2005

Does My Identity Speak English? A Pragmatic Approach to the Social World of an English Language Learner with Language Impairment

Robin L. Danzak
Sacred Heart University, danzakr@sacredheart.edu

Elaine R. Silliman
University of South Florida

Recommended Citation

Does My Identity Speak English? A Pragmatic Approach to the Social World of an English Language Learner with Language Impairment

Robin L. Danzak, M.A.,[1] **and Elaine R. Silliman, Ph.D.**[1]

ABSTRACT

The case description provides a comprehensive picture of the complex social and linguistic factors that shape the social identity of an English language learner with the additional challenge of language impairment (LI). These issues were explored over 6 months with Fernando, an 8-year-old, Spanish-speaking male with LI in grade 3. A pragmatic, or practical, approach to problem solving was developed for two purposes: first, to obtain a multifaceted understanding of Fernando's world at school, and second, to arrive at possible educational/clinical solutions that met a standard of cultural appropriateness and practicality. The patterns found that, contrary to teacher interpretations of Fernando as inattentive, he employed both perseverance and saving face strategies, which appeared to function as practices for preserving his self-esteem in different situations. These patterns led to specific recommendations for collaborative instruction and intervention that would better integrate and support Fernando's social and bilingual learning needs while also meeting standards of cultural appropriateness and practicality.

KEYWORDS: Bilingual, language impairment, pragmatic assessment, social identity, social competence

Learning Outcomes: As a result of this activity, the reader will be able to (1) recognize the complex social identity and linguistic challenges that English language learner children with a language impairment confront daily in their general education and English-as-a-second-language classrooms, (2) identify a pragmatic approach to assessment as a problem-solving approach intended to generate possible solutions that respond to the situation, and (3) demonstrate how to apply a collaborative structure for two language intervention approaches.

A small group of struggling readers, mostly English language learners (ELLs), sits at a round table with their third grade teacher for a reading lesson. The general education (GE) teacher, Ms. Hill, is guiding the students through a cloze task to help them learn to search the text for clues to the meanings of unknown words. Fernando*, an energetic 8-year-old boy from Puerto Rico, sings to himself in a whisper, "La cucaracha, la cucaracha. Tiene ocho patitas . . . ."

Fernando is an ELL student who has the additional challenge of a language impairment (LI). He has attended the Center School†, a public elementary school on the urban west coast of Florida, for just over a year, and he is well known by his teachers for being easily distracted, not following directions, and playing around in class. Ms. Hill commented in an interview that "Sometimes you can say his name several times and he does not acknowledge it. He thrives in a smaller group. . . but when he's in a large group that's when he goes on vacation." In a separate interview, Ms. Bloom, Fernando's English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teacher, concurred with Ms. Hill's assessment: "I'm constantly having to tap on him, call his name to ask him a question, just something to get him back. He's always wandering off in space." In concert with the classroom teachers, the bilingual aide in the ESL classroom, Ms. Lopez, reported that, "Fernando es un poco diferente. El quiere hacer lo que él quiere hacer. Está en su propio mundo" [Fernando is a little different. He wants to do what he wants to do. He's in his own world].

Students, like Fernando, who are ELLs experience multiple challenges as they struggle to acquire a second language quickly, integrate into new community and school cultures, and keep pace with academic demands. However, an ELL student with LI faces additional burdens, not only linguistically and academically but also socially. An important question is

whether the descriptions by Fernando's teachers that he is figuratively on vacation in the classroom reflect a real "attention" problem or whether his behaviors represent a strategic way for him to manage his social identity in complex situations.[1]

The purpose of this article is threefold. First, Fernando's participation in the social realms of the GE and ESL classrooms is described. A second aim is to show how a solution-oriented, pragmatic approach to assessment can illuminate critical patterns of interaction and beliefs underlying educational practices. In this sense, the term "pragmatic" is applied to mean a *practical approach to problem solving* rather than referring to social language use. The final purpose, stemming from the pragmatic approach just mentioned, is to offer some promising directions for more effective collaboration. We suggest specific ways in which teachers and speech-language pathologists (SLPs), together, can develop educational and clinical solutions that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, as well as practical, to implement.

THE SOCIAL WORLD OF ELL STUDENTS WITH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

Fernando

Fernando arrived with his family from Puerto Rico in January 2004. He lives with his parents, Susana and Carlos, and his younger sister, Ana Maria, who attends grade 2 at Center School. Both siblings are on the reduced price lunch plan at school. Fernando's home situation appears to represent the common struggle of a newly immigrated family. Susana is relatively proficient in English and works as a nurse. Carlos has limited English skills and washes cars.

