incomprehensible. It should be noted that this discrepancy is not created due to the refusal of teacher engagement with the ELs. “When teachers talk to us it’s because they’ve just tried some things and they are not sure how to proceed, or maybe they haven’t tried some things but they want to but they don’t know what to do” (Ann, 2017). All of the staff were very aware of the limitations of the ESL program and the expectations cast upon the ELs. They listed the WIDA, testing and district standards, curriculum, lack of understanding by administration and teachers, and lack of resources

as hindrances to ELs' progress. These factors will be further discussed in the following chapter but the concern here is to highlight how deficiency becomes the defining characteristic of ELs.

The fundamental difference between world language classes and ESL classes are their desired curricular outcomes. While the goal of world language classes is for students to continue the pursuit of a language, the goal of the ESL program is for students to attain enough English to leave the program. While students in world language classes can be proud of their interest in a language, it is difficult to be proud about placement in an ESL class which is based on the lack of an ELs' skill. The focus of ESL classes is established through the "savior mentality...Like "Oh, you are in this system that wasn't created for you. And now I need to help you be able to navigate that system." (Larry, 2017). This is a deficit perspective focusing on the ELs deficit rather than their multilingual abilities. Education through this deficit mindset leads to curing students than educating (Arslan & Rață, 2013). Furthermore, marginalization of students who are perceived as being deficient is justified when deficit thinking faults the individual students or their families as the cause of their marginalization rather than teachers or the education system (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Walker 2011; Weiner, 2006). These attitudes of deficiency and atmosphere of marginalization are created by the dominant culture but can also be internalized by the marginalized population.

There exists a,

misconception that parents who come in and they see the reading level of their kid and they get mad at them like 'Hey, get your act together. You need to be reading better' and it's like if they haven't acquired enough vocabulary to read

better...it's a process to get there it's not just like you're not focused or anything and I think that sometimes it gets blurred. (Shelly, 2017)

The need for learning English is so great and the expectation unrealistic that parents of ELs fault their children for their lack of effort. Not unlike some of the immigrants from the past, the families of ELs are only too grateful for the school to assimilate their children into the normed American (Salomone, 2010). Additionally, since the emphasis and “intelligence” of a student is focused on their acquisition of English, for their parents,

It's kind of an emotional thing too. Like, there's an immediate reaction that you might have if your child is not up to par, and to kind of you know cover, there might be some shame involved and some guilt like, you know I wish I could have had my child in school at an earlier age, I wish we didn't have to... like come over here from our country or I wish they had gotten school in their home country and maybe as a way to kind of deal with that kind of anger of that situation, it kind of gets channeled at the kid ...as a way to not kind of be embarrassed in front of... a person in an authority position here. (Ann, 2017)

The marginalization of their children is perceived by the parents and they too feel marginalized by society.

ELs remain in contrast to the dominant culture of the school. Their incongruity characterizes the ELs as not only different but deficient. In the paradigm of an English, monolingual dominant society, the markers of their deficiency are characterized by the lack of the ELs' English proficiency. Even though ELs might have valuable skills, their potentials are never realized and are regarded as burdens to the school system due to this characterization. Studies have shown however, that even when students have low

vocabulary skills, they have high executive controls if they are bilingual and that this effect is strong enough to even counteract the negative impact of poverty on cognition (Engel de Abreu et al., 2012). Unfortunately, school practices and assumptions emerging from the deficit paradigm often hide student abilities (Weiner, 2006). Furthermore, deficit thinking faults individual students and families rather than the education system. This leads to ridding the ELs deficiency rather than transforming an education system that characterizes individuals as deficient and continuously fails them. In this structure, ELs are marginalized and with it their families and their community.

Identity Clash

Student performance and achievement are affected by identification, engagement, relatedness and school belongingness (Booker, 2006). As EL populations are commonly marginalized from mainstream society, it is essential for schools to create an environment of inclusion and acceptance so that they are able to succeed. In School A, the norm, the dominant culture, is created by white monolingual English speakers. Larry describes “We’ve such an interesting dynamic of culture in our building where we have traditionally affluent, students predominantly white, who carry themselves through high standards of excellence and then we have low performing students and then we have our ESL students. So, trying to, it’s almost like an identity crisis like who is School A?” Even though there is a concerted effort to make multilingualism a pillar of the school, the norm is shaped by the affluent, white students with a high standard of excellence and the groups that are upsetting this dynamic are the low performing students and ESL students. This section contrasts specifically the ESL students to the world language class to examine the different perception in these groups.

Nels and Camille shared how some of the students are really passionate about learning a world language. Nels provides an example of a student going to the store and eavesdropping on what people are saying in Spanish and understanding and being excited about it. However, Nels also adds that because “they don’t see that many examples of bilingual people, white people, English-speaking people, around them... that much, so they might have an image of studying it or an expectation of studying it but they might not have a real expectation of actually becoming quite proficient at it.” Idir adds that for most of the students in world languages, they lack the passion and that they only view the language classes as a luxury. He expresses that most students in middle school, “are not seeing the potential. They just see learning a language as not... necessary... not something they should work towards for” but also adds that “the kids are not the same level as the parents, school or the staff.” He acknowledges that the school and parents might be promoting the value of multilingualism but the students might not have the same impression towards languages.

Shelly “notic[es] students NOT feeling very proud or wanting to call attention to their linguistic heritage.” Shelly and Camille question if this attitude is particular to this age group, as middle school students are at a developmental stage, where they strongly feel the need to fit in with their peers. This might have some effect on the ELs. However, the identity of ELs are heavily influenced by educators and context of their environment (Harklau, 2000). As that is the case, students’ feelings that their multilingual skills are undervalued and are unable to be “out loud and proud about [their] bilingualism” (Ann, 2017) might be due to the school environment. Since student achievement has a positive

relationship between school belonging (Booker, 2006), middle school students who are sensitive to marginalization might be acutely affected.

Staff have revealed that students generally perceived their multilingual skills are unrecognized and the students who are in ESL classes that are proud of their heritage are, ...a group of students who's successful here. They understand what's going on... Their language proficiency is at a place where they are able to be very successful academically here and in many, many areas. And maybe it's that students who don't have the full proficiency in one or more of those languages feel less proud about their native language because they see it as 'uh if only I just knew English better'. (Ann, 2017)

Again, the focus is on the EL's mastery of English. The students that are proud of the heritage have a certain level of proficiency in English to be able to celebrate their other linguistic skills. Without the basis of English proficiency, multilingual students are unable to be proud of their multilingualism.

Surprisingly, this attitude for multilingualism is not particular to ELs. Camille shared how even English speaking students in world language classes who are part of the dominant culture feel the need to hide their multilingual skills.

I've learned from conferences, from student parent teacher conferences that there are a lot of students who speak other languages and they never bring that up at all, and I don't know if they are embarrassed, I don't know if it's an age thing, but because middle schoolers are so, kind of embarrassed as being seen different from other students and that was certainly the case for when I was a kid, I had lots of

friends that were bilingual and they never promoted it because they wanted to be American, as American as possible. So that's definitely part of it. (Camille, 2017)

In an effort to fit into the dominant culture, students feel it necessary to suppress their multilingualism. The notion of what it means to be American is synonymous with a monolingual English speaker. In this framework, students who speak a different language are perceived as deviant from the dominant culture. Acceptance into the dominant culture requires multilinguals to have proficiency in English because the dominant culture is not going to learn their language (Fillmore, 1991).

While the multilingual students taking a world language can hide their multilingual abilities, students in ESL classes are unable to hide this fact. While some of the students taking world languages are given space to be proud of their skills in another language, the lack of English proficiency hinders ELs to be perceived in a positive manner. When prompted to think about multilingual students, Larry initially thought about students

that have skills in both areas... who are able to translate back and forth... But then I also started thinking about the students, when I think about multilingual, even our ELL students and that was my SECOND guess. Like when I heard multilingual I heard 'Oh yeah, proficient in both places.' But now as I'm thinking about it even more...I started to envision more of our ELL students and how they are multilingual as well. It's so easy to forget [that] for many of our students....

English is the extra language that what they are coming to their table with..."

Even though ELs are multilingual, their lack of English skills hinders them from being considered multilingual or at least forgotten that they are multilingual. Their

characterization as deficient in English overpowers their characterization as a multilingual. These beliefs of teachers are important in shaping the culture of the school as it affects the practices of the school (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

To satisfy their need to fit in, ELs tend to lose or not develop their native language, which can hinder communication with their family members who are not fluent in English (Fillmore, 1991; Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Salomone, 2010). This poses another type of isolation for ELs, not only in school but at home and in their cultural communities. Doubly isolated, it should therefore not be surprising to find out that students whose primary language is not English are far more likely than their peers to drop out of school early (Steinberg, Blinde & Chan 1984).

As these ELs are perceived in a deficient mindset, dominated by the conceptualization of their lack of English proficiency, their talents and their potential are not fully realized. In a system established by white, English-speaking, monolinguals, the identity of these multilingual students clash with the dominant culture. Larry describes,

I would say [students in world language classes] would fit more into our mission statement than our ESL student. Yes, I would agree with that. It's easy for them to fit into that box. Than our ESL students because... the ESL students.... Aren't in a language per say. They aren't taking French, Japanese, whatnot. They are, almost like an addendum, if you will, to our school's mission and who we are as our school identity. (Larry, 2017)

Even though an IB school celebrates multilingualism and international mindedness, the ELs are seen as an “addendum”. Furthermore, although their marginalization is imposed on them through the deficiency perspective, as middle school students needing to fit into

their community, they self-impose these expectations on themselves, hiding the fact that they are multilingual. Where in other societies, monolinguals are regarded as misfits (Wardhaugh, 2010), in this school and in many parts of white-dominated America, these multilinguals are regarded as the misfits. As misfits lacking the belongingness to succeed in school, their academic achievement suffers (Aldana, 2016; Booker, 2006). While the IB curriculum intends to encourage an inclusive community where all can succeed with their varying talents, the culture of School A goes short in realizing this ideal. ELs multilingual skills are overlooked and ELs remain outliers of the norm suffering the consequences of their marginalization.

Summary

In following the IB curriculum, the school attempts to follow the teaching of international mindedness and globalization. In doing so, the school has taken actions towards displaying more languages around the school and acknowledging the existence of multiple languages and cultures in the world. However, these overt displays, “the three Fs, flags, food and festivals” of multilingualism are easy (Larry, 2017) and superficial. It does not transform the structure and environment of the school itself or acknowledge the complex identities of the students.

Since French, Spanish and Japanese are taught as world languages, they are given weight and importance as a language. In contrast, even though there is a significant number of ELs that speak Somali, their language and in a sense those students are undervalued. Through the overpowering demand on students to acquire English, languages of marginalized people lack status and can lead to the loss of their home

language (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2009). Instead of promoting multilingualism, this can lead to ELs subtractive bilingualism (Salomone, 2010).

The difference in expectations for the multilingual classes creates a rift between the perceptions of the two different student groups. While students in world language classes are praised for their strive to become multilingual, ELs' are commonly viewed in a negative light and their multilingual skills go unnoticed. The domineering characteristic of being deficient may overpower any other characteristic of ELs. These deficit perspective faults students rather than teachers or the system. Instead of creating a structure that best suits the success of ELs, the purpose of educating ELs might lead to acculturating them into the dominant culture.

The dominant culture is created by the norm of white, monolingual, English speakers. ELs who lacks proficiency in English as well as multilingual students in world language classes clash with the identity of the school culture and feel marginalized. This marginalization jeopardizes students' academic success. If students feel like they do not belong, they are more likely to do worse academically (Aldana, 2016; Booker, 2006; Phinney, Romero, Nava & Huang, 2001).

This chapter compiled the data collected while observing and by interviewing staff within the school. Analysis of the data reveal three big themes: valuing multilingualism, viewing multilingual students as deficient and identity clash. The themes highlight how the school attempts to create a multilingual environment while still perceiving students with multilingual skills in a negative light. Even though the school makes a concerted effort into creating an open-minded multicultural school, the underlying structure and environment created by the dominant culture, marginalize

multilingual students and their families. As research has shown, there is a correlation between students' sense of belonging and academic achievement (Booker, 2006). With the deficit perspective and the norm created by the dominant group, multilinguals are marginalized from the school culture. This marginalization jeopardizes the academic success of multilingual students within the school. The next chapter will discuss the major findings of this research and the implications for what the school can do followed by limitations of the study and a final summary.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

The focus of the study was to find how students engaged in becoming multilingual are perceived within the school community in order to understand how multilingualism is valued within a school. Therefore, the overarching research question for this study was “How are students who are engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community?” In order to answer this overarching question, some key questions guiding this study were:

1. How is multilingualism valued in schools?
2. How do the teachers in the school perceive students in ESL classes compared to students in world language classes?
3. How do disparities in perceptions influence the school culture?
4. How can a school create a culture/environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all?
5. How can we define language education so that multilingualism is an essential skill of the future?

In this final chapter, questions one through three will be discussed as major findings of the research. Questions four and five are to be discussed in the implications for the study. Following these points, the researcher will discuss the limitations of the study and ideas about future research. Lastly, this chapter concludes with a final summary of the research.

