

A CASE STUDY OF PATTERNS OF  
LANGUAGE USE BY ONE BILINGUAL STUDENT  
IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

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## ABSTRACT

### A CASE STUDY OF PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE USE BY ONE BILINGUAL STUDENT IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

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University of Dayton, 2002

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Immigrants coming into the United States bring with them many different cultural legacies, including language. Indeed, immigrants bring with them their mother tongues and most of them are not English. For children who emigrate from one country to another, the complexity surrounding issues of language learning and language use are considerable.

Nevertheless, the dilemma facing immigrant children has less to do with the learning of the English language than with the loss of their mother tongue. Few immigrant groups have successfully maintained their ethnic languages as they become assimilated into American life.

This is an ethnographic case study on patterns of language use by one bilingual student who was born in a South American country but moved to the U.S. when she was almost 2 years old. Three months of observations, field notes, and interviews provided insights into my participant's discourse in

various settings, such as the classroom, the family, and the social setting as well as her discourse with friends and with the researcher.

Results support the finding that my participant is not only a successful bilingual student but also a person proud of her heritage and willing to share her culture with others. Indeed, it is hoped that through a greater understanding of patterns of language use by one bilingual student, educators and parents who wish to maintain and embrace mother tongues in their families, classroom and school can find in the data collected and analyzed in this thesis, the strategies, ideas or even philosophies to achieve their goal.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Language does not contain meaning; rather, meaning lies in the social relationships within which language occurs. Individuals in communities make sense of language within their social relationships, their personal histories, and their collective memory. (Ovando, Pugh, & Schonemann, 2000, p.5)

Language is our primary human system for conceptualizing, expressing, and comprehending complex and relative meanings (Ovando, Pugh, & Schonemann, 2000). Indeed, the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (as cited in Ovando et al., 2000) wisely describe language as constantly changing, as a living organism.

This living organism is, as a matter of fact, an essential part of all human beings and the culture in which they develop. Immigrants coming into the United States bring with them many different cultural legacies, including language. Indeed, immigrants bring with them their mother tongues and most of them are not English. For children who emigrate from one country to another, the complexity surrounding issues of language learning and language use are considerable. However, the dilemma facing immigrant children has less to do with the learning of the English language than with the loss of their mother tongue (Carliner, 2000; Fillmore, 2000; Mc Laren &



Ovando, 2000; Nieto, 1999; Portes & Hao, 1998; Schechter & Bayley, 1997). Few immigrant groups have successfully maintained their ethnic languages as they become assimilated into American life. Indeed, English is alive but the languages their immigrant parents brought with them are not. In fact, many immigrants arrive in the U.S. speaking some English.

Results from a study conducted by Carliner (2000) pointed out the distribution of language skills in the 1990 U.S. Census of Population for U.S. born of Mexican descent. Among the adults, only 4.5% reported speaking English not very well or not at all. Among the 5 to 8 years olds, 68% spoke English only or very well. In addition, over 83% of the 13 to 17 year olds spoke English only or very well. As we can see, the lack of fluency in spoken English is rare among U.S. born. In addition, this study showed that a substantial fraction among U.S. born children of Hispanic descent did not speak English when they entered grade school, but at most three to five percent of teenagers and adults in these groups reported speaking English poorly or not at all. Thus, English skills improve over time as years of residency increase.

In another study, Portes and Schauffler (1994) reported that 86% of U.S. born Cuban-American children prefer English to Spanish. Similarly, in a different study conducted with 36 bilingual Latinos, the results showed a positive, although not very strong correlation (.51), between acculturation and use of English, not Spanish, at home. In other words, results indicated a loss of mother tongue and a greater Anglo/American orientation with the increase

of English at home (Tropp, Erkut, Garcia Coll, Alarcon, & Vasquez Garcia, 1999). Thus, Spanish tends to be spoken less and less as years of residency in the U.S. increased.

Another important study compared fluent bilingualism among immigrant communities with a sample of 5,266 eighth and ninth graders in the school systems of Miami and San Diego (Portes & Hao, 1998). They found that preference for English was dominant, since over two thirds of the youths in the sample chose it over their parents' languages. In fact, the majority could not speak their mother tongues and just 16% reported that they were fluent in these languages. Furthermore, among Latin American students, less than half are fluent bilinguals, and among those of Asian backgrounds, less than 10% are. Similarly, in a case study that explored the relationship between language and identity in four Latin families (two from Texas and two from California), the researcher found that members used English almost exclusively in parent-child and sibling interactions. In addition, they not only described the frequent intermixing of English and Spanish but also the lack of fluency in the mother tongue (Schechter & Bayley, 1997).