Results from a parent questionnaire[2] indicated language and literacy learning difficulties in the immediate family. Carlos reported experiencing problems learning to read in both Spanish and English. Currently, he believes that he does not express himself well in English. Susana commented that he also has difficulties in Spanish. In addition, the parents

*All names, including the name of the school, have been changed to maintain confidentiality.
†The Center School, a Title I school, has 700 students in prekindergarten through grade 5. About 69% of students are minority students; a total of 41 receive ESL services. Spanish is the most populous first language of ELLs in the school.

reported that Carlos' brother experienced similar language and literacy learning problems. Ana Maria, age 7, also has a documented history of delayed language development including expressive phonological impairment. Both children received speech and language services in Puerto Rico and continue with individualized educational plans (IEPs) for speech-language services at the Center School.

Fernando's performance on various formal measures of beginning reading and oral language (the Spanish versions were administered) is shown in Table 1. The oral language test scores alone did not qualify Fernando for speech-language services; however, based on his previous IEP from Puerto Rico, his struggles in the classroom, teacher and parent reports, and his ability to benefit from services, Fernando is currently receiving two types of resource services: language intervention services and learning disability services for math.

In terms of oral reading fluency as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS),[3] Fernando has made progress throughout the current school year.

However, his scores continue to fall into the range of high risk for decoding problems, possibly because of his status as an ELL. Fernando is also a year younger than most of his classmates.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social Competence

Social competence is as an umbrella term that encompasses multiple skills and behaviors. According to Benard,[4] social competence includes the ability to respond to and elicit positive responses from others. This characteristic is also related to sociability, described by Hart et al[5] as behaviors that convey a cooperating, sharing, helping, and comforting attitude toward others. Furthermore, sociability is related to peer acceptance.

Studies documenting the social difficulties of children with LI are not numerous.[5–9] One common characteristic of these children is reliance on nonverbal social coping strategies, such

Table 1 Fernando's Performance on Standardized Measures of Reading Readiness, Decoding, and Oral Language (English and Spanish)

Date of Administration	Assessment	Result	Expectation	Notes
8/04	DSAR[a]	7/30 correct	21/30 correct	Below grade expectation
9/04	DSAR	6/30 correct	21/30 correct	
11/04	DSAR	7/30 correct	21/30 correct	
1/05	DSAR	5/30 correct	21/30 correct	
8/04	DIBELS[b]	16 WPM[f]	88–105 WPM	High risk for decoding
11/04	DIBELS	28 WPM	88–105 WPM	problems
2/05	DIBELS	41 WPM	98 WPM	
10/04	CELF-3 Spanish[c]	R = 106; E = 74; Composite = 89[g]		Did not qualify for language intervention services on scores alone
10/04	OWPVT – Spanish Bilingual[d]	R = 89; E = 88[g],		
1/04	LASO[e]	0	0–54 = non–English speaker, level 1	Remains qualified for ESL services

[a]DSAR, District Standard Assessment of Reading (criterion-referenced instrument developed by the local school district).
[b]DIBELS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills.[3]
[c]Clinical Evaluation of Language Functions–3 Spanish[23]; composite mean standard score = 100; SD = ±15.
[d]Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test–Spanish Bilingual[24] and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Tests–Spanish Bilingual[25]; mean standard score = 100; SD = ±15 for both measures.
[e]Language Assessment Scales–Oral.[26]
[f]WPM, words per minute.
[g]R, receptive, E, expressive; scores reflect standard scores.

as aggression and withdrawal, specifically reticence (when children want to interact but are apprehensive about doing so) and solitary-passive behaviors (they prefer to play alone).[5,6,8] These studies raised concerns about the high levels of reticence observed in students with LI, as this behavior has been associated with anxiety, social uncertainty, wariness, and peer rejection.