Major Findings

The overarching research question for this study is “How are students engaged in becoming multilingual perceived within the school community?” In exploring this question, the study describes how multilingualism is valued in the school followed by

descriptions of how teachers perceive students in ESL classes compared to students in world language classes. Discussions of how these perceptions influence and affect the students' academic success is also pertinent to the question at hand.

How is multilingualism valued in schools?

At first glance, the school seems to embrace the IB teaching of globalization and international mindedness. There are many displays of languages around the school as well as lists of events that celebrate the diversity of the school; posters are in multiple languages, there are celebrations for specific ethnic groups, multiple languages are used in greetings in advisory. However, these overt displays of languages are easy and superficial displays of multiculturalism. Some of these are made to acknowledge the diversity within the school and yet others are only promoting multilingualism for the benefit for the monolingual white population. As Fishman proclaimed "one cannot just platonically proclaim one's love for 'multilingualism' while neglecting to provide all that multilingualism needs in order to exist and prosper (as cited in Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012).

One of the big structural implementations of multilingualism is the 6th grade language carousel. This sends out the message that language acquisition is important. However, as Japanese, French and Spanish are formally taught in world language classes, they are perceived as being more beneficial to the student than the language backgrounds of some of the ELs. In fact, ELs are required to be in ESL class and lack the opportunity to choose their own language of acquisition. Their lack of English is the basis to their language acquisition class rather than an interest in a language or the culture. The difference perceptions between ESL and world language is further reflected in how students in each class are perceived.

How do the teachers in the school perceive students in ESL classes compared to students in world language classes?

While students in world languages are praised for their interest and pursuit of acquiring a language, students in ESL are perceived as lacking the necessary skills to be successful in school and in society. English is the lingua franca of the school and the surrounding community. However, the characterization of ELs solely focused on their English or lack of their English ability is concerning. As these ELs are viewed through the deficiency perspective, their contributions and potentials are overshadowed by their deficiency; their lack of proficiency in the English language. Even though the school promotes multiculturalism and multilingualism and pride the students in world languages, the multilingual students in ESL classes are dismissed as deficient. The students in world languages classes are considered the norm and have access to the dominant culture while the ELs are marginalized, unreflective of the school culture.

How do disparities in perceptions influence the school culture?

ELs are seen in a deficit paradigm and are regarded as “addendums” to the school; they are marginalized and their potential remain unrealized. Consequently, when students lack the feeling of belongingness, their academics suffer (Booker, 2006). Their lack of success is further justified since the deficit perspective commonly faults the individuals rather than the teachers or the education structure. Therefore, the structure remains unchanged while the marginalized are pressured to assimilate to the norms of the dominant culture.

The marginalization of multilingual students conceals the presence of these populations as multilingual students are reluctant to display their multilingualism.

Therefore, the English-speaking monolingual, norm culture is maintained while multilinguals suffer as outliers to the norm. Children of immigrants lose their native language and lose their bond with their ethnic background. With their ethnic identity at a scrutiny, their self-esteem, school involvement, their psychological well-being is at risk (Phinney et al., 2001). The promotion of multilingualism is futile if the general environment excludes multilinguals from the dominant culture.

Implications

School A is making an effort to value multiculturalism. However, the school engages in easy and superficial overt displays of multilingualism and multiculturalism. More transformative action such as changing the culture of the school is required in promoting a welcoming environment for multilinguals (Banks, 1993). The implications drawn from the research is discussed in this section by attempting to answer the following questions:

1. How can a school create a culture/environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all?
2. How can we define language education so that multilingualism is an essential skill of the future?

How can a school create a culture/environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all?

The first step when considering creating an environment or culture is to first understand the already existing culture. How is the current environment being inclusive to all students? What values are being promoted? Is the promoted culture of the school representative of the student population? As Banks (1993) notes, many school reform efforts fail because the roles, norms, and ethos of the school do not change in ways that

will make the institutionalization of the reforms possible. Without understanding the elements of the current culture, the possibilities of transformation cannot be realized.

In School A, the white monolingual English-speakers have historically been the majority of the school. As a majority, the school has reflected their values and needs. Additionally, the education system is created by people of power, historically by white people in power. Again, the environment is shaped by policies and systems that meet the needs of whites. Looking at the teacher population, the majority of the teachers in American schools are white female. This is consistent even in schools where the student population mainly consists of minorities and people of color. Therefore, it is first important to realize that white, English-speaking, monolingualism has been entrenched in the school system whether schools openly acknowledge it or not.

In understanding the effects of this white dominant culture, more resources are needed for equity and cultural competence training. As teachers bring their own biases and expectations to the classroom, it is important for staff to have the occasion to reflect and analyze their biases (Arslan & Rață, 2013). This is important since the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter (Pajares, 1992). Additionally, because the privileged racial and class tends to view themselves as noncultural Americans who are colorblind and raceless (Banks, 2001). The structure of schools might have been created by their predecessors but they are maintained by the current staff. “Teachers need to undergo personal development work to rid themselves of ‘world views’ that were developed before they can develop professional tactics for classroom use” (Arslan & Rață, 2013, p. 206). Staff need to become culturally responsive and aware of how their beliefs affect the school culture (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Even

though the district has recently put more effort into providing summer institutions and opportunities for equity training, it lacks the resources and time given to teachers on a daily basis to transform their environment. I will continue to read more literature on the topic of understanding race and culture within schools in order to understand how my biases might be affecting the school environment. I will continue to attend equity workshops and invite others to do the same.

Additional effort needs to be given in providing support for ELs. Suggestions for teachers both in ESL and general classrooms to be trained have been discussed for years. All teachers need to know the important of language and the process of language acquisition as well as being learning strategies to best support the ELs (Yates & Ortiz, 1991). Currently, ESL professional development is provided by the ESL teachers within the building. They are given an hour maybe twice a year to provide strategies to help ELs. With the co-teaching model, more mainstream teachers are able to cooperate with the ESL teachers and are able to support their ELs. However, because there are only two ESL teachers within the school, there is only a limited number of classes that can be co-taught which leads to a cluster of ELs in a class. This leads to tracking a group of ELs in the same classes for the whole school day. In this way, students are marginalized and although the inclusion model is used, these students have limited exposure and presence in the mainstream population. Therefore, first it is important for all teachers to have enough training in helping ELs so that all ELs can be served in a general class. The school and district need to provide more time and resources into creating these trainings so that teachers feel prepared and comfortable to serve the ELs within the school.

Personally, it is important for me to use my ESL teachers as resources and help promote best practices within my school.

It is important to alter what is existing but in order to transform schools to include different perspectives that reflect the diversity of the students, there should be some diversity within the teaching population. A school that is promoting multiculturalism needs adults who model the attitudes and behaviors that are being taught (Banks, 1993). Research has shown that student teachers' ability to speak a foreign language enhances their intercultural competence (Arslan & Rață, 2013) so we need to hire more teachers who are multilingual. There has been rising pressure within the district to increase the number of teachers of color and to support the retention of teachers of color. As most of the ELs entering the district are students of color, it is important for the school and district to recruit people of color. It is written in School A's district policy to hire more people of color but the results are meager. The school and district needs to analyze why they are unable to recruit individuals that are reflective of students' background and provide resources to change this structure. This might involve directly recruiting teachers of color from historically black schools, providing incentives for people of color to pursue teaching, and provide support for people of color pursuing teaching as a career.

If a school is to promote multiculturalism, it should not only hire people of color but also hire staff that reflect the background of the ELs. It is not enough for the school to display languages representative of their student body but it is necessary to have people of authority, in the case of school, teachers and administrators, that are representative and reflective of the students' backgrounds. It is crucial for students to see the presence of successful multilingual individuals within their school. It is also important for them to

hear different languages within the school day so that multilingualism is accepted as part of the norm. Throughout the day, students should see multilingualism in action rather than disjointed celebrations or classes from time to time. I will try to establish positive relationships with EL colleagues within our school so that they are valued within our school system.

Language is inherently tied to power. Languages spoken by marginalized populations are discriminated against and stripped of their significance in the world (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2009; Solomone, 2010). Therefore there is a need to elevate the status of these languages so that populations speaking those languages are also valued. One way to promote this is through bilingual education on the premise of students learn best in the language that they understand (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012). Another is to offer heritage language classes, officially acknowledging that these languages are useful. Students can then pride themselves in being bilingual which could lead to more cohesion with family leading to higher academic achievement and greater self-esteem (Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Solomone, 2010). Not only would it boost the self-esteem of the students that speak that language, but others who might be interested are able to learn about the cultural background of these populations while learning the language. I will try to learn the basics of the languages spoken within the school. Being able to greet the marginalized families in their own language is a step towards recognizing the value of their language. One of the most progressive policies around language education was enacted in Minnesota through the implementation of the 2014 LEAPS Act (Minnesota Department of Education). This law revised many statues and brought attention to the value of being bilingual by allowing schools to award multilingual seals to students with a language

proficiency in a language other than English. Students' proficiency in a language are recognized and are officially acknowledged through attaching multilingual seals to their high school diplomas.

Schools need to ensure that all are welcome and that somehow contribute to the school community. However, students and families cannot experience belongingness if they feel unrecognized. When a school only focuses on academics and solely uses English to promote their community, it marginalizes populations that value different characteristics. The school should acknowledge the presence of different backgrounds and intentionally make an effort to be inclusive of these populations. Schools should provide occasions where the celebration of a student does not rely on English abilities. School A has Student of the Month which celebrates students embodying the learner profiles of the IB. The caveat with this event is that they are only attended by students who were nominated and their families. If everyone were able to, all could be proud of their achievement.

The same critique applies to the different ethnic celebration days where students are required to sign up to attend. These celebrations should be a requirement for all so that the whole student body celebrates the diversity of the school and acknowledges their diversity as a positive characteristic of the school. Idir describes, "if one wants to learn Somali, we have a Somali community here but the goal is not keep the language and the culture alive...Somali people understand that. You know that a few couple of generations, Somali language would not be existing in this place." Research shows that even if communities maintain a cultural presence, the absence of policies promoting bilingualism, languages do not survive past the first generation (Oh & Fuligni, 2010;

Portes & Schauffler, 1994). If a society truly values multilingualism, the expectation should not be that students fully assimilate to the point of erasing their heritage. The purpose of multilingualism should not only be for monolingual students to become multilingual but to value and maintain multilingual students and their multilingualism. By celebrating skills that are not academic, parents of the students can also be proud of their heritage and their multilingual abilities. I want to encourage the world language department to continue hosting the international stage at Family Day and recruit more parents to showcase their talents with their children.

As a school promoting multiculturalism, it is beneficial for the school to recruit EL parents to be part of the school community. If the ELs see that their parents are contributing and belong in the school, they too would feel a sense of belonging. When asked about if how much voice ELs have at the school, Larry described how,

the ones that are proficient in English and have parents who can advocate, can arrive that conversation. However, our [ELs] don't have a strong enough voice. I would definitely say that. And there are multitude of factors that go on to it.

Whether students don't have the vocabulary or the parents don't have the vocabulary or even seats at the table or they don't even realize that they have an invitation to the table. (Larry, 2017)

Larry describes how parents of English-speaking students are more involved within the school while there is a lack of involvement from the EL families. Schools needs to make personal contacts and extra effort into recruiting these families to the events as these populations already face marginalization from society. Schools need to ensure that information is accessible to EL families, sending notices and invitations in the

language spoken by ELs and making sure that there are translators available at school events. It is also important to have a point person that has a relationship with these populations and can explain opportunities in the school to these parents. The presence of parents and their contributions to schools will develop a better sense of belongingness for ELs.

“How can we define language education so that multilingualism is an essential skill of the future?”

School A has accepted IB curriculum and has received support in adopting their international outlook. There is plenty of support for students to learn a language and this has been incorporated as an expectation for the school. However, as Blake and Kramsh (2007) pose, how should society take it to the next step of not just having language education as a luxury of the elite? Through their question, Blake and Kramsh hint at the survival of democracy within the world as their reasoning.

With its prominence in the world, the U.S. has the need to promote multilingualism. Practicing multilingualism has its cognitive advantages (Bhatia & Ritchie 2012; Cox et al., 2016; Diamond, 2010; Engel de Abreu et al., 2012; Portes & Schauffler, 1994) that would be beneficial for any individual. More importantly, as schools are a gate to society, schools provide an opportunity for students to comprehend the needs of society and develop skills that are required to contribute as a citizen. In a world where facts can be drawn simply by typing on a computer, one of the important skills that students can gain from attending school is to gain intercultural skills. It is important to not only memorize facts of the world but understand the existence of differing perspectives. As the world becomes more globalized, students have the

opportunity to engage in communication all over the world, and being multilingual will benefit them greatly.

Even though there are teachers that say that their jobs are to teach their own subject, this would only be applicable if a school existed in a social vacuum. Teachers beliefs and attitudes are influenced by social attitudes (Pajares, 1992, Pettit, 2011) while a school informs students the acceptable behavior and the rules of society. If the general environment of school is hostile to multilinguals, they understand that they are unwelcome in the school and in society. Additionally, if the political atmosphere is not friendly to immigrants, students will be hesitant to feel safe in a space where they believe is representative of the general surrounding community. These types of negative stereotyping from dominant groups will strongly affect the educational attainment of minority students (Arslan & Rață, 2013). All teachers need to advocate for their students no matter their political belief. They need to encourage multilingualism and value multilingual individuals.