Several studies, which will be thoroughly described in the review of the literature, have described the negative effects of losing the mother tongue. These negative effects include identity and self esteem issues (Fillmore, 2000; Nieto, 1999; Prewitt & Santiago, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000), deterioration in family bonds (Flores & Murillo, 2001), and economically

detrimental consequences to the society and the individual among others (Portes & Hao, 1998; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Not only does the issue of primary language loss relate to broad social issues, but language use and loss touches me personally as well. Being a bilingual language teacher and coming to the United States from a Spanish speaking country to live and study makes me wonder about many issues educators and parents of immigrant children are facing today. I acknowledge that my interest in this field was at first triggered by my personal interests considering the fact that there is a high probability that I will stay in the United States after I complete my graduate studies. Accordingly, staying in this country means staying not only as a second language teacher, but also as a wife and eventually a mother. This brings about several concerns.

First of all, as an educator in the U.S. schools I will be facing diversity in my classroom wherein students from different cultural backgrounds and with mother tongues other than English are part of my classroom. As educators, how can we help these students in the classroom? How can we embrace diversity? How can we promote bilingualism and cultural awareness? In addition, as a wife and eventually a mother, I will have to make key decisions regarding my child's education. How do I want this child to be brought up? I know for sure that I want my child to be bilingual. But what does that mean? How can I help him/her grow up understanding English and Spanish? What implications confront a bilingual child?

The reader might ask himself how I am supposed to answer all these questions in one thesis! Certainly, they are not all going to be answered, but the significance of this study does not rely upon the answering of all the questions! In fact, this thesis aims to gain insight into one particular aspect: language use in one bilingual student. Moreover, the analysis of this aspect will open the door to some of my previously posted questions. Indeed, this study will not only help any educator in the U.S schools but also parents who are struggling with their children in keeping or acquiring the mother tongue and its cultural legacy; and at the same time, maintaining a good level of English. Thus, it is hoped that through a greater understanding of patterns of language use by one bilingual student, educators and parents who wish to maintain and embrace mother tongues in their families, classrooms and schools can find in the data collected and analyzed in this thesis, the strategies, ideas or even philosophies to achieve their goal.

Therefore, my research questions are:

1. What patterns of language does one bilingual person demonstrate in various contexts?
2. How do teachers, peers, and parents respond to these different patterns of language use?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review is divided in four sections. The first section consists of a short overview of the history of pluralism in the United States from the early beginnings to present time. Indeed, a description of the U.S. political responses and ideologies towards minorities and their assimilation process will be provided. The second section depicts current demographic trends and also provides projection of minority population until the year 2050 as well as an analysis of educational implications. The third section portrays the recent English-only movement in the U.S., which is a powerful ideology that strives towards the elimination of languages other than English. In addition, legal trends in the state of California are also explained as well as their influence in the education of immigrant children. Finally, the last section analyzes the social and political implications of this current English-only ideology. It describes the factors that influence the loss or maintenance of mother tongues in immigrant children and provides a further analysis of the negative consequences the loss of the native language can bring to an individual and the society.

## E Pluribus Unum: History of Pluralism in the United States

Ricoeur reflected, "An ideology is operative and not thematic. It operates behind our backs, rather than appearing as a theme before our eyes. We think from it rather than about it" (as cited in Galindo, 1997, p. 165). In addition, Bourdieu affirmed, "ideologies serve particular interests which tend to present as universal interests, shared by the group as a whole" (as cited in Galindo, 1997, p. 165.) In other words, Ricoeur asserts that many times ideologies are so powerful that they can prevent people, states, and even countries to think critically and beyond. Indeed, Bourdieu also stated that usually a small group supports an ideology and presents it as if it were supported for the whole population. In the history of pluralism in the United States there have been several political reactions towards minorities entering the country. Some would argue that many of these ideologies have served the interest of a small group and many of these have blindfolded this nation and prevented it from really growing in understanding other cultures (McLaren & Ovando, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The purpose of this first section is to give the reader a historical framework concerning different ideologies towards immigration. It is essential to know the past in order to understand the present.