Studies focused on the social competence of ELLs with LI or learning disabilities are even scarcer, resulting in "limited research. . . to guide educational practices for ELLs in general. . .or culturally diverse learners with LD in particular" (p. 544).[10] In this regard, one study comes to the foreground. Ruiz[11,12] conducted an ethnographic study of a bilingual special education classroom for children with a language learning disability, finding that certain contextual features highlighted the upper range of children's language and literacy abilities. These features included student-directed discourse, use of whole texts, topic choice, focus on student experience and background knowledge, and emphasis on communication over form. On the other hand, some classroom contexts were associated with the lower range of student abilities, such as teacher-directed discourse; use of text fragments; student production of predetermined vocabulary, syntax, or content; and reliance on packaged curricular materials.[12]

Social Identity

The interpersonal dynamics of a classroom community and school culture are paramount for ELLs' development of new social identities as readers and writers. According to Christian and Bloome,[13] these social dynamics are driven by symbolic capital that is "socially constructed by how people interact with each other, by the social organization of events, and by how events play out" (p. 368).[13] Examples of how children advance their symbolic assets include being singled out by the teacher as a good reader or writer and, more implicitly, distributing access to the conversational floor to favor high achievers. Symbolic capital is closely related to (1) cultural capital, the knowledge of how to engage in classroom practices appropriately; (2) linguistic capital, knowledge about the target language and the academic practices for which it is used in the classroom; and (3) economic capital, control of material resources. These assets all interact to influence identity, status, and power relations in the classroom.

In the case of ELL children, lack of symbolic capital related to their minority status may place them at risk for marginalization in the classroom. As a consequence, these social dynamics can potentially deny ELLs the numerous and varied opportunities needed to develop identities as successful readers and writers, even more so when an LI is part of a child's profile.

In summary, research on the social competence of monolingual English-speaking students with LI has identified some of the difficulties that these students may experience in the development of peer relations. With the[a] exception of the Ruiz ethnographies,[11,12] almost no classroom-based information is available on ELL students with language or learning disabilities. Because children's identity is always "personally experienced but publicly defined" (p. 162)[14] by multiple group memberships at home and school, valuable educational and clinical insights can be gained from entering the social world of schooling for the ELL child with an LI.

Seeing Fernando's Social World of School through a Pragmatic Assessment Approach

As most SLPs know, when it comes to the assessment of ELL children, there is an absence of instruments that meet the dual criteria of scientific *and* social validity. In part, this deficiency is due to the indivisible integration of language, culture, and identity. This complex, interactive relationship challenges the utility of traditional assessment methods, which cannot effectively address the collective impact of language, culture, and identity on individual variations in student performance.[15]

A PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT APPROACH

When a persistent problem exists within the child's social world of school, we make the case that a solution-oriented, pragmatic assessment approach is called for. To reiterate, in this

situation, pragmatic refers to a practical or realistic approach, not to social communication per se. A pragmatic approach employs varied kinds of practical assessments that address the problem in its social context, for example, detailed observation of the child in the classroom combined with teacher/parent interviews and standardized achievement scores. The goal of a pragmatic approach is to formulate *culturally appropriate, practical solutions* that also meet rigorous standards of social validity because the outcomes should respond to the particular situation.[16] The rationale is that problem resolution can result only from an assessment process that probes beneath the surface to uncover multiple causes of the perceived "problem." In Fernando's case, his teachers identified the surface problem, "inattentiveness," as a primary source of his struggles at school; therefore, the functional aim was to uncover the interpersonal dynamics contributing to Fernando's lack of focus and, as an outcome, determine the most effective solutions to the genuine, core issue.

DISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF FERNANDO'S LACK OF FOCUS

Multiple strategies incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods were selected to accomplish the goals of this pragmatic assessment. These strategies included (1) three audiotaped, ethnographic observations in both the GE classroom (30 minutes each) and the ESL classroom (90 minutes each) and extensive field notes composed on a laptop during and after each observation*; (2) open-ended parent and teacher interviews; (3) descriptive measures including Spanish and English oral narratives and spelling samples, and (4) formal measures, ranging from standardized test scores (see Table 1) to an observational instrument for the ELL classroom.[17]

TEACHER AND PARENT INTERVIEWS

Teacher Perspectives Teacher interviews were organized around three major topics: (1) Fernando's social interaction in the classroom, (2) his strengths and challenges, and (3) goals

*For detailed guidance on writing classroom-based field notes, see Klingner et al.[27]

for him for the remainder of the school year. Teachers were interviewed independently. The ESL teacher, Ms. Bloom, age 23 years, is a first-year teacher. She is a Caucasian, monolingual English speaker with limited knowledge of Spanish. Ms. Hill, Fernando's GE teacher, is 37 years old and has 8 years of teaching experience. She is a Caucasian, native English speaker with basic competence in Italian and limited knowledge of Spanish.