Creating a welcoming environment for all involves creating an equitable environment for all. It is often the case that schools become the laboratory for social programs: eradicating poverty, promoting gender equality, tackling racism etc. These are all big issues that school themselves are unable to tackle on their own. However, because schools are a place that all individuals attend for educational attainment, it is a place to face problems and promote new ideas to the next generation. In terms of creating an inclusive community, school staff need to be aware of the culture that they are creating and willing to change it for the benefit of its students. They need to allocate more resources into hiring staff of color. They need to allocate more resources into

Professional Development involving equity and understanding more about ELs. There needs to be more time spent reaching out to communities of color that are not attending school events. There needs to be more time spent on celebrating students' heritage within the school day. They need to explicitly value multilingual individuals.

Everyone who is in education knows the many limitations that hinder us from the ideal outcome of a school. Time and money restrict what a school can do. Changing a culture of the school cannot happen overnight. However, if schools fail to act, they will continuously marginalize populations and waste the potential of a diverse community. The point of this study was therefore to look at perceptions, the beliefs of teachers because although it is difficult issue to tackle, it is on a scale that is still manageable. All teachers can reflect on their own perceptions and analyze their effect on their ELs.

Limitations of the Study

The previous section poses implications and suggestions for schools as a result of the study. However, limitations of the study need recognition before applying its results to a broader context. The characteristic of an ethnographic study is that its methods encourage the study of a specific community in order to have a deeper understanding of its cultural phenomenon. In this fashion, the data collected for this research is specific of the school and cannot be generalized for other schools.

Perceptions revealed by the staff towards students taking world languages and students in ESL classes are particular to the students in School A. Notably, many of the ELs are Somali which cannot be said for many other school in the U.S. The ELs in America are very diverse and the population makeup of the school might differ greatly from each state, city, or even within a district. As Somalis are the majority of ELs in

School A, race might be a factor in how they are perceived in a white majority school. Economics is a huge factor but Steinberg et al. (1984) pose that what they define as language minorities are a very general category. The only commonality among ELs is the that English is not their primary language and different factors need to be analyzed for each ethnicity (Kim & Chao, 2009; Steinberg et al., 1984).

The study has a small sample size of interviewees. The researcher selected staff that were somehow engaged in multilingualism within the school in hopes that they will have more opinions on the matter. If the researcher had conducted interviews with other staff in the building, a more varied perspective might have been collected. It should also be noted that these participants were also aware of the topic at hand.

Another factor pertinent to this study is that School A is a middle school. As middle school students' have a strong need to fit in, their need to become part of the majority might be greater than in other stages of their lives. Therefore, their feeling the need to hide their multilingual background might be more acute than if the same research was conducted in an elementary school or high school.

Even with these limitations, the significance of this research should not be dismissed. The need for students to belong, and to be successful in school is universal. Schools need awareness of their expression of their culture of inclusion or exclusion within the school. The consequences of not integrating our ELs, and not realizing the potential and benefits of the diversity of the school population can be dire. Is assimilation, immigrants losing their identity, the natural course of history? Or can the land of immigrants provide for a framework that realizes the potential contribution of the multitude of different identities within its community?

Further Research

In this, study, the focus was on teachers' perceptions of the students to highlight how they influenced the school culture. Further research could be conducted into analyzing how students themselves are feeling about multilingualism. How do ELs perceive whether they belong in their schools? Do students value multilingual skills? As has been conducted by Phinney et al. (1999), further research needs to be conducted in order to portray a full picture of the school environment, especially from the students' and parents point of view such as has been conducted.

It would also prove applicable to collect data on the success/progress of ELs in relation to their belongingness in the school. If this type of study were to be conducted, it would be advisable to not only collect data on academic success of ELs as their academic grades might not reflect their achievement in their classes. Progress might also be measured in terms of skills acquired and their levels of English attainment. As ELs are a diverse population, the measurement for success in schools for these populations will require examination of their specific factors (Kim & Chao, 2009).

As most of the ELs entering our schools are students of color, the issue of race and equity is pertinent. There have been many theories used to explain the low achievement of immigrant students. However, no single theory is sufficient enough to explain this phenomenon (Arslan & Rață, 2013). If possible, it would be interesting to somehow isolate the perceptions of deficiency towards multilingual ELs either as a result of their lack of English ability or due to their non-whiteness. It would also be interesting to collect data on the effectiveness of equity trainings and how those might decrease the level of marginalization felt by ELs and their parents.

I will bring back the results of the study to the equity team at my school. With the shared results, I hope that the equity team can come up with some professional development workshops around the needs of ELs. Implications for the study will also be shared with the equity team so that they may use it as a guide to their future goals.

Final Summary

With an ever-connected world, multilingualism is promoted as a benefit to individuals and society. While overt displays of multilingualism such as multilingual posters and events are easy, this act is not enough. If a school is to truly value multilingualism, it is insufficient only to create addendums to the existing, white monolingual English-speaking culture.

This study collected ethnographic data on the perceptions of teachers towards students in world language classes and students in ESL classes. In line with the IB program, the school valued the ideals of international mindedness and promoted a sense of valuing multilingualism through overt celebrations of multilingualism. However, in a white-centric, English monolingual centered framework, students in world languages are praised while ELs lack of English proficiency renders them deficient. The characterization of deficiency dominates the understanding of ELs and their potential overlooked (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2000). Multilingual students are marginalized and are denied the feeling of belongingness negatively affecting their academic success (Booker, 2006).

It is important for schools to understand the nature of its culture by analyzing the values being promoted. All staff members contribute to this culture which cannot be isolated from their own perceptions and biases. Therefore, school require professional

development sessions surrounding ELs and the issue of equity. Schools and districts also need to hire more people of color that are reflective of their student population in order to transform the school into valuing multilingualism.

Schools equip students with the skills needed to be successful in society. If a school believes multilingualism to be of value, it should not be one-sided in providing white students to benefit from being multilingual but to acknowledge the presence and contributions of multilinguals within the school. The importance of ELs in learning English should not overshadow their potential. Schools are responsible for creating an inclusive environment where all students may succeed without sacrificing their own identities.

There are many limitations to what a school can accomplish. However, it is also a place of vast potential. Schools shape the mindset of students and affect the attitudes of the future. If schools can value multilingualism and norm its presence, that norm might become the norm of the future. If a society may realize and utilize the potential of its multilinguals, the contributions made by them are inconceivable. It all begins with our perceptions, “Is that bucket half-full or the gourd overflowing?”

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data Collection Method and Related Questions

Research/Evaluation Question(s)	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Sampling and Data Collection Methodologies	Time Demand on Research Subjects	Proposed Analyses
How is the school promoting multilingualism?	Observation	Observation of the school building, posters, displays, Observation of Events/Activities Curriculum offered at our school	None	Displays of multiculturalism Different languages but lack of EL's language
What are the teachers' levels of understanding of multilingualism? What are the perceptions of the teachers of students taking world languages and ESL classes?	Interview – transcribe	Interview – open ended questions	30-1hour	Differences between the two groups

Appendix B: Letter of Consent

November 26, 2016

Dear Teachers and staff:

I am studying at Hamline University for my Master's in English as a Second Language. To get my master's degree, I need to do research for my capstone. I am interested in investigating how bilingualism is valued in our school. I would like to collect data on how our school perceives bilingualism and the students that are bilingual. Hamline University has given permission for this research and our school [REDACTED] Middle School as well as [REDACTED] Schools, has given permission for this research. I also need your permission.

I would like to interview you to investigate the perceptions of our bilingual students in our school. I will report the data that I have collected, however, I will not use any names. All data would be aggregated in order to conceal the identities of the participants.

The research will be published in an online database of Hamline University. If you do not want to be in the research, that is ok. If you want to leave the research later, that is also fine. I will be removing your data from the rest of the data.

If you have questions, contact me either through email, Kazusa.yamashita@mpls.k12.mn.us or you can reach me through phone at [REDACTED]. You can also contact my Hamline Professor, Ann Mabbott at 651-523-2446 or amabbott@hamline.edu.

If you agree to participate in the research, please sign this letter.

Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Do you think that your school values bilingualism? Why or why not?
 - a. How do you think that they promote those values?
 - b. Where do you see it displayed in the school?
 - c. How is it talked about in the school?
 - d. What do you think are factors that might limit the promotion of bilingualism?

2. How visible do you think the value of bilingualism is promoted in our schools?
 - a. How do you think the bilingual students in our school is or isn't promoted?
 - b. How much voice do you think our bilingual students have in our school?
 - c. Who is one student that you see embodied as a representation of the promotion of successful bilingualism in our schools? Why do you think of that student? What about them makes you think of a "successful bilingual?"

3. What is your typical interaction with a student taking ESL?
 - a. How would you describe some characteristics of students taking ESL?
 - b. How would you identify them?
 - c. What is unique about them?
 - d. How do you think they reflect the school's values?
 - e. How do you think they contribute to the school culture?
 - f. How do you think they are perceived generally? Why?
 - g. What are some things that form the perceptions of these students?

4. What is your typical interaction with a student taking world language classes?
 - a. How would you describe some main characteristics of students taking world languages?
 - b. How would you identify them?
 - c. What is unique about them?
 - d. How do you think they reflect the school's values?
 - e. How do you think they contribute to the school culture?
 - f. How do you think they are perceived generally? Why?
 - g. What are some things that form the perceptions of these students?

5. Students in ESL classes and World Language classes are both engaged in becoming bilingual.
 - a. What do you think are the differences between these two classes?
 - b. What might be a difference between the students who are in these classes?
 - c. Do you think there are differences between students taking ESL and students taking World language classes?
 - d. Do you think there are differences in expectations?
 - e. How do you think that those expectations are formed?

Appendix D: Transcribed Interviews

February 28th 2017
Interview 1 with Nels

Researcher (R): So let's start out with a basic question you. Do you think our school values bilingualism?
Why or why not?

Interviewee Nels (N) : Well I mean I would say yes and... not enough...um... uh, I mean we've got, we state in the IB learner profile, IB...um... World language statement that we have, that you know, that people are supposed to really progress with languages and everyone is supposed to take a language

So in terms of people learning a second or third language um... we are at least giving them good lip service you know, to, um, becoming bilingual you know at least making progress with language. but in terms of um, you know supporting students who are already bilingual, like with Spanish and English, or Somali and English, or Tibetan and English, or whatever it is and English... um.. I don't think that we show that we we appreciate that or value that, that much. I mean we say we do, um, and maybe I think I've seen more signs around the building that are in Somali .. but it's not enough... and we need to do more of that um... with different languages. Although one thing that's pretty cool that I've noticed when we had our fire alarm and some other events when they come on and do the announcements "great job on the fire alarm everybody we got out in 33 seconds you hear it now in English, you hear it now in Spanish and you hear it in Somali. and it's really cool that we have people in the building who can do that and who value doing that, you know. That's new this year. I've never seen that or maybe it was last year but um, so that's some improvement, I would have to say.

R: Um, So what do you think are factors that might limit the promotion of bilingualism?

N: Um, I think being in a White-centric, Eurocentric system um, where, you know, the way to get ahead is, you know, to do really well in your classes in English and to be articulate in English um... and uh... I'm sure there are some teachers who take advantage of some learning opportunities... as they come up... I don't know how much they are planned for but to tap into, you know, a kid's prior knowledge of a different language or prior cultural knowledge, you know, um and uh...so I mean otherwise, time is certainly an obstacle...um because people feel pressured, teachers feel pressured to get through what they've planned and what they're supposed to be doing, you know, according to their learning targets and all that and, working towards bilingualism is usually not part of their learning targets or their, you know, part of their big scope of sequence..

R: Uh huh. Umm...

N: Is it going okay?

R: Yeah. How do you think bilingual students in our school are, is or isn't promoted? So you talked about, like, you recognized that there are like Tibetan Americans,

N: Yeah

R: or like their so language,

N: Yeah

R: So do you think... so we also talked about fire drill and how that shows uh... bilingualism, or valuing...

N: Multilingualism...

R: Yeah.

N: Yeah

R: Do You think there are other instances you see in our school that we celebrate or don't celebrate?

N: Uh... um... well I don't really know what other teachers do but I try to do small things in my classroom um like, have greetings in the morning for advisory in a couple of different languages, you know, including Somali which I've learned a few basic greetings in. Um.. and in other languages you know and really that's more just to acknowledge that they are there and to raise awareness that they are there or, you know, to recognize for individuals to see that their own language is recognized up on the board and they might feel good about that or some subtle or not so subtle way. I don't know how many teachers are doing that kind of thing. I know for people who go around and do like morning meeting, greetings, you know, like sometimes we'll say "do a greeting in any other language besides English" you know, and then, you know, we get a little this a little that, you know a little Hawaiian, a little Arabic, a little Italian, whatever it is.

R: Um...How much voice you think out bilingual students have in her school?

N: Say that again?

R: How much voice you think are bilingual students have in our school?

N: Um... well not much...um... I'm trying to think of like, students having voice period, in our school. Like there is the...