From the early beginnings in the U.S. history, political leaders envisioned a country with a unified history, with unified traditions, and with a common language, which was very strongly based on English traditions. In fact, Larson & Ovando (2001) suggested that not only in this country, but also

with the arrival of the first colonizers to the new world, this idea of a world unified by a sole imposing culture was already present. As it was the case of Columbus who wrote these words upon seeing the Indian tribes in the New World:

It seemed to me that they were people very deficient in everything. They all go naked as their mothers bore them, and the women also...They should be good servants and of quick intelligence, since I see that they very soon say all that it is said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it appeared to me that they had no creed. Our Lord willing, at the time of my departure, I will bring back six of them to your Highness that they may learn to talk. (Larson & Ovando, 2001, p. 104)

Columbus not only envisioned the assimilation of the tribes to his culture but also assumed that they were inferior as well as lacking creed and ability to talk (Flores & Murillo, 2001). Why are we always so ready to judge by appearances?

E Pluribus Unum, the Latin phrase meaning "one out of many," has long been the national motto reflecting the American aspiration for a unified country. However, the controversy about the real meaning of this motto is still at the forefound of public discourse. The dilemma resides in the relationship of national unity (the Unum) with ethnic and cultural diversity (the Pluribus). Patrick (1998) stated that the monolithic integration viewpoint of E Pluribus Unum, which corresponds to the early beginning of the United States,

involves assimilation into an Anglo-Saxon culture that was presumed to be American.

Thus, the stage was set early in the nation's history for the politics of English-only (Larson & Ovando, 2001). In addition, the schools served as a powerful vehicle throughout the nation's history to assimilate ethnic and racial communities into white, Anglo Saxon, protestant norms. In order to reach the goal of a unified country, political leaders have implemented several approaches over the decades. Larson & Ovando (2001) described the chronology of implemented strategies in the United States for the past 200 years using the outline of the educational sociologist Robert Havighurst. He divided the development of pluralism in four phases: defensive pluralism, the melting pot, laissez-faire pluralism, and constructive pluralism.

Certainly, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, immigrant communities defended their inherited legacy jealously and worked to maintain mother tongues and traditions while at the same time they participated in the civil life of the nation. This was called the defensive pluralism. However, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until World War I, the melting pot ideology emerged. Ellwood Cubberley, a prominent early 20<sup>th</sup> century educator, saw public schools as the necessary instrument by which to solve the "great ethnic problem."

Furthermore, Cubberley states (as cited in Patrick, 1998):

The problem which has faced and still faces the United States is that of assimilating these thousands of foreigners into our national life and citizenship. We must do this or lose our national character. (p. 6)



Therefore, the schools strongly promoted Americanization of minorities, a strong emphasis on citizenship minus their cultural legacy, ideologies and languages. Likewise, schools propagated the sense of nation so as to create the hegemony needed by new elite to maintain their power relationship. Schooling was the tool to disseminate the ideals of a new society (Flores & Murillo, 2001). Indeed, up to the 1960s, the consensus in linguistic and psychological theories was that bilingualism and cognitive development were negatively associated. This misconception was supported by requiring children to take intelligence tests in English. Not surprisingly, minorities scored at levels well below Anglo-American students (Flores & Murillo, 2001). As a consequence, many considered the retention of a foreign language and the lack of fluency in English as a sign of intellectual inferiority. In fact, prominent political figures denounced the use of foreign languages as un-American. Such a figure was Theodore Roosevelt (Portes & Hao, 1998): "We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language" (p. 271).

The conventional wisdom during that time period was that by doing away with student differences, assimilation led to more equality (Nieto, 1999). However, as Nieto (1999) avows, the pressure that schools placed on students to assimilate was itself an example of educational inequality.

Following World War I came the "laissez-faire pluralism period." The federal government did not explicitly advocate for ethnic rights or equal opportunities. However, this ideology suggested that schools and parents

worked to achieve equilibrium in accepting cultural legacy while at the same time affirming the core values associated with American democracy (Larson & Ovando, 2001).

The civil rights movement promoted “constructive pluralism,” in which not only parents and schools, but also administrators, politicians and social activists enthusiastically promoted U.S. diverse cultural heritage. With the civil rights came English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, bilingual education and multicultural education as well. Nevertheless, according to many researchers, the “melting pot” ideology has always been floating around. This term was created in 1908 by a British author of Jewish identity, Israel Zangwill. He wrote a very popular melodrama called “The Melting Pot” (Patrick, 1998):

Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross-how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. (p.6)

Since the 1990s, this ideology strongly resurged under an English-only policy, which is the current response to rising number of minorities in the United States.