Ms. Bloom commented that, in terms of his social skills in the ESL classroom, Fernando generally preferred to work alone. However, Ms. Hill noted that he had a close female friend in his GE class who was also a Spanish-speaking ESL student: "Carolina is his little mother hen. She watches him. She steers him in the direction that he needs to go." Field notes from the ESL classroom confirmed that Fernando generally worked either alone or with Carolina.

Ms. Hill and Ms. Bloom further agreed that Fernando had been reluctant to produce written texts in English. In fact, at the time of the parent conference in February 2005, Ms. Hill noted that Fernando had just recently begun to write at all in her classroom. She also expressed concern with his test-taking skills: "He sees these bubbles and fills them in like he's filling out a card of lotto. . . with every other child, it's the very same thing, but with Fernando, he's hiding behind this shield of 'I don't understand you'." In regard to academic achievement, Ms. Hill wanted "to foster more organization skills and his self-directed ability to keep himself on task."

Ms. Bloom's goals for Fernando were specific. They included improving his ability to decode English words involving vowel blends and digraphs and to increase his reading comprehension. She also wanted to build his attention span and organizational skills.

Parent Perspectives Parent perspectives were obtained from two sources: administration of a questionnaire on the language development history of Fernando and other members of his family[2] and the field notes and audio recording of a February 2005 parent-teacher conference, when both parents were present. Fernando's parents consistently expressed concern about his language development, in both English

and Spanish, as well as his academic struggles. They viewed him as having particular difficulty acquiring vocabulary in both languages and reported his behavior as immature for his age: "El es muy bebé, tímido, en su mundo de muñecos" [He is very babyish, shy, in his world of cartoons/action figures].

At the parent-teacher conference, Fernando's mother reported that she practiced spelling words with him everyday. The family also has a computer at home, and the parents were interested in helping Fernando with literacy programs and Web sites. Susana shared that Fernando read in Spanish at home, as long as it was material that he liked. Similarly to his teachers' goals, Fernando's parents wanted to increase his ability to focus, as well as his organizational skills, both at home and at school.

Patterns of Social Interaction in the Two Classrooms

During a daily, 90-minute reading block, ELL students go to the ESL classroom, where they receive small group instruction with other children in their grade level. There are 10 students in the ESL room during the grade 3 block, including Fernando. The ESL classroom is set up with several learning centers where students can work independently or in small groups simultaneously as the teacher, Ms. Bloom, directly instructs groups of five or six students. Ms. Lopez*, the ESL bilingual ESL aide, circulates to assist children working in centers, paying special attention to the Spanish speakers who have few or no English skills.

The grade 3 classroom taught by Ms. Hill has 23 students, and 3 are Spanish-speaking ELLs with varying levels of proficiency. A fourth Hispanic girl in the class is highly proficient in Spanish and English and does not receive ESL services. Ms. Hill elected to seat the four Spanish speakers in the same cooperative learning group based on the idea that the more highly proficient English speak-

*Ms. Lopez is a bilingual, native speaker of Spanish from Peru who has lived in the United States for 24 years. She holds a BA in Spanish and is in the process of obtaining teacher certification in Spanish for grades K–12.

ers would help the students with lower levels of proficiency. Ms. Hill reported that this strategy has been helpful for these students socially and academically because it helped to keep them involved and on task in the classroom.

Based on the various tools employed, two interrelated social patterns emerged during literacy instruction in both classrooms: perseverance and saving face. These patterns appeared to function as strategies for Fernando to maintain a sense of social competence as well as maintain peer relationships, especially with Carolina. Examples of each pattern follow.

PERSEVERANCE

Interestingly, despite multiple discussions with parents and teachers about Fernando's lack of attention to instruction, he frequently demonstrated perseverance, particularly when he was confident he had the correct answer or relevant information to add to the discussion. As Ms. Hill noted, "He makes no qualms. If he needs something, he's right in my whole physical space, 'Ms. Hill!', and will spend as long as it takes to make me understand, will repeat. He doesn't become embarrassed if I don't understand something right away." The perseverance strategy seemed to be a conversational device by which Fernando could gain access to a social interaction and position himself to display what he knew, while at the same time preserving his sense of identity by refusing to be ignored or silenced by his teachers or peers.