R: (Laughs)

N: There's the student government, right? There maybe students who are bilingual, on student government. Um.. I'm sure there probably are, for sure there's got to be, they try

to get an eclectic group so probably some Somali students, Latino students. But I don't think that they're there pushing that agenda I think they are kind of pushing the normal middle school experience, you know of of planning dances and planning and some stuff. I don't think they're getting into that deep of an issue.. um... around it.

R: Yeah.. Do you um... Is there one student that you can think of in the school that is... that embodies, you know, succ-successful bilingualism in our school? like do you see any students who are like "Oh I know that the student is bilingual and and I think they're doing well or...

N: Well, I um... .. Because I taught the Advanced Spanish class last year, I know certain students who are now eighth graders who were seventh graders who are really pretty darn bilingual and is really really impressive in how they can express themselves in two different languages, very well and go back and forth and...um... so I can think of a small handful and maybe there's more, but a small handful. Because we have this class that brings out Academic Spanish, you know, for Advanced Spanish speakers, we don't have anything like that for Somalis, and I know that in some high schools they offer Somali but...um...what was I trying to say...yeah

R: Yeah. So um, you are a world language teacher um, how would you describe some main characteristics of students taking world languages?

N: Um, most of them who take Spanish, um... although I'd say most of them have it as part of their sort of long-term goal or expectation that they are going to be studying another language. I think because they don't see that many examples of bilingual people, white people, English-speaking people, around them... that much, so they might have an image of studying it or an expectation of studying it but they might not have a real expectation of actually becoming quite proficient at it. And so I think we're...um... a lot of times always bucking against like a hidden under belief that I can't, I'm not really get fluent, or , I'm not really going to be able to use it. Although, I mean, I have had students, some beginning students, like that they were at a store and people were speaking Spanish and they were eavesdropping and they understood some of what they were saying. Yeah so that's really fun to hear and nice to hear and you hear things like that periodically so um... uh...

R: So do you think how they think about Learning a language reflects what our school is promoting? Or like our values as a school?

N: Well I think it works well since we have this international mindedness and it's easy to make the connection "well, if you are going to be international minded, you know, you got to learn a couple of languages, so you can communicate with more of the world and understand more of the world." um... you know I think that a lot of the kids, there are a lot of middle class white kids in our school, and upper-middle class white kids in our school. They come from a whole orientation of, you know, learning a language will be better for jobs but that's really for everybody in terms of selling it to students, you know, the job thing. Like I was talking to two students outside my room today, who were just

off task and whatnot and the dean came by and the dean's pitch to them was about "learn a language you know you're going to make more money don't you know that? Dunananana." So it's kind of this conventional wisdom that's being pushed forward, which is to some degree is true, you know not completely true but yes you make more money if you're bilingual you know

R: Yeah

N: or more job opportunities. It is true. It is true. Sorry am I answering your questions?

R: Yeah. Yeah. No no.

N: Okay.

R: Um. So what is your typical interaction with students taking ESL as a world language teacher?

N: Um.. I interact with a few students who take ELL. You know, actually I'm not sure which of my students are receiving ELL. I mean I know like one student is... works with C (EL teacher) um... but I know that C keeps tabs on a number of students as opposed to working directly with them. But I've got a couple of students who I think I've become aware that um... since English is the language that we use um.. to explain what the Spanish means, sometimes that can be an obstacle. So my, but my interaction with the ELL, or students who are in ELL, are mostly um...just a few that I have in my classroom so probably not that many

R: Um hum.

N: And and then just some in the hallway but I don't necessarily know who is what.

R: Um... So how do you think they are different from the students that you are teaching? We're both teaching languages, right? In ESL class and in world languages.

N: Yeah

R: How do you think that might be different?

N: I think there might be different motivations and issues with picking up the different languages, like for the kids that are learning Spanish, um... in my classes, it's like this fun extra thing "oh" I think they are kind of like a novelty "wow, I can say a couple of things. I can say my opinion about this, or I can understand this in Spanish. That's pretty cool" But they don't feel, I don't think, um... I mean I don't know how the ELL students are feeling about it but, there is a little more of urgency to, especially amongst the teachers to like, you know, to become proficient both academically and socially. It's pretty hard, tall task um.. and... So what's your question again?

R: So yeah... so how how do you think... so then how do you think they are perceived like ELL students versus students taking maybe world languages?

N: Um... I think, I'm not sure exactly but I kind of get a feeling of, like they are behind. That they are viewed deficient. So kind of negative. I don't get a cool vibe.

R: Okay

N: Like from "Ooh, wow you're in ELL. That's so cool." You know it's more like "oh you don't know English and English is what we all use so you are going to be behind but hope you'll learn fast."

R: Um hm. And where do you think those vibes come from?

N: (silence...) Um... well I think from like a school system that values being really verbal in English. And um... and maybe it comes from a white centric, some people would say, white supremacist... you know, I mean not in an overt like, evil kind of way but, this is a system in which we are in and that's the standard, that's the norm and that's where everything is based on. What your grades are based on, you know, how you're doing using English to explain everything, math, science....um... and I mean, I'm not sure but in the vibe with the new president and the government I mean um... There is this one student who I have that has gotten really quiet. He's been quiet already but um...he's like, really quiet and barely will talk and I don't know what goes on inside his head and I think there's a lot that is going on inside his head and

R: Um hum.

N: um, so I don't know if he's like picking up concern of his parents you know, based on the politics that are going on, you know.

R: Yeah.

N: You ever thought about that? You have a thought about like where the vibe is or what the vibe is for ELL students?

R: I mean, I'm hoping that's, where I'm trying to figure it out, you know. Like, do you think there are differences in expectations like kids in world languages classes verses kids in ESL classes. They are both trying to do the same thing, which is learn another language and be proficient in it.

N: Right.

R: But like, what makes them... like you've kind of said like they are feeling like they're behind, like they are more seen in a deficiency model... like are we providing different expectations of how fast kids could learn a language or you know? What are some expectations that might be giving off that vibe? I guess...

N: (silence) Talk about test scores and, you know, I'm not really paying attention to ELL that much but there's the WIDA and there's the whatever other, you know, scores are and I'm sure they are tying back to their scores, that ELL teachers... in addition to all the other things that they're doing, you know, paying attention to test scores, to have kids eventually test out of needing extra English help. So there's one that's like a real proficiency in progress with their English and the other one is like a test score that you're suppose to show it on paper um...

R: What would it look like if we... What would you think would...what changes would you see if we were valuing bilingual students, or multilingual students more?

N: If we're valuing them more?

R: Um hm

B: I think we could have more signs up around the building in different languages, um... and, you know, typical things bathrooms, stairways, and cafeteria and I am seeing more of those things, in the cafeteria their official stuff is in a couple of different languages I think, that they put up on the walls there. Um... I mean depending on student need, we would have more classes that kind to cater either or brought up the cultural richness of, you know, where these languages come from, and so validating them more. Um...

R: Yeah that sounds great.

N: Okay.

R: Thank you.

N: Oh, great.

R: Do you have any last words?

N: um...

R: On bilingualism in our school?

N: Well, I don't really think that much about bilingualism in our school. Well, I mean the thing is I think about it everyday cuz I'm trying to get my kids, my Spanish students to be kind of on the way to being bilingual

R: Un huh.

N: But-But again, it's in that, it's in that extra like yes it's adding an extra language just like the way for a Somali student is adding English as an added language but English is

the lingua franca. English is like what's going, the the language that they need to operate in this country um... and... um... so I don't know I just...

R: So do you think the expectations of like, as a teacher, you know, like, do you think the expectations are different being an ESL teacher and a world language teacher? And how?

N: I think that, I mean I think so. I happen to be lucky, maybe you are too, to not have heavy duty expectations of specifically "you have to know this, you have to know that" you know? Um... Whereas, seems like maybe there's more pressure for them, ELL, it's more under the microscope. The students and the teachers are probably more under the microscope. Um... And especially since some people are like not into to the refugees, and refugee students. Like to say that if there's an argument being made that um, a lot of resources are being spent and there's not much result from it, you know that it's not just worth it, and they should just learn Spanish the way my grand parents did when they came from Poland, or you know, um... but I think that our idea of for having this multicultural meal, you know and it's just a step in that direction of acknowledging and embracing, and welcoming and um, valuing you know, the cultures and languages that we have in the building.

K: Cool.

N: Okay.

K: Alright. Thank you.

March 7th 2017
Interview 2 with Camille

Researcher (R): Um, so tell me Camille, do you think your, our school values bilingualism? Why or why not?

Interviewee Camille (C): Uh, I think in some ways it does and some ways it doesn't. I think that just being an IB school, or MYP school, it is part of the curriculum that all students have the opportunity to learn language. I think the fact that we offer three languages is huge. Um, I know that there are so many schools where they basically if they offer anything, they just offer Spanish so um, giving kids a choice, or just at least offer, showing that there are many different languages, um...that are useful and um... providing them and is supporting that kind of program, I think shows, tells a lot about our school. Um, I think that, sometimes I feel that, um... people aren't a hundred percent understanding what it means to be in a language class, that it's not just fluff. Um, and I think that (noise in background) and I think that I don't want to blame administrators for this but when a student comes in really late and then they are put into a world language way into the semester, into the trimester, and are sort of expected to just catchup, I think that shows, in some ways that shows a lack of, understanding how difficult and the academic and cognitive um... what you need to be able to, to learn another language. It's not just, like "oh we watch fun movies and eat crepes." No, I mean you have to build on a foundation, and you need to be in class everyday and and um, to be able to build on top of that so putting kids in, it kind of sets them up for failure in a way. So that shows sort of a lack of understanding of what it means to be a bilingual, and what it means to learn another language. I also know that we have many students in the school that speak other languages at home and up until this year having the multicultural festival, and highlighting those different languages that are spoken, until then most kids, people didn't know that there are lots of bilingual kids already in the school. So...

R: So, then what do you think are factors that might limit the promotion of bilingualism in our school?

C: Something that might um...

R: limit....

C: limit...

R: the promotion of bilingualism.

C: uh... I think... I honestly...I think having a high school graduation requirement not include a world language is a big part of it. Um.. there are many parents, I know, we know, that to get into a college, if you are going to, certainly if you are going to do a liberal arts college, but even beyond that, you need to have language. Um, for first to get in, to be enrolled in a college, but also to graduate college, you need to have a certain amount of world language, another language, um... but.. as a high school requirement,

it's not required to graduate high school to have a world language and that.. it diminishes the importance, especially for a lot of parents, and not even, so much in the city, we live in an environment where a lot of people have traveled and they do understand the benefits of being bilingual but I think that in particular is a big problem. Um.. because then when funding comes around then people, schools need to cut funding, they are not going to going to cut math, or language arts if that is a requirement to graduate high school. So I mean it really comes from those policies, I think, policies have a lot to do with it.

R: Um, how visible do you think the value of bilingualism is promoted in our school? So we talked about IB a little bit in our school..

C: um hm...

R: so um..

C: I think that we are doing a, a good job, having posters in different languages, which is important.. I think um, I know our IB coordinator is very interested in the world languages department, um.. in promoting that... I do see languages, and not just languages taught in our school, but also other languages written all around the building, I think that those are important things. Um... I think that... I think offering the choices for the languages is important too. I think showing kids that, it is something that you need to think about and not just say well I'm just going to take this because it's there. I get to choose a language, I get to explore the languages, I think that's really valuable in that sense. Um... So... those are things that I see promoting bilingualism. Um hum.

R: um hum. Um.. How much voice do you think our bilingual students have in our school? Or like do you like see...

C: Um... I don't see kids... I think that kids that come from bilingual families are not necessarily... they don't promote that and I've learned from conferences, from student parent teacher conferences that... there's um... there are a lot of um... students who speak other languages and they never bring that up at all, and I don't know if they are embarrassed, I don't know if it's an age thing, but because middle schoolers are so, kind of embarrassed as being seen different from other students and that was certainly the case for when I was a kid, I had lots of friends that were bilingual and they never promoted it because they wanted to be American, as American as possible. So that's definitely part of it. It's somewhat of an age issue. But, um I think teachers could be helpful, at being more, promoting more, "oh tell me about, how do you say this in" Like I have a student that speaks Latvian, and I never really would have know that and um.. but just ask "how do you say this in Latvian... how do you say" asking them "how do you say this in... Swahili, how do you say this in Arabic?" whatever language is spoken in the classroom and having more teachers, not just the world language teachers. Because of course we are going to say that. But OTHER teachers in the building. Math teachers, art teachers, asking those questions will be really helpful.

R: Yeah. Um...Do you think there is one student that you see embodied as a representation of the promotion of successful bilingualism in our school? Is there one student like, "oh yeah" like you know you talked about your Latvian student

C: Yeah but she was really quiet about it.