Indeed, this first section has given the reader a panorama of the past. The following sections will give the reader a panorama of the present, beginning with current trends in demographics.

## Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau population projections, the face of the U.S. will become even more diverse in the decades ahead. The U.S. population will look quite different by the year 2050; the White, Non-Hispanic population will decrease from 75 percent in 1990 to 64 percent in 2020 and to 53 percent in 2050, whereas the Asian population should continue to increase from 3% in 1990 to 6% in 2020 and to 9% in 2050, the Hispanic population should also increase from 9% in 1990 to 17% in 2020 and to 24% in 2050, whereas the Black, Non-Hispanic population should stay more or less the same with 12% in 1990 to 13% in 2020 to 13% in 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections Program). Likewise, Larson & Ovando (2001), state that by 2020 children now labeled racial and ethnic minorities will constitute about 46 percent of the nation's school-age population; of these, 27 percent will be children of poverty.

These dramatic changes in the U.S demographics are depicted in two tables. Figure 1 shows population projections in millions and Figure 2 shows population projections in percentages.

	1990	2001	2005	2010	2015	2020	2050
White, Non-Hispanic	187.20	197.25	199.41	201.96	204.59	207.15	212.99
Black, Non- Hispanic	29.20	33.88	35.45	37.48	39.55	41.55	53.47
Hispanic	22.30	33.62	38.19	43.69	49.26	55.16	98.23
Asian, Non- Hispanic	7.20	10.99	12.50	14.44	16.44	18.53	35.76
American Indian	1.90	2.07	2.17	2.30	2.43	2.55	3.24
United States	248.70	277.81	287.72	299.87	312.27	324.94	403.69

Figure 1. Projection of population growth in millions from 1990 to 2050.

	1990	2001	2005	2010	2015	2020	2050
White, Non-Hispanic	75%	71%	69%	67%	66%	64%	53%
Black, Non- Hispanic	12%	12%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%
Hispanic	9%	12%	13%	15%	16%	17%	24%
Asian, Non- Hispanic	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	6%	9%
American Indian	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
United States	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 2. Projection of population growth in percentages from 1990 to 2050.

As we can see, Hispanic population growth will continue to increase dramatically over the years. Accordingly, the face of U.S. schools will change also. More and more students with diverse cultural backgrounds and mother tongues, especially Spanish, will join the U.S. classroom, my classroom, your classroom, our classrooms (Nieto, 1992, 1999). Furthermore, the above demographic poses an important challenge to teachers, administrators, and universities that prepare educators for today's schools. The controversy is that to date, the majority of k-12 teachers are white, middle-class females (Larson & Ovando, 2001). Indeed, many researchers believe that it is essential that educators become aware of the increasing gap between students' backgrounds and educators' backgrounds and truly make a commitment to embrace diversity in the classroom and promote mother tongues. However, many U.S. voters have reacted defensively against the racial, cultural, and language diversity brought by rising levels of immigration. This has led to the passage of nineteen state laws designating English as the sole language in the U.S. (Crawford, 2000)

### Current trends in policy: English-only

There has been a national movement to make English the official language of the land and has persuaded voters in several states to pass declarations to that effect (Larson & Ovando, 2001; Portes & Hao, 1998). It appears that we may be entering a new backlash phase, which could be called “anti-constructive pluralism” (McLaren & Ovando, 2001).

Indeed, the message was put forward with Proposition 187 in California by limiting educational and health services to “illegal” immigrants. Likewise, in 1998 California passed a ballot initiative called Proposition 227; which states, “All children in California public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English” (Lexis-Nexus, 2002). Proposition 227 is considered by many educators to be an anti-bilingual measure that would deprive language minority students of quality educational services by limiting support in their maternal language to one year (Quezada, 2000; Valdez, 2001). In a case study describing the experiences of 20 bilingual teachers in California, Valdez (2001) portrayed the common discontent teachers have with several aspects of the Proposition 227 such as lack of clear local/state policy guidelines, increased tensions between bilingual and non bilingual teachers, and having to deal with frustrated parents and students.