Although this strategy was observed consistently in both classrooms, a notable example of Fernando's perseverance was recorded in the ESL classroom during a whole-group vocabulary lesson. Ms. Bloom wrote the word "different" on the board. Angela, a Spanish speaker with very limited English proficiency, saw the word and said, "different." Ms. Bloom became excited and praised Angela for reading the word. She then asked the group what the word meant and called on another student to explain. During this exchange, Fernando was talking to himself: "Different. Diferente." He suddenly yelled out, "Oh! I know! That is Spanish! (to himself again)...different-diferente." Fernando was ignored; however, he continued, insightfully, "I know what, why Angela know this!" As he explained that the

difference between the words in both languages was the final "e" in the Spanish version, Ms. Bloom and the group continued to tune him out. Only after he insisted a third time did the teacher address Fernando's display of knowledge and give him the floor: "Oh, can you go and show me how to spell it in Spanish? (to the group) He's just gonna show us how to spell it in Spanish." Fernando wrote '*diferente*' in Spanish correctly on the board, saying each letter aloud, and Ms. Bloom acknowledged it with the comment, "Yeah, these are cognates." As Fernando returned to his seat, Ms. Bloom closed the conversation, again praising Angela: "Good job, Angela! Everyone, let's give Angela a round of applause!" The class cheered, Angela beamed, and Fernando's contribution was overlooked.

In this example of Fernando's perseverance strategy, he was able to compare cognates in his first and second languages and connect word meanings through analogy, illustrating his emerging metalinguistic awareness. For Ms. Bloom, however, it was a missed opportunity (or a teachable moment) to guide her ELL students in a cross-linguistic examination of cognates and how they could be used to figure out new word meanings in English. Moreover, it was also a lost opportunity to build on the symbolic and linguistic assets that Fernando displayed.

SAVING FACE

Two variations of this strategy emerged. The first variant allowed Fernando to maintain symbolic capital with peers in activities when teachers presented new instructions or materials. Fernando's immediate response was "I know how to do this" or "This is easy." Also, he was commonly the student who announced to the rest of the group the page number or title of the story they were going to read. Students did not always respond favorably to these verbal behaviors; however, for Fernando, they seemed to serve as a way to maintain his self-esteem and hide doubts about his performance. This strategy could also be interpreted as a form of bravado, possibly a product of his socialization as a Hispanic male.

The second variation of the saving face strategy seemed to provide an escape for Fernando when he did not want to complete a challenging task, as in the following example from the ESL classroom. Ms. Bloom had set up a phonological awareness (rhyming) activity for Fernando on the overhead projector. He was to work independently, filling in the missing letters on transparent flash cards of rhyming words, such as *fox* and *box*. Because his work was on an overhead projector, Fernando's performance on this activity was on display for the rest of the class to see if they wished. In fact, even though the other students were engaged in their own activities, Ms. Bloom announced that Fernando was going to "entertain" them with his pictures. As she gave him directions, Fernando predictably told her he knew what to do and resisted further help or support.

It was evident, however, that much more guidance was necessary for him to complete this task successfully. Although he stayed with the activity for over 30 minutes, he spent the time playing with the overhead or experimenting with the colors of the transparent word cards and even yelled at Carolina to stay away when she sought to engage in the activity. Eventually, Ms. Lopez, the aide, approached and attempted to direct Fernando back to the actual purpose of the activity. She pointed to several of the cards, asking if he knew the words and had completed the rhymes. Fernando responded by again employing the saving face strategy, informing her that he had already completed the words on each of the cards, even though this was false. Unfortunately, Ms. Lopez did not insist or prompt Fernando to display any of the words or rhymes he had supposedly completed. Perhaps experiences like these have taught Fernando that, if he acts as if he knows what he's doing, his teachers or parents will leave him alone and he can continue with what he considers either more interesting or easier. In effect, his teachers (and maybe his parents) were enabling his inattentiveness and not holding him accountable for his academic assignments.

Fernando's Oral Narrative and Spelling Abilities

Descriptive information on Fernando's oral narrative skills in English and Spanish was

obtained based on his retelling of a 10-minute, wordless video,[18] first in English and then in Spanish. Directions were given in both languages relative to the language of retelling and focused Fernando's attention on the characters' mental states. To reduce demands on recall, Fernando was provided with color copies of eight still frames from the video. Oral narratives were transcribed verbatim and segmented into communication units (C-units) to assess his use of verb tenses and lexical diversity in both languages.