R: Yeah

C: So that was more what I learned from the Parent teacher conferences. Um, I have one kid. I'm sure that there's more if I thought really hard right now. Um.. I do have one student who's Somali, yet lived in Kenya. And that part of his identity is really strong. Like the fact that he lived in Kenya, the fact that he travels to Kenya still, like once a year and that he can speak four languages already is a big, like he really takes pride in that. And he's not, it's not that he tells everybody but he's definitely told me more than once and when he says it he looks very genuinely very proud of the fact that he can speak these languages. And it makes him excited to learn French 2 because he's just like adding it to another list of languages he knows. But he also knows how useful it is because to fly to Kenya he flies into Paris, so he feels like now when I'm in Paris I can communicate and then I'm in Kenya and um... he's very proud of the fact that he can speak several languages. So um I would definitely say he is one of them, there might be a couple more but um

R: yeah

C: He's definitely one. Yeah.

R: umm. So let's see...What is your typical interaction with students taking world language classes? You teach a language...

C: hmm...what's my interaction with them?

R: How would you describe some main characteristics of students taking world languages?

C: Okay. Well we do see pretty much everybody. Because it's part of our curriculum so... um there are definitely six graders who come in genuinely are pretty excited to learn any language. Because they most of them haven't had much opportunity so to be able to take a language in a classroom everyday is really fun. They seem very excited. Some people seem nervous but also kind of excited. There's a lot more acceptance. Um...I think that by eight grade it-it is harder and I think kids starts to, just also personality of 8th graders, is to be a little bit more push back and um, they've been with me for three years which is different than other classes for the most part, unless it's like band. But they've been with me for a really long time so um.. they kind of hit something that's a little bit hard um, they start to.. it's um... you know, sometimes it can be frustrating or...not so much why are we doing this? cuz I think they know why they are doing it but um... there's less excitement

R: yeah

C: I feel, for some. Not for everybody. I still have some eighth graders that are, who super love French. but it-it is harder and just personality wise too and just kind of exhaustion, I think they get tired and it gets harder.

R: yeah. How do you think your students are perceived like them learning a language? How do you think they are perceived?

C: I think in our school, because so many people, everyone does it for the most part. It's just seen as normal. I know, I can give you an example of another school from not from my own personal experience, but just hearing from parents and students that where there's an immersion program that feeds into the middle school and in that middle school they have a really high level of that language as the immersion kids but they are with a lot of kids that didn't do immersion, and they are seen as geeky. So that's definitely the perception that this is the group they are kind of nerdy and they kind of have certain names that are not, you know, mean but , but kind of, they are not cool. They are not the cool kids.

R: yeah

C: um...and that follows them all the way through high school.

R: Do you think in our school, that these kids are valued, in like people...?

C: well, I think in our school yes. Because, um, again they all have to take a language so they are all sort of in the same level, for the most part and I think it's the community too. The community kind of, they don't see world languages being nerdy or weird.

R: um hm

C: I see a lot of kids...

R: What do you think people see it as?

C: I just think they see it as another subject. Um... I think they just see it as humanities, or art or ... something or robotics. It's just another thing that they are doing. I don't um... they are some kids that are really into it and there are some kids not so much but it kind of crosses all the different groups of cliques. I guess I could say.

K: Yeah.

C: um hm.

R: um. So then looking at some ESL students, how would you describe some characteristics of students taking ESL, as opposed to students taking world language?

C: um so.. that is different. I I think that there are definitely um... we have some EL students that are also taking a world language so we do have that. Um... I ... as for the school, I think you know, we have like two main groups of EL languages, or like the students we have Somali and Spanish speaking so I think that the kids that are not in world language but in EL are just a sort of seen as kind of newcomers. That's sort of how I see them.

R: um hm

C: because the kids we teach, that also do ELL plus a world language, they are kind of grouped with the rest of the kids but the students that actually do a pull-out EL, like they are not as well known like I don't hear kids talk about them so much. Um, they seem a little bit separate. I would say that. That's just my perception.

R: um hmm.. uh...what are some things that form those perceptions of these students do you think?

C: Just for the fact that I don't hear much talk about them. Like...Um.. I don't think they know their names really well. Uh... they probably when they are working in groups, like in other classes, not in my class but if there, say for example they are doing a project together in language arts, um... they probably have support by maybe an EL teacher and therefore they don't integrate in the groups the same way that the non-EL students would work um.... I think that maybe the case. And I think they kind of keep to themselves a bit too, I think they probably are probably feel very comfortable, since they are, especially the ones that are in a pullout class, they are friends, and I'm sure they are you know shy and-and don't feel as confident to branch out into other groups of kids. I think that would be very hard.

R: um hum.

C: So, I think it's a common, those are the perceptions that I see.

R: Okay. Um.. so students in ESL classes and world languages classes are both engaged in becoming bilingual.

C: Yes

R: or multilingual.

C: um hum

R: Um...What do you think are the differences between theses two classes?

C: Well, I think the kids who are in world language class, speak English as a dominant language are in the dominant culture. So even, so for example, my one student that I'm thinking about who speaks Swahili his English is also... native-like, English. So I don't believe he's in any, or has no EL services. So he's seen as a dominant culture because he speaks English just like the dominant culture. And understands the dominant culture. He understands what's it like to live here and what... what it's like to... what kids do here. He understands that so he fits in. um, I think that that students who are in EL services, are more newcomer, to a varying degree. Um...And... so they are seen as... not the dominant culture ... I mean, I do think that affects how the kids see them. And, I also think when you have sort of a dominant... two dominant cultures that are in the EL program, so for example you have a groups Somali students. They speak Somali. It's not like it's a multicultural group of EL students. So if there was like a Somali, maybe someone from Poland, maybe somebody from China, where it was more of a mix, I think... that would be easier to kind of break apart because there wasn't this one dominant culture.

R: Um hm

C: Does that make sense?

R: Um hm

C: I think that's where... in this school, that's the case. That's not the case in other schools that I've seen. But it is in this school.

R: Um hm. Do you think because they are still learning a language,

C: um hm

R: Do you think there are differences in like expectations of what each group is supposed to be...

C: yeah...

R: and where do those come from?

C: hm... um... I think that... there's certainly an expectation that EL students are going to learn English faster. Than almost to a degree that, I mean, unrealistically faster than students who are in a world language class. Now, kids who are in world language class like French, aren't hearing French all day, they are just hearing it for my 49-minute class 5 days a week. Um... so they aren't, they are not going to get as much input. They just are not. Um... But if you are a student from Somalia, and you come here, and you come into school, I mean you are hearing English for more hours but you go home and you hear Somali for the most, for the most part. Or Spanish... if you are from a um, Spanish speaking family. So you're hearing more English. You, There's English on the Television, and other areas in your community, when you are out in your community. But um, I think that, the expectation is students can kind of, and our teachers don't speak, I

mean they probably know a little bit of Somali like but some, but they, it's not like they are doing, can explain things in Somali to help them understand in the English language. For my understanding. Um... and I don't think they speak Spanish. So they can't help... explain in Spanish English concepts.

R: yup

C: So that's a... so to expect a student who doesn't have, who has a low-level of English to understand academic content just in English, us as world language teachers know how hard that is. Because we try to do that and the kids look at like us, if I try to explain an activity that is too complex and I explain it in French, they are lost. They are totally lost. So to explain hard concepts in, academic concepts in English, I mean the expectation that they understand all of that is I think is NOT realistic.

R: Yeah.

C: That's what I think.

R: Yeah.

C: I mean, we've tried it. I mean, I've been in a French school and I didn't understand much. To try to understand history, literature in French, with French people and a French teacher... that's really hard.

R: um hm

C: really hard. So...

R: yup

C: um hm.

R: So you've talked about one of the students, who seem proud to be bilingual, or multilingual. Um... so what are some things that you see that could be beneficial for others, being able to be more proud of their multilingual...

C: I think just, recognizing and making it verbal that we know you sp, how great it is that, and I wish I could speak that language. Or speak something like that. I mean, cuz, I think, I genuinely do feel... envy people who can speak multiple languages, fluently. So to express that as an adult, or as a teacher or all the adults to say "I think that's cool" and "I'm envious that you could do that," I think would be powerful. Even though they really want their peers, they also like, they also appreciate when we recognize things about them. Um hm.

R: Cool.

C: Yeah.

R: Alright. That's about it.

C: Okay. Good.

R: Do you have any other last words in terms of...

C: Well, I could also say that my own kids went to a dual immersion program so um, in terms of introducing content in the target language for those kids coming from Spanish speaking families. Um... I feel that that's a really good type of program too for younger kids. Um, to sort of promote biliteracy. Uh...for both cultures I think it's kind of a cool way of... I like that model. I think it's good. You have to implement it correctly. But I like that idea. Um hm.

R: Did your kids have trouble adjusting into like...

C: no...

R: it's not all..

C: No. because it's their dominant language. The dominant culture for them. So they didn't. I think they, it certainly benefited them because their Spanish is really good but I think it really benefits kids from Spanish speaking families too, or can. Because they can get content in Spanish. Um hm. Academic content.

R: Cool. Thank you.

C: Your welcome. Thank you.

March 8th 2017
Interview 3 with Ann and Shelly

Researcher (R): Um, so I wanted to ask you both, um, do you think that our school values bilingualism? Why or why not? It's kind of an open question.

Ann (A): Okay. Um... do you want to go first?

Shelly (S) : Well, what do you mean by values?

R: It could be how you interpret it.

A: I think the mentality might be there. But, the like, execution of you know, like we don't have a bilingual program, we don't have, necessarily always celebrate native language... um... I think we try to...um...

S: I was going to say the same thing. I think, I don't really feel like it's really built up enough as a skill like, that is valued, I feel like some of the programming here make it seem more like it's a deficiency instead of a strength.

R: Okay. So then how do you think like that is displayed in the school? Where do you see that? I guess? Like you talked about, like the idea's there kind of but it's not there like, we don't have bilingual programs and stuff. Do you see anywhere that we think we are promoting it?

A: Well we have the, like Somali day, for example. Or the Spanish day. Where I don't know we celebrate the culture, um... we'll have the food from that culture, you know, speakers who speak the languages so in those-in those instances it is. But then is it really being applied to every area? Every aspect? Or even a few. I don't even know, I guess we have the world cultures class, and we have the languages classes but um...you know throughout the school I'm not sure.

S: You know we have the Spanish for Spanish speaking class too. Spanish for Spanish speakers um... but it seems more like disjointed. Like it's not like a seamless cohesive school wide thing. It's just like pockets of a day, or a class, or things like that. That's just how I see it.

R: Um, and so what do you think are factors that might limit the promotion of multilingualism?

A: Well, I think one thing, maybe, that sets us apart from other schools is our demographic, our student body. We don't have as big of a population of Spanish speakers as other schools, we don't have even as big of a population of Somali speakers as other schools. Um... and our staff, you know we have a few staff members who speak

those languages but um. that's part of it I think. And then another part is like those parents aren't um... as involved for I'm not sure what, probably a lot of different reasons.

R: Um hm. Do you think you can name some of the reasons? Or have you heard from...

A: Um... I...I... I'm just thinking about something Shelly mentioned a while ago that B school, at B school, parents were like a lot more involved in the PTA

R: okay

A: um and...

R: the same parents that are here?

A: uh... not all of those parents, because I don't think B school is one of our feeder schools. We get kids from there but it's not, I don't think one of our main ones ... So I was just talking about you said that parents at B school were like a little bit more, they were involved, they were on the PTA but we don't really have that here.

S: But B school has a lot more community population of neighborhood families, that I think it was easier to get to, if you don't have transportation as accessible...

R: um hm

S: yeah. They are pretty involved. More parents are involved.

R: Um, but our school does try to provide transportation and things. So what is still hindering them from coming to our school and being more involved?

A: I-I think it still goes back to the community school. We have one parent liaison; she does not speak Spanish. Her demographic is more the African American community. Um... and...

S: We still have a lot of correspondence that's going home in English or we don't have correct addresses for some kids, or correct phone numbers, where they are getting robocalls in English.

R: um hm

S: Um, I don't always feel like the families know what's going on.

A: and I think with letters... Um... I think some parents, the only way to communicate with them is by having a Somali speaker talk to them or maybe a Spanish speaker in some cases. But like translating things into Somali when it's written isn't really going to do for much for certain parents.

R: um hm. That's good to know. um... how visible do you think the value of multilingualism is promoted in our school?

S: visible?

R: um hm.

S: Um...

R: We talked a little bit about um, like mail getting out and some of them are in different languages but not necessarily,

A & S: um hm.

R: Do you see anything else that is trying to promote multilingualism in our school?

A: Well I think, like for instance, like when I walk through and I see the door decorations.

R: Okay.

A: Like I think this, this language and cultures class has helped a little bit like their door is in Spanish. Um... at least I think I saw a door that's in Spanish or like... um... I don't remember if your door has, you know if there are some other languages, if you have Japanese on your door or something. So maybe in those cases, I guess it was, we did for that project choose holidays from around the world so it-it's relevant to put another language on there.

R: um hm.

A: Um, it's more for the purpose though of educating people about different holidays than promoting multilingualism.

S: And I don't know I feel, sometimes, it's evidence, or maybe I'm inferring too much from the situation but noticing students NOT feeling very proud or wanting to call attention to their linguistic heritage

R: um hm.

S: Like they just want to be seen like any other kid and I don't know if that's just typical for the age group. Um, but I don't, I'm not seeing that very much and I don't know if it's indicative of the fact that we don't, it's not valued here or if it's something else.