Additionally, in 1998, the U.S. Congress debated The English Language Fluency Act (H.R. 3892). This bill limits the number of years non-English speaking students can take bilingual classes. The bill converts two existing programs, the Bilingual Education Act and the Immigration Education

Act, into a single state block grant (Lexis-Nexus, 2002). This trend in legislation not only affects the educational and health setting, but also the labor setting. Indeed, there has been a recent increase in discrimination complaints and lawsuits over English-only restrictions at the job place. More and more employers are requiring English to be spoken at all times. At this writing, it is impossible to gauge the effect of September 11 terrorist attacks on public sentiment for English-only rules but in 1996, there were 91 charge filings. In 2001, there were 443 such filings (Lexis-Nexus, 2002).

As we can see, this California judicial trend seriously cripples bilingual education support services for language minority students. Many can say that California in a very unique situation. However, many others believe that California often serves as a prophetic barometer to what can be expected throughout the nation (Flores & Murillo, 2001; Larson & Ovando, 2001). The English-only supporters allege linguistic fragmentation and political disintegration in this country if the U.S. continues to support cultural diversity and mother tongues. Indeed, they associate social problems such as unemployment and low educational achievement with the Spanish-speaking population. Therefore, the Spanish language is often viewed as a cause of those social problems. "Thus, fixing the language problem is seen as a way to solve these related social problems" (Galindo, 1997, p. 172).

Many have addressed the oppressive nature of the English-only movement. However, as sociologist Morris Janowitz points out, "what this ideology fails to recognize is that the overwhelming majority of immigrants

“came as settlers” to start a new life in a new culture; they did not come as colonizers to perpetuate “old world cultures” (as cited in Patrick, 1998). Likewise, as political scientist Jean Bethke Elshtain affirms, “Education is about opening the world up, not imprisoning us in terms of race, gender, or ethnicity” (as cited in Patrick, 1998, p. 11). In addition, Freire (1972, 1989) described the banking concept of education as the one that serves the interests of oppression and attempts to control thinking and action. Therefore, it transforms students into receiving objects and leads them to adjust to the world inhibiting their creative power. Indeed, Paulo Freire (1970) powerfully opposed any pedagogy that embraces oppression. He affirmed, “La opresión, que no es sino un control aplastador, es necrófila. Se nutre del amor a la muerte y no del amor a la vida” (p. 81)<sup>1</sup>.

By and large, as current legislation seemed to verify, there is an on-going concern about language learning and rapid English acquisition. Thus, Americans in general have not been accepting of languages other than English, Spanish in particular. It is usually the language of the new immigrant, who is seen as the intruder encroaching upon the diminishing resources of this country and preventing the eradication of a foreign tongue on U.S. soil (Cummins, 1993). However, the ubiquitous concern that these children are not learning English is erroneous. As most of the research supports, immigrant children are learning English as quickly and well as they always have. We have yet to meet an immigrant parent who says that he or she does

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<sup>2</sup> “Oppression-overwhelming control-is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life.” (Freire, 1968/1972, p.64)

not want his child to learn English or to acquire the skills that will prepare him or her for a successful career in the United States. Indeed, Carliner (2000) examined knowledge of languages in people born in the U.S. of America. Findings show that in 1990, 98.6 percent of Americans aged 18-64 reported speaking only English. Therefore, Americans were in 1990 almost 100 percent monolinguals! Whereas, as stated by the Linguistic Society of America founded in 1924, "The vast majority of the world's nations are at least bilingual, most are multilingual." They also acknowledged, "people who speak a language in addition to English provide a role model for other Americans. Our national record on learning other languages is notoriously poor." (Linguistic Society of America, 2002)

Unfortunately, in the United States, the children from immigrant families are rapidly losing their native languages (Nieto, 1992, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Yet, many have suggested this loss is detrimental to those experiencing it and to society as a whole. Therefore, this point of view will be developed in the next section.

### Implications of Current Policies

Several studies have reviewed the research on acculturation effects and the loss of mother tongue in immigrants. A language transmits values, beliefs, and common cultural understandings that are at risk of diminishment when children began to decrease their usage of their mother tongue (Kouritzin, 2000). One of the aspects studied was the presence or absence of family support. Schechter & Bayley (1997) showed the importance of having



grandparents around to interact with the children in maintaining mother tongue fluency. In addition, Li (1999) supported the findings that family talk in the primary language is an important way to maintain and develop the first language for children. Another factor identified in several studies is the well-known positive correlation between time in the U.S. and acculturation (Carliner, 2000; Portes & Hao, 1998; Tropp et al., 1999). That is to say, the longer a child has resided in this country, the stronger the likelihood