The oral narrative productions in both languages had both commonalities and differences (see Table 2). As might be predicted, Fernando utilized more varied verb forms in his first language, Spanish (26 clausal units in 22 C-units), than he did in English (20 clausal units in 23 C-units). However, he had to be prompted significantly throughout the retellings in both languages to continue or expand upon his story, and both versions demonstrated syntactic limitations and minimal lexical diversity, as indicated in Table 2.

Although a more extensive evaluation of Fernando's oral language skills is warranted, two tentative conclusions are possible. First, at a minimum Fernando appears to have acquired the basic Spanish verb tenses that sequential bilingual children attain by age 5 years.[19] Second, the brief narratives suggest difficulties in Spanish and English, which Fernando's parents also described, as well as specific interferences between the two developing linguistic systems. For example, Fernando employed the Spanish word order for possession when he said in English, ". . . the frog is up on the head of the man." Similarly, in Spanish he utilized the English possessive word order in the Spanish statement, "el sapo brincó a- abajo del piso del niño bolsillo" [the frog jumped to- down to the floor from the boy pocket]. As with his comparison of more transparent word meanings cited earlier, it appeared that Fernando may have been using a partial analogy strategy for word order. In this case, however, his inferences were misleading. Similar inference patterns were found in spelling, where Fernando often drew on the phonological features of Spanish vowels, for example, *upsters* (upstairs) (/e/ in English represented by the letter E in Spanish) and *bates* (bottles) (/ɑ/ in English approximates /a/ in Spanish).

PROMOTING FERNANDO'S ASSETS: SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The decision to employ a problem-solving approach to assessment was based on the unanimous agreement of Fernando's teachers and parents that he had difficulty paying attention in school. The outcomes revealed several possible answers about why Fernando, as an ELL student with LI, appeared to lack focus. Consistent with previous findings on alienation in monolingual English-speaking children with LI,[5–9] Fernando was increasingly marginalized and began to withdraw from the social life of the GE and ESL classrooms. Moreover, he had yet to assemble sufficient levels of linguistic and cultural capital essential for academic language proficiency and their associated practices. A strong possibility, therefore, is that Fernando's perseverance and saving face strategies represented tactics for him to gain symbolic capital to preserve his social identity in the demanding world of literacy learning at school,[13] a place where he was already academically and socially disempowered.

Promoting Fernando's Linguistic and Cultural Assets

Of course, it is likely that Fernando's "attention problem" is directly related to the compounding linguistic challenges he faces as a second language learner with LI. Based on this status, as well as the findings from the pragmatic assessment, resolution of Fernando's educational problems must begin with more individualized support of his language and literacy development. Critical to this individualized support is the implementation of collaborative instructional/intervention strategies among Fernando's teachers, the SLP, the learning disability specialist, and the bilingual aide. As a first step to collaboration, GE and ESL teachers and bilingual aides would benefit from assistance to gain the insight that the needs of children such as Fernando exceed those of typical ELL students. For students like Fernando, learning to read, spell, and write is not just an issue of

Table 2 Frequency and Examples of Different Verb Forms in Fernando's Spanish and English Narratives

Verb Construction	Frequency in Spanish Narrative	Examples	Frequency in English Narrative	Examples
Present tense	3 Subject-verb agreement used correctly	*Y este el niño* **quiere** *buscar su-su sapo . . .* [And (in) this one the boy **wants** to look for his- his frog . . .].	19 Most frequent, but subject-verb agreement not marked when required (finite clauses)	*He* **get** *the frog; In this part, the frog* **go** *out,* **jump**.
Past tense: preterit (completed past action) and imperfect aspect (continuing past action)	17 Most frequent; appropriate tense for traditional narrative form	Preterit – *Por eso el otro hombre grande* **cogió** *el sapo* [That's why the other big man **grabbed** the frog]. Imperfect – *Estaban pensando que, ellos* **creían** *que, el sapo* **asustaba** *a toda la gente porque . . .* **veían** *toda la gente asustada* [They were *thinking* that-they **thought** the frog **was scaring** everyone because . . . they **saw** everyone scared].	2 Both were irregular forms	*Because he* **saw** *the frog; In this part he cannot find the frog where he-na-* **found** *it*
Past progressive	6	*estaba pensando* [She **was thinking**]	3	*They* **were thinking**
Present subjunctive	1 Present and imperfect subjunctive not used in two other linguistic contexts where obligatory	*. . . para que él no asuste a nadie* [so that he doesn't **frighten** anyone].	—	—

learning to speak English. It is also about creating a new way of communicating through the construction of an *academic register* in which complex linguistic and discourse knowledge must nest on an already precarious first language foundation. The important question is how to achieve this goal by promoting Fernando's linguistic and discourse assets in both Spanish and English.