R: Um hm. That's perfect. Cuz, how... my next question was like how much voice do you think our bilingual students have in our school? Like do you think they are part of this community?

S: I think they do feel like they are a part. But, not... I don't know if it's identity things like wanting to identify as... I don't know. Maybe I'm inferring too much.

A: No, no. I think that students feel a part of the school

S: um hum.

A: but it's not always like out loud and proud about my bilingualism.

S: um hm.

A: It's, maybe for a couple of students like you mentioned a couple of students who are like really like really proud of their Spanish her, speaking heritage and they are totally bilingual.

R: um hm.

A: but that's a group of students who's successful here. They understand what's going on. They are not having, you know they are not, their language proficiency is at a place where they are able to be very successful academically here and in many, many areas. And maybe it's that students who don't have the full proficiency in one or more of those languages feel less proud about their native language because they see it as "uh if only I just knew English better"

R: Um hm. Yeah. This is kind of silly but what is your typical interaction with a student taking ESL? So then off of that, how would you describe some characteristics of students taking ESL?

S: Well, we obviously that's our job so... (laughs)

R: um hm.

S: um characteristics meaning like demographics?

R: um hm

S: Mainly the students here are Somali speakers. And Spanish speakers. Majority Somali speakers. Some are first generation. Others were born here. Or some where recent immigrants. Some where born here. It's a mixture.

A: um hum. Um. I would say many of them um, have at least, most of my students have at least one other sibling. If not more than that. Um...

R: Is it usually within the school? Or do they have like siblings in other schools?

A & S: Both

A: Here and elsewhere.

R: Um...How do you think they reflect the school's values?

A: Th-these students in ELL?

R: um hm.

S: well,

A: um...

R: or maybe kind of like, how do you think they are perceived generally within the school community? And how do they fit into the school?

S: I think it depends... um... I think some of the recent students end up being kind of frustrating to some people. Like they don't know what to do with them or how to help them. And not, I don't think that's necessarily reflective on the kid. It's more like maybe we don't have enough PD for staff, to help them um... figure out ways that they can help those kids in their classes.

A: um hm...

S: But usually when I get contact from other teachers it's about "what do I do with so and so"

A: um hum

S: out of frustration. Like, maybe they are feeling like they are not learning anything and they feel bad about that. Whatever the reason.

A: um hum. Yeah. Yeah. I would say, when teachers talk to us it's because they've just tried some things and they are not sure how to proceed, or maybe they haven't tried some things but they want to but they don't know what to do. Um....so... yeah as far as how the school perceives our students. It depends on how long they have been in the country and how much English experience they have

R: um hm.

A: Um, and with the more proficient students I think um... I think things are changing a little bit sometimes it's accommodating, sometimes it's kind of a headache for some people. like or us, another source of frustration. Just like, you know, like people getting frustrated with lack of, what they believe is like a lack of effort. Or...

R: By the students or the teachers?

A: uh... by the teachers. Like maybe some students too. Think that about other students too.

R: Um... so you don't teach a world language but how would you, so kind of comparing it, what are the main characteristics of students taking world languages? In both classes, students are learning a language um... how would you identify them? ... Like How would you consider them maybe similar or different to kids learning world languages as opposed to kids who are in EL classes that are still learning languages?

A: Like we are comparing students who take ELL with students who don't take ELL who are taking a language?

R: Or kids that are in world languages and might be also in ELL. I don't know if that's...

A: I don't know if it's possible but maybe.

S: I think it's just the, I mean, their whole school day is in English and they have one class on you know Japanese or Spanish or French. um, and they are getting like as much as you can get but they are not getting, they are not immersed. Um, our students are immersed all day but they still need structure... and support.

A: Um hm. Yeah and I think that maybe it contributes to some of the perspectives our students have on ELL as well "I'm already doing English" you know, "why do I need more" um... and that's something we, I think confront.

R: Do you think that you hear that from parents more or students themselves saying that?

A: I've heard it from both but I hear it more from students.

R: Okay. Um.. so students in ESL classes and world languages classes are both engaged in becoming multilingual. Um, what do you think are the differences between these two classes? Um, what are some of the differences that you can think of?

S: Between world language and...

R: Um hm...

S: Well I mean, I don't, I guess it's kind of hard of me to know because I'm not in, I don't see world language classes and how they are taught and...um, I mean we teach in one hundred percent of the target language all the time. And I don't know, I mean obviously that's the goal for everyone but I don't know with beginner like level like with 6th graders doing the carousel, I don't think that that that's going to be possible. Um. Yeah.

A: And, I think, yeah like, I don't know exactly how the, all the language courses are taught, but I would say, we really have a focus on academic content. So, we're teaching science. We-we're in, and the other thing is we are also co-teachers. So we're in those classes. And we know exactly what is being taught in science and social studies and therefore we can teach it in here. Whereas, it seems like, although I don't want to say I know for sure what happens, but it seems like in other language acquisition courses it's not quite as detailed of a focus on content and it's more like a variety of different things, perhaps some content focus but maybe not quite as frequent.

R: Um hm. So then what do you think are different expectations as acquisition goes?

A: Um, I think our expectations are pretty high. Because we know that what's at stake. Not saying that conversely other teachers don't know what's at stake but

S: It's, their whole academic experience and success depends on their acquiring academic English.

A: Yeah

S: Whereas I don't think the stakes are as high for the other languages. Because they are not taking their classes in Japanese, or French or Spanish.

R: Uh... And how do you think those expectations are formed?

A: Our expectations of the students and how they perform academically?

R: um hm

A: Um, I think they are formed. They are based on standards. And you know, what other teachers are teaching. You know, we are accountable for testing scores, so I think that plays a role. Um... and we know I think that like when we meet with parents, that they want their student, they want their children to do as well as they possibly can. So they-they don't want us to hold up and make it easy.

R: Um hm. Do you get a lot of parents asking about standards and testing when you talk to them? Like what are their expectations of their kids when they are in an EL class?

S: I think it depends. Like I don't know if I have a straight answer, one size fits all.

A: um hm.

S: um do you....

A: They don't ask about standards, they might ask about testing, because they want to know how they are doing. Uh... I think it varies. Some parents are more... most parents I know I think that I have talked to, every single one wants their child to be behaviorally

engaged and respectful and I think then the variation might come in like with how much of that focus should be on the academics. Um...

S: And I think sometimes there's a misconception that I've noticed and I know you've talked about it too, with like parents who come in and they see like the reading level of their kid and they get mad at them like "Hey, get your act together. You need to be reading better" and it's like if they haven't acquired enough vocabulary to read better, I mean, it's a process to get there it's not just like you're not focused or anything and I think that sometimes it gets blurred.

R: um hm. So where do you think that expectation is coming from? That they're like "why aren't you reading better?" like where....

S: Well, I mean if they see that their kid isn't meeting standards, meeting expectations on tests, or things like that.

A: I think it's yeah... I think it's um... I think it's kind of an emotional thing too. Like, there's an immediate reaction that you might have if your child is not up to par, and to kind of you know cover, there might be some shame involved and some guilt like, you know I wish I could have had my child in school at an earlier age, I wish we didn't have to... like come over here from our country or I wish they had gotten school in their home country and maybe as a way to kind of deal with that kind of anger of that situation, it kind of gets channeled at the kid

R: um hm

A: um...as a way to not kind of be embarrassed in front of a teach... a person in an authority position here

R: um hm.

A: um, perhaps that's how they were, have been treated in the past.

R: Well, I think that's all about the questions that I have.

S: Okay

R: Any other final thoughts, questions ...

A: I can't think of anything.

R: Alright. Thank you.

March 23rd 2017
Interview 4 with Larry

Researcher (R): Alright. Tell me, do you think that your school values bilingualism. Why or why not?

Interviewee Larry (L): Bilingualism.

R: mm hmm.

L: I would think...

R: or multilingualism.

L: There you go. I would say multilingualism yes. They do value that in a sense. We offer, three languages at School A: French, Japanese and Spanish. And we also have a budding ELL program. Uh, two ELL teachers who are doing some pull-out classes but also some co-teaching models as well. Uh, since our school is an IB school, the idea of international awareness and international mindedness is at the foundation of what our school mission is and so multilingualism is part of that as well.

R: mm hmm. Why do you say “budding” ELL?

L: I would say budding ELL because... everything seems to be budding in Minneapolis. It's not a full-grown program. The number of ELL students that we have are not adequately supported. Um, because just the sheer number of teachers we have, we only have two teachers and that's, their case load is much too large and... budding also because they are doing some great work of trying to help all members of the staff, across disciplines provide the support as much as they can for our ELL students. We have a level reading library that started last year that's continuously growing, they are presenting PD in a variety of ways how to best support students and make sure they can access those materials at um, grade level but at their reading level.

R: mm hmm. And you said uh, multilingualism in one sense. Like what are the, what does that mean? What is that...

L: All of our students get to take a language for the most part. Um, they are either in one of the three languages. In 6th grade, here, they get a nice carousel of those three languages but... outside of them taking that language, how are we allowing them to...grow outside of just that classroom. Where do we see those languages? and are we using those languages outside of the foreign language wing in our building.

R: um hm.

L: That's why I say in one sense. I mean, it's easy to say “oh yeah, we're all about multilingualism” because we offer these classes but are we really helping students move

beyond just saying “Hi! my name is” “hello” let me count for you...how are we giving them the skills to use that language in a real world context.

R: m hm. Um... so where do you think this uh, promotion of multilingualism is? how do you see it displayed in our school?

L: How do I see it displayed in our school. Um... well, we see these students in those classes. And that’s the number one thing. If we are committed to having students be in a true IB program, every student being able to take a language other than their home language is kind of important. So we see the students doing that. If you walk through the hallways in the foreign language wing, you see the student work that they have done, I know some teachers utilize in morning messages for advisory or in some of their problems in whatnot in their classrooms they’ll use the, some of the languages that we see here. Or we ask students like, especially I’m a Lang and Lit teacher too so looking at origin of words, “do you recognize a word from a language.” Like we were looking at defenestrate and fenetre in French means window and to defenestrate someone means to throw them out.

R: ooh.

L: So my students who are in French they knew that. Iridescent iris and ---? for rainbow. And we are able to decipher meanings those ways. So we try to build on some of those language pieces in our class. Because we get to play with language that way. But I think we can do more to really help promote the multilingualism in our building. But also celebrate the languages that our kids speak. Ah... We do a little bit of it in advisory as students are communicating with each other and whatnot, especially when we have our communicator month. Like how to say hello in different greets and things like that. But allowing the student the opportunity to shine would be very cool to see.

R: So what do you think are factors that might limit that?

L: Uh... I think some of the factors, I mean, the staple factor for any teaching thing is time. How do I have enough time to be able to implement these things in my classroom. Uh, is this at the forefront of the mind. You know it’s really great when we go have a PD about certain equity issues or different classroom strategies and then for the next 2 weeks we are able to like “Oh yeah I remember how to do that.” But if we don’t keep getting reminded about those things or different ideas, they can be put at the backburner for all the other multitude of things that come up as we are trying to teach our kids or plan lessons or whatnot. Uh... Comfortableness? I think would be it. It’s, I’m, it’s just easy for me just count down in French or Spanish cuz those are languages I’m comfortable with but asking a teacher who’s not comfortable with that to try to implement that in their classroom might be hard.

R: mm hm

L: So those are some of the factors I see.

R: um.. so how visible do you think the value of bilingualism is promoted, or multilingualism is promoted in our school? You talked about like IB as being part of it so

L: mm hmm

R: so there are student work in our school but do you see any other way that it's promoted?

L: That it is promoted? uh... um I don't.. I can put it on a scale of 1 to 10 and I'd probably say that our school we're probably at a 5, we are right in the middle.

R: okay

L: We are not super good at it. We are not terrible at it because we do have these options but think we can be doing better. Uh.. one aspect I would love to see is that even in our arts program whether our students in our choir classes or band classes are pulling in uh... pieces from artists from around the world that use different language and really talk about why that language is there why would, what we can learn from that language and things like that.

R: Um... let's see. How do you think multilingual students in our school is or isn't promoted?

L: How do I think it is or isn't promoted? I mean I talked a little bit earlier about kind of the gaps that we have, I don't see anyone trying to suppress multilingualism.

R: Right.

L: Um, you know another thing that we can talk about too speaking about language classes, we do have like our Spanish for Spanish speakers class. Which is a way of uh promoting multilingualism but that's for a certain sect of students either the students came from our Spanish immersion elementary school that's in our area or have a... Spanish speaking background with their families. Uh, So that's one way we are promoting it.

R: um hm.

L: I know in the coming months that we are hoping to have our like multicultural night at School A, a taste of A type of deal.. um... that's one thing. This year I've noticed, and maybe a little bit last year too, when we have our code reds, are post code reds we started having different languages and I mean throughout the building we have learner profiles posters in different languages as well but I think we definitely... posters are easy.

R: Okay. Yup.

L: Posters are easy to hang.

R: Yup.

L: But how do you use those posters as a teaching tool, as a culture tool in our school.

R: m hm.

L: That's a good question. I don't have the answer.

R: Yeah. (laughs). No. um...How much voice do you think our uh...multilingual students have in our school?

L: ... the ones that are proficient in English and have parents who can advocate, can arrive(?) that conversation. However, our ELL students don't have a strong enough voice. I would definitely say that. And there are multitude of factors that go on to it. Whether students don't have the vocabulary or the parents don't have the vocabulary or even seats at the table or they don't even realize that they have an invitation to the table.

R: right.

L: uh.. I think those are some of the factors that are preventing our students from having, our multilingual students from having the best opportunity to succeed in our school.

R: mm hm.. do you... when we talk about like multilingual students, do you have like a student that you see embodied as a representation of like successful multilingualism? Is there any one that you could think of?

L: Like any one single, like this is...

R: yeah, or like or a couple

L: this is like students, I mean

R: or like any...

L: oh yeah... so it was really interesting. That's a good question. Because when you started to bring up the multilingual students, I started to think about some of our ones that have skills in both areas. My mind went there. I can think of a seventh grader a couple of 8th graders that have those skills who are able to translate back and forth, um, transfer back and forth, more appropriately. But then I also started thinking about the students, when I think about multilingual, even our ELL students and that was my SECOND guess. Like when I heard multilingual I heard "Oh yeah, proficient in both places." But now as I'm thinking about it even more, in a spare of our conversation, I started to envision more of our ELL students and how they are multilingual as well. It's so easy to forget the for

many of our students uh,... English is the extra language that what they are coming to their table with to begin with.

R: um hm. Um... So maybe going on that track, what is your typical interaction with a student taking uh...ESL?

L: what is my traditional... So I have... I have interactions in a variety of ways. One being that I have some students who are just stand-alone students who have either existed from ELL services but they still sometimes get checked-in with or I have a couple of students that are in Ms.B's writing advisory

R: um hm

L: So whether they are at speaking and listening section in WIDA exam being whether they need to be in their writing is not there, so they are getting pulled out to get extra support there. Uh, but outside of that, since I'm not co-teaching with one of the ELL teachers, I'm not seeing too much interaction like I'm the daily with them.

R: Um... how would you describe some characteristics of students taking ESL?

L: Um, how I describe some characteristics of them?

R: um hm

C: Students of color. I think it's really easy for us to put that in there. It's like this "oh you are" and I'll even for our school it's traditionally Somali-Somali students. These are the students in the ESL classrooms. Are those the only students that need that support? Absolutely not. And so, they sometimes, it's ugh (frustrating grunt). They automatically identify the students the most need, most need, in just like "Oh, you should be in the ESL classroom" instead of the lay in the classroom. We need you to do the foundations in English before you can get into the deeper things. But then you get such a wide variety of student needs in those ESL classrooms.

R: Yeah

L: You have students at level 1 all the way to level 4, and level 5 even some that are still in there.... Uh, and for those teachers to try to differentiate lessons in a manner that's helping the student who barely knows their letters to who is able to communicate effectively but just not exited through the WIDA strategies yet, it's tough. Uh, I remember having a student, and I don't even know if it's ESL, but it was a student who came to with me with no literacy and that student ended up in the ESL program. He spoke English right?

R: mm hm..

L: but couldn't read, couldn't write. But he could talk. He grew up in a farm in Jamaica so... (laugh)

R: Yeah! Yeah

L: But he, it was, it was kind of a catch fall(?). For the students who are just like.... can't hack it if you will, in a traditional classroom and "oh well, you'll just go put them over there. "

R: mm hmm

L: And hopefully those blessed teachers would figure out what to do with them.

R: (laughs) Um, how do you think these ESL students contribute to our school culture? Do you think they reflect the school's values?

L: Do I think our ESL students reflect our school's values? We have those students on the first floor, right across from the main office. Yet at times I feel like that classroom could be considered the same, when traditionally special ed, dark corner in the basement. Right?

R: mm hmmm

L: They, like this is the ESL room. The kids go there. We've such an interesting dynamic of culture in our building where we have traditionally affluent, uh... students predominantly white who... carry themselves through high standards of excellence and then we have low performing students and then we have our ESL students. So, trying to, it's almost like an identity crisis like who is School A? And since our borders changed about 4 years ago, we've actually have been getting in more students who can classify as ESL and in fact more black and brown students

R: mm hmm

L: and it really is, it's been a teaching change for many of our teachers. They've had to figure out well "How do I best scaffold my lessons for kids who are at this level, also while providing the academic rigor to the others ones who are at a higher level" and so finding that balance can be challenging.

R: Yeah. That's interesting. Um, How do you think, so you just talked about like how the ESL classroom is seen as the dark corner of our school like how do you think they are perceived generally? From...

L: Like students? The teachers?

R: Both.

L: Both? I don't know. I would s... I ... I would say that our kids for the most part are generally accepting. They, when they are in a classroom together, they work together and they do what they need to do.

R: mm hmm

L: However, you look at the lunchroom. Our lunchroom is very segregated. There's like the white kid table, the black kid table but... why is that? Is it because they feel like they can't come together? Or that's the only time that they can come together with people that look like them? I'm not sure.

R: mm hmm

L: And so... I think with our ESL, even you'll find all our Somali girls or Somali boys sitting at one table. Verses all of our African American boys over here. So...how we create a more coalescent, blending of those groups is yet to be seen.

R: mm hmm. And then so how do you think staff see these ESL students?

L: I think our staff sees them as members of the community. And I think few, (gurgled sounds) I'm trying to figure out what adjective to use there. I would say a good number of the teachers are struggling with how best to provide the best academic experience for these students.

R: mm hmm

L: and there is a cry for, "well, what materials do we have? What supports," It's not like we just want to push those kids off into a corner and say "No, you just do you over there. I'm going to teach the class." We want to get them to a place where they feel like they are part of the classroom community.

R: mm hmm. So moving from the ESL students, what is your typical interaction with a student taking world language classes?

L: Well there's that every other student in the building. I mean you... that's just like a normal student interaction. And I think that's, what we would hope to see with it being an IB school is that all students being able to participate in that. So a typical world language student will just be like a typical student in the classroom. Um, Let's just think about the students in my advisory, in general, I have students in all three of the languages.

L: Cool.

R: They will be talking about what they are learning in class, they will share with me the language that they are sharing, um... and learning about and what the different study of units they are going on.

R: Nice.

L: Some gripe about having to be there but.

R: (laughs)

L: Their middle schoolers. That's what they do.

R: Yup. (laugh). So in that sense, do you think they reflect the school's values? We talked about IB...

L: Do those students reflect the school's values? I would say they would fit more into our mission statement than our ESL student. Yes, I would agree with that. It's easy for them to fit into that box. Than our ESL students because... the ESL students.... Aren't in a language per say. They aren't taking French, Japanese, whatnot. They are, almost like an addendum, if you will, to our school's mission and who we are as our school identity.

R: Okay, um... let's see...

L: We definitely do more to make them less as an addendum and more of... a part of who we are.

R: yeah, but both students in ESL classes and world language classes, or like students in both classes are both engaged in becoming multilingual.

L: mm hmm

R: So what do you think, so you said that they are more, mmm, they don't reflect the mission as much?

L: Well in the traditional sense of it. Yeah. The traditional sense of it. Uh... I don't, I see our students who take French, Japanese, Spanish as our more traditional, more language acquisition setting. As being shown off more than our ESL students.

R: um hm. Do you see any other differences between the two classes?

L: Um...

R: Because ESL is still part of the language acquisition.

L: It's true. ESL is part of that. And so it's easy for... language acquisition classes just to be seen as those three Fs, flags, food, and festival. And this is all we are learning about. Whereas the ESL classroom seems to be more, skill based. This is how you will learn how to survive in a traditional school setting. Here is the vocabulary and skills needed in order to go next door and be able to participate and do the work that is being asked of you.

R: mm hmm. Um... so do you think there are differences in expectations? You just kind of talked about it foods and festivals so expectation that if kids are in world cultures is that they just kind of learn a culture and then with ESL, they learn skills?

L: Since the students who are in those other classes, the traditional French, Japanese, and Spanish, for the most part already have those skills, those foundations ones, I think they are afforded the opportunity to get a chance to dive into the culture and whatnot. Like... think about it like a bucket model right? Those students' buckets are already to a capacity where they can build upon that. Whereas our ESL students are sometimes seen as... who don't have their buckets full yet so we need to fill in those gaps and fill in those buckets in order for them to hopefully, eventually at some point, to get to the point where they can do that.

R: um.. so like those different expectations that you kind of touched on them, of like they, the ESL kids might not have the necessary skills um but what do you think, like that expectation's come from? Why is it that ESL classes tend to be skill based verses um world languages...

L: mm hmm... Gut reaction? The savior mentality.

R: Okay.

L: Like "Oh, you are in this system that wasn't created for you. And now I need to help you be able to navigate that system."

R: mm hmm

L: "and so, so that you don't get further behind, further disenfranchised, let me try to get you up to speed as much as we possibly can."

R: mm hmm. And do you see any structures in place within our school that tends to like put those expectations on these different classes?

L: Um.... The sheer fact that ESL is such a small sect of our building, like a small number of kids get it. It kind of gets just pushed out to the side. Like I said before, even though they are on the main floor of the building, they kind of get "you do you." And a lot of it all comes down to the fact that teachers, even arguably administration as well don't know what to do with ESL. They don't have the skillset to be able to provide the best, now, it's not that they don't want to. It's just that they don't have the necessary training, the necessary ideas, necessary research and so... we rely on our two ESL teachers to be the ones to provide that support.

R: mmm hmm

L: Whereas if you go into a foreign language classroom, I can easily see, I might not know the language but I know how to do good teaching so I can try to suggest ideas on how to put those things in there.

R: mm hmm

L: Whereas, how to teach a student how to read, I don't know how to do that. I can teach a kid how to READ like dive deeper into a text but phonetics and whatnot, that's way over my head. I have no idea.

R: Yeah. Cool. That is pretty much my interview.

L: Okay. Did you hear the information you wanted to hear?

R: Yeah. Absolutely. Do you have any last thoughts on multilingualism? Or how they are valued in our school?

L: um... the questions you are asking right there are dang good questions. I think like if more people were asked those questions, we, perhaps have some different discourse within our building.

R: hmm I see

L: So I applaud the questions you are asking. I like the idea of where your research is going. I would like to see what you come up with.

R: Alright. Thank you.

March 31st

Interview 5 with Idir

Researcher (R): um...Do you think that our school values bilingualism? Why or why not?

Idir (I): I think it does biling-, it-it it values, the school values, uh bilingualism

R: mm hmm

I: but just like any other school or entity, there are always some languages that are valued more than others

R: okay so what do you think which uh, languages are more valued than others?

I :I would, I would say that you know, the languages that are I guess um... are seen as seem... useful to the kids in the long run

R: mm hmm

I: and those languages perhaps are the language that now we are taking, the kids are learning like Japanese, French what is the other one now...

R: Spanish

I: Spanish. Yeah. Those languages are you know, maybe something that the kids would benefit in the future so...that's why they've been offered

R: um, do you, how do you feel that way or why do you think you feel that way?

I: I just, I'm- I'm I'm just kind of like making that, I guess, expressing that assertion because of what I see, uh... so it's not like I'm criticizing, and that I'm saying like other languages should be taught as well. I'm not-I'm not saying that(?) particular so many things are parents' choice that are a lot of things so but I'm-I'm just assuming like, I remember when I was learning languages...and you know... I speak my native language Somali but Arabic, you know were taught in our country so we knew how to read Arabic, and anyone who wants to pursue Arabic, to learn Arabic. Then we're okay, we're seem like that's a normal thing. Because like you know Arabic is based on our religion and it's like, it's like everywhere. And English, was-was seen also international language.

R: m hm

I: Which means many people speak. So that it means if you speak English, that means there are more chances, that you should be able to get a job, you should be able to get a, I guess a good schooling or whatever. So I think the reason that the kids, families in here value the language that I pointed out, are because they see their kids benefiting from it.

Which is a normal way to think if you're a parent so.... That's how I feel, you know that's why I feel, those languages are valued why their parents, and parents are doing, them they're telling the school and if they are not, even society is saying that. So yeah so, I-I would think, that's how, that's why I feel some languages are valued more than others yeah.

R: mm hmm. Um... so you think that they value uh, languages but what are some languages that you don't see valued and so why do you feel that they are not valued as much?

I: You know I think some of the languages that are, I mean not like valued in a way that is like putting them down but they are not being valued, I mean like, you know, people respect you but like when we consider how people are being taught, a language being you know taught, offered at school then that means that the language is being valued and seem official for the kids so... that's how I, that's how I, the other languages doesn't mean they don't value but they respect and value but like they don't, they don't see them as I guess important for the kids, for the parents, yeah for-for their future.

R: mmm so how do you think um like the bilingual students in our school is or isn't promoted?

I: First of all, I'm not familiar with like how a kid can be promoted by a language?

R: like or do you think like if a kid is bilingual, or multilingual, that they are valued in our school?

I: I think some of the teachers do respect the kids who speak in their native language and now they are in the process of acquiring another language

R: mm hmm

I: So, I think that's a, that's a good point, a lot of parents, a lot of teachers I think see the kid having a sort of like, some teachers see that as an asset.

R: mm hmm

I: So that kid, now they speak Somali, they speak Ethiopian or whatever. Or they speak another language and then on top of that they are learning English so that is bilingualism. So, so the kids, the teachers see it. But it's not something that the society supports. And I'm not sure if they should. Because I don't think that's their place because if someone comes here, and wants to learn, um, English, you know, they made the choice to get here and now they are like learning the language in this country uh, or are used by their citizens of this country. So yeah. I think, I think it's like those kids are seen as more like they are being benefit, benefitting from you know their-their background plus you know the opportunity that they have.

R: mm hmm.

I: So it's not necessarily important, you know I think, I'm not criticizing at least to the school or the society or anybody to value that. Because I don't see like why they should do that considering like we are living in a capitalist society.

R: Okay.

I: Why someone cares about someone came here, already knows a language and learning English as a second language and hopefully you know invest in their future. I mean like I don't see why parent society should, comparing that to like if you are English speaking person, and you want to learn Japanese, then it's your job to do that. And it's not the job of the immigrant families to say like "oh, it's good for the, for the natives to do that too." I mean like, so, it's always like we're selfish so we're doing it for our own interest.

R: Yeah. Um, but how much voice do you think our bilingual students have in our school?

I: I think, as I said, teachers, some teachers see them, kids with potential,

R: mm hmm.

I: But like I don't think they have any voice.

R: Okay.

I: Because uh...I don't know if they should have a voice. Because other than the voice that they need to learn English because in order for them to be successful in this country, uh, where the majority of the people speak English you know, it's all on them. The responsibility is on them. That means they have to, so in a, in a from that view point they are seen like having a deficit by the society and (?) the school.

R: mm hmm.

I: So that means they have to improve their English, do well. Read, write, speak. That's how they are uh, you know measured I think.

R: mm hmm.

I: So yeah, I don't think they should have a voice. I don't know if they should have a voice.

R: Can you think of one student that is a representation of like them being bilingual, multilingual and being valued in our school? Like can you think of one student?

I: I think um... I think all the kids are... I don't see like a kid that's being valued, specifically by anybody in this school

R: mm hmm

I: I think some um, the only kid that I can think about that who is valued as a student and his behavior. I think that many teachers kind of like praise and say "you are doing a good job. Keep doing like this, don't kind of like go astray" or whatever. This kid called Mohamed. Mohamed you know he's learning English, he's an 8th grader now, he's going to high school. And he is in the process of acquiring a second language. So, but he has the like, a good attitude, good behavior, good discipline. I think that's more important for the teachers than him being bilingual or anything like that. As I said they just see like from different background, learn English now, it's your benefit, it's your own benefit they don't just sit, and they don't feel like they, you know should value it, I just, I don't think they feel that's their place.

R: mm hmm

I: They just say " good job. Learn English better and you'll be fine."

R: mmm hmm

I: In this country.

R: Yeah. Um, and so what's your typical interaction with a student taking ESL. So you... do you have certain kids that you are following in classes or?

I: Yeah there are kids that I um help tutor, sometimes, some hours when I have the time. Cuz my job here is, sort of like broad, sometimes I'm interpreter, sometimes I'm translator, sometimes you know I'm AE bilingual. So like I fill in like different, I guess um roles

R: Yup

I: in the school so-so, the majority of the time I try to give a couple of hours, you know one hour at least a day with different kids so that, you know, especially those who speak my language, if they don't understand something in English, then I'll be able to explain it to them

R: mm hmm

I: in Somali. So yeah there are some kids that I do follow.

R: How would you identify the kids that you are um, interacting, that are in ESL classes?

I: What do you mean? How am I, how would I describe them?

R: mm hmm

I: I think there are, they have different attitudes some wants to, some see, they feel like there's an urgency, that they need to really get up, and learn the language and get good at it. They see like their future, sort of like tied to how much English they know. They see, you know, the importance of learning the English language.

R: mm hmm

I: Others they're not as, they're not as, you know, they are not as committed I think maybe...as-as the previous ones so yeah there's a variety of I guess personal and background... and you know there are, there are too many factors out there that can influence kids so, I guess academic progress as they go along with their school

R: mm hmm. How do you think they reflect the school's values?

I: You mean the kids?

R: mm hmm

I: I think kids you know they're, they are innocent. They just don't see like... uh, they don't see any problems in school. I think they just see school as a place you come to get some education. Yeah and sometimes it's like the kids who um, don't uh feel afraid that they don't need to work hard as they should

R: mm hmm

I: It's not like, I don't see like the teachers or the staff that are kind of like hampering. I don't see that. I see like you know adults come here to do their job. Sometimes the kids who are I guess uh feeling, doing their best. That's how I would describe it so.

R: How do you think these students are perceived by teachers, or like the school itself?

I: The kids, the ELL students?

R: Mm hmm

I: As I said you know previously, It's more like they are viewed as having a deficit in the school because um and teachers take you know, having those things you know, in mind, they are just taking necessary measures, dictated by curriculum, school district uhh, and I guess and you know all the laws that they have to follow.

R: Mm hmm

I: So yeah, so the kids are you know... they teachers... just like that's how they do things.

R: Mmm hmm. What is your typical interaction with a student taking world languages?

I: World languages meaning the language that we are learning here?

R: Mm hmm

I: I think now the kids in middle school most of them, I don't think they still see um... maybe the... maybe the parents and staff see the potential that they could have down the road.

R: Mm hmm

I: But I think the kids are not still in the same level as the parents, you know.

R: What does that mean?

I: Meaning like the kids are not like seeing the potential. They just see like, they see like learning a second language as not I guess necessary. I think that's my impression. I-I could be wrong.

R: Mm hmm.

I: At least most of the time. I don't think they see like learning Japanese or-or German or whatever you know like Spanish or French, I don't think they see it as something they should work hard towards for

R: Mm hmm

I: I don't see that. Except like of course, you know, you always have isolated incidents, where you have a kid whose always interested in a particular language but in general, I think the kids are not the same level as the parents, school or the staff.

R: Uh huh. Um and so you think there are any like how would you identify a student taking world languages?

I: Here at School A?

R: Mm hmm.

I: I think....

R: Are there any unique things about there? (overlap)

I: What's that?

R: Are there any unique things about them? Do you think?

I: I don't, I don't, I don't think so. I think they are just doing it because it's part of the curriculum. They have to do it.

R: Mm hmm

I: Uh, it's part of the schedule they have to fulfill.

R: Yup.

I: But I don't think there is a passion.

R: Okay

I: I think that's how I would describe it.

R: Um, do you think they contribute to the school culture? The kids taking world languages?

I: No, not a lot.

R: Okay

I: I think... that's my perception. Yeah, I think they don't... Because if they would have, if that was the case, that means they have interest for the language. For any language and then what would happen is that they would uh, also try to learn the culture of the people who speak those languages. So then um speaking Japanese, to them would look like you know, cool stuff so they would just walk in the hallways and like you know speaking Spani-Japanese. You know and-and you know other-other words in Japanese, language. I don't see that happening. So, so that's how I would say like... same thing with French or it's more like you know parents and staff, school think "this is good for you. And you will appreciate it down the road so learn it" and for them they just don't have the passion. At least the majority of them.

R: So um ESL classes and world languages classes are both engaged in becoming bilingual like students in them are engaged in becoming bilingual. Um do you see, so you've touched on some of these, but what do you think are like the big differences between the two classes?

I: Oh, I think one is uh. there's a significant difference. I think yeah. one is for... for... I guess uh... one is sort of like required for you to take the class, like if you were, this semester if you are told to take Spanish or Japanese, then you just do it. Then last semester you took something else, you took something else. But in English, if you are,

you know, an immigrant and if you are coming here, for you to learn English it's not, it's not a choice. It's a... It's a necessity.

R: Mm hmm

I: So if you want to have a future in this country. So-so there's a huge difference. It's not, it's not even close.

R: Um so you've touched on this already too but do you think there are differences between students taking ESL, so you've talked about passion a little bit, do you think there are other things that are different between kids taking ESL and kids in world languages?

I: Yeah as I said, uh kids that are taking the world languages, they don't experience the, uh... they don't experience that, the fact that they um, you know, that they have deficits. They are not viewed to have deficits by the school. Or you know, or by society in general. But the kids who are learning English, they are viewed that they have issues and have a hurdle to overcome.

R: mm hmm

I: So um, the two are totally separate entities. Maybe, I was trying to avoid the word um, luxury maybe because a kid who is uh like an English speaker whose parents wants him, her to learn Spanish or Japanese I mean for them it's more of like a luxury. They just have to um learn.

R: mm hmm

I: Uh, they-they love to learn and it's fun and it's cool and someday they might become you know CEO somewhere. So that's just, you know what I mean? Unlike the other kid who's like viewed to having deficit and has several things to overcome if you work hard and... they are not the same.

R: Yeah. Um and so you've also kind of touched on this but where do you think these expectations, so there's differences in expectations.

I: Mm hmm

R: Um, you've said that like for world languages it's a luxury vs. EL, ESL which is like you are required and people are seen being more as deficit mindset. Um, how do you think that those expectations are formed?

I: Oh that's

R: What are those perceptions, how are they formed?

I: I think it's a, I think it's not only unique to the U.S.

R: Okay

I: I think um, I'm being frank here.

R: Yeah yeah.

I: It's not like, it's not like, it's not unique. It's like every society. You value something over other, other things. Languages you know food, you know cars, everything you know. So, the-the reason they form is that because when you look at Spanish, Spanish is a language that is significant, has a lot of influence in this country so you can't ignore, you can't ignore it. Like I don't know like 15 million Americans who are already Spanish speaking. And the numbers are expected to get even bigger. uh French is a language that is seen as, you know cultural relevant, to the U.S. culture

R: Mm hmm

I: And it's also a language spoken by many people. Maybe like number 2 or three in the world so there's a value to it. That means if you speak French, you're-you're, you speak one of the international languages in the world. So yeah. On the other hand, if you come from like Kenya, Ethiopia, or a place like that, and you already speak your native language, sure that language is an asset in your village or your country. Take for example Somali right now. Um, it's only spoken in East Africa. Somalia mainly and then parts of Ethiopia and Kenya. So in that context, if you are looking at that part of the world or if you are pursuing a career maybe that's, maybe you would be valuing it. So going back to your old questions like how are these expectations formed? I think they are just like default in human perception, it's just like the way we are. Tend to think in a selfish way. Uh, what's good for interest. I don't want to say it in a negative way but...

R: Yeah yea.

I: What do you think is good for you for your family and for your kids and we all do that. And I-I don't think, you know, I'm not criticizing the American families

R: But if I can push a little bit, like Minneapolis has one of the highest Somali population within the U.S.

I: Right

R: So number wise, like it is useful to know the language but we could be promoting it in Minneapolis but we are not. You know what I mean?

I: Yes, I agree. You know, if one wants to learn, Somali, we have a Somali community here but the goal is not keep the language and the culture alive. The peo-to keep, you

know Somali people understand that. You know that a few couple of generations, Somali language would not be existing in this place.

R: Do you think so?

I: I think so. I'm sure so. Because, if you look at history, it's the same. It's only a few families, few families, maybe a handful families that will keep their, their ancestral language. Because if you look at the history of immigrants in this country, I mean 1918, I think or maybe, the election is, I think I'm told. If I'm not mistaken exactly, but during that era, in Minnesota the richest, more than 15 languages. And today, none of those exist. So you know, my kids right now are struggling to speak Somali perfectly, so in a way that I would like them for them to speak.

R: Mm hmm

I: So unless I make a, you know, calculated effort and take them home and take them this and spend years there, they would not be speaking Somali language the way I am. So yeah, so I think, the goal, the goal of U.S. policy you know, government is not to, to keep the languages of immigrants alive because they want to make sure, maybe today it's a lot easy to keep your language because you want to like your parents so. But my point is like they don't wana, they don't wana do that because they see it as a cultural, I guess uh mismatch. That's just the way I see it. And-And it's not only unique to the U.S. too. You go to different countries you'll find people who are different ethnic backgrounds, Japanese, Chinese, everybody but their language, it's not, it's not there. Except a few countries that also embrace those few languages as well. And have a consistent effort. So because, so, that's-that's how I look at it. That's a big question.

R: Yeah. Um, those are pretty much all of my questions.

I: Okay

R: Do you have any other lasting things that you want to talk about bilingualism, or multilingualism?

I: I think you know, at the end of the day, we will uh... if one wants to learn, you know first it will be a choice. There aren't too many people who are bilingual in the world. Based on what I've heard, what I've read. It takes time and energy to be able to speak 2 languages or three languages

R: Mm hmm

I: So, at the end, the parents could wish what they want. The society can wish whatever they want. The school could wish whatever they wanted but it will be up to the individual... to uh choose a language that they are interested, interested in the culture, language or whatever. So it will be to the individual student to think like hey maybe in high school or middle school it doesn't matter, and eventually say "I want to learn

English, I want to learn Japanese” and not just all Japanese and not just (?) but basic Japanese but I want to be able to read books in Japanese and be good at it. So, it will be up to those kids. Before that, we can try the best that we can, the school system, the parents, and society so, that’s all I’ve got.

R: Alright.

I: That’s my final thought. Yup.

R: Thank you.

I: You’re welcome.