Fortunately, there is evidence that two approaches, the bilingual and cross-linguistic methods, can function as the centerpieces of a collaborative plan for building on Fernando's language assets. However, in applying both approaches, it is important that Fernando understands the purposes of activities, is actively engaged in discovery about his two languages, and provides reasons for his decisions. As described by Kohnert and Derr,[20] the bilingual approach "simultaneously directs attention to improving communicative competency in both Spanish and English" (p. 325) by highlighting features *common* to both languages, for example, cognate words and morphosyntactic structures. Recall that Fernando demonstrated emerging metalinguistic readiness in at least three different situations: (1) employing more transparent cognates in his translation of "different" from Spanish to English, (2) using Spanish vowels for English vowels, and (3) his interchange of the linguistic marking of possession in Spanish to English and vice versa. Explicit attention to cognate words and similar morphosyntactic structures would benefit this emerging awareness. A bilingual approach can be implemented, for example, by a team in which one member speaks English and a bilingual aide speaks Spanish.[20] Such a focus could also involve Susana, Fernando's mother, who was seeking strategies to help him at home.

In contrast to a bilingual approach, a cross-linguistic approach centers on explicit teaching of *variations* between Spanish and English, which can target "...the sound, meaning, structural, discourse, or pragmatic levels" (p. 328).[20] Here, the focus is alternated between Spanish and English in separate activities during the same time period or at different times and can be implemented by both the monolingual and bilingual members of Fernando's collaborative team.[20] An example of cross-linguistic intervention for Fernando would be to have him compare and contrast differences in word order between Spanish and English, for example, by using sentence sorting activities. Similarly, word sort activities could be utilized for systematic discovery and evaluation of phonological differences involving vowel phonemes and their relationships to contrasting spelling patterns in both languages. This type of cross-linguistic intervention should support both decoding and spelling.

Promoting Fernando's Symbolic Assets

In relation to classroom social dynamics, both teachers noted that Fernando performed well in a small group but easily became lost or distracted during whole-class instruction. This pattern is evidence of Fernando's potential isolation in the whole-class setting and supports the Ruiz[11,12] findings that specific contexts often determine whether students with LI appear abler or disabled.

To illustrate, during structured literacy activities Ms. Hill sat with a small group, directed the students through a variety of tasks, actively modeled appropriate strategies, and supported students when they experienced difficulty. In this context, Fernando's strengths, such as his persistent effort, became apparent. On the other hand, when given a more ambiguous activity to complete independently or when constant direction from the teacher was unavailable, Fernando was left to his own devices to play or daydream and was not held accountable for his learning.

Again, children like Fernando require clear and explicit procedures to translate opaque academic language into more transparent understandings. Some recommendations include the incorporation of problem-solving, experience-based activities and use of graphic organizers embedded within more theme-driven and meaningful learning experiences. In addition, from the perspective of Fernando's linguistic capital, increased attention should be directed to real vocabulary learning through student-directed reading comprehension and oral discussion activities. For example, an explicit focus in both the reading and oral

domains should center on the slow mapping,[21] or semantic elaboration, of both high-frequency and more literate English word meanings (e.g., fortunate, miserable, absurd).[22] Words should be selected from engaging texts and used in authentic ways through related talk about texts.[22] This type of activity would be beneficial in expanding the scope *and* depth of Fernando's semantic knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

Fernando's teachers were already utilizing some of the recommended strategies. However, supporting Fernando's development requires that he establish symbolic capital in a foreign classroom and build prosocial relationships with peers and teachers. If this social validity standard is to be reached, new social and linguistic strategies meeting criteria of cultural appropriateness and practicality must be constructed. Ultimately, new symbolic, linguistic, and cultural assets[13] must be integrated into multiple contexts, experiences, and relationships if ELL children with an LI are to build new social identities as competent speakers, readers, and writers.

REFERENCES

1. Donahue ML, Szymanski CM, Flores CW. When "Emily Dickinson" met "Steven Spielberg": assessing social information processing in literacy contexts. Lang Speech Hear Serv Sch 1999;30:274–284

2. Gutierrez-Clellen VF, Kreiter J. Understanding child bilingual acquisition using parent and teacher reports. Applied Psycholing 2003;24:267–288

3. Good RH, Kaminski RA, Smith SB, Simmons DC, Kameenui E, Wallin J. Using DIBELS to evaluate kindergarten curricula and interventions. In: Vaughn S, Briggs KL, eds. Reading in the Classroom: Systems for the Observation of Teaching and Learning Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; 2003:221–266

4. Benard B. Resiliency: What We Have Learned. San Francisco: West Ed; 2004

5. Hart KI, Fukiji M, Brinton B, Hart C. The relationship between social behavior and severity of language impairment. J Speech Lang Hear Res 2004;47:647–663

6. Brinton B, Fujiki M. Social and affective factors in children with language impairment: implications for literacy learning. In: Stone CA, Silliman ER, Ehren BJ, Apel K, eds. Handbook of Language and Literacy: Development and Disorders New York: Guilford Press; 2004:130–153

7. Brinton B, Robinson LA, Fujiki M. Description of a program for social language intervention: "If you can have a conversation, you can have a relationship. Lang Speech Hear Serv Sch 2004;35:283–290

8. Marton K, Abramoff B, Rosenzweig S. Social cognition and language in children with specific language impairment (SLI). J Commun Disord 2005;38:143–162

9. Fujiki M, Spackman MP, Brinton B, Hall A. The relationship of language and emotion regulation skills to reticence in children with specific language impairment. J Speech Lang Hear Res 2004;47:637–647

10. MacArthur C. What have we learned about learning disabilities from qualitative research? A review of studies. In: Swanson HL, Harris KR, Graham S, eds. Handbook of Learning Disabilities New York: Guilford; 2003:532–549

11. Ruiz NT. The social construction of ability and disability: I. Profile types of Latino children identified as language learning disabled. J Learn Disabil 1995;28:476–490

12. Ruiz NT. The social construction of language ability and disability: II. Optimal and at-risk lessons in a bilingual special education classroom. J Learn Disabil 1995;28:491–502

13. Christian B, Bloome D. Learning to read is who you are. Read Writ Q 2004;20:365–384

14. Hagstrom F, Wertsch JV. Grounding social identity for professional practice. Topics Lang Disord 2004;24:162–173

15. Solano Flores G, Trumbull E. Examining language in context: the need for new research and practice paradigms in the testing of English-language learners. Educ Res 2003;32:3–13

16. Patton MQ. Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2002

17. Haager D, Gersten R, Baker S, Graves AW. The English-language learner classroom observation instrument for beginning readers. In: Vaughn S, Briggs KL, eds. Reading in the Classroom: Systems for the Observation of Teaching and Learning. Baltimore MD: Paul H. Brookes; 2004:111–137

18. Osbourn S (Producer), Templeton G (Director). Frog Goes to Dinner [film]. Rochester, NY: Phoenix Films; 1985

19. Bedore L. Morphosyntactic development. In: Goldstein BA, ed. Bilingual Language Development and Disorders in Spanish-English Speakers Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; 2004:163–185

20. Kohnert K, Derr A. Language intervention with bilingual children. In: Goldstein BA, ed. Bilingual Language Development and Disorders in Spanish-English Speakers. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; 2004:311–338

21. McGregor KK. Developmental dependencies between lexical semantics and reading. In: Stone CA, Silliman ER, Ehren BJ, Apel K, eds. Language and Literacy: Development and Disorders New York: Guilford; 2004:302–317

22. Beck IL, McKeown MG, Kucan L. Bringing Words to Life. New York: Guilford; 2002

23. Semel E, Wiig EH, Secord WA. Clinical Evaluation of Language Functions —3 Spanish. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corp; 1997

24. Brownell R. Receptive One-Word Vocabulary Test—Spanish Bilingual. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy; 2001

25. Brownell R. Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test—Spanish Bilingual. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy; 2001

26. Duncan SE, De Avila EA. Language Assessment Scales—Oral. Monterey, CA: CTB/McGraw Hill; 1988

27. Klingner J, Sturges KM, Harry B. Conducting ethnographic observations of reading in elementary schools. In: Vaughn S, Briggs KL, eds. Reading in the Classroom: Systems for the Observation of Teaching and Learning Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; 2004:145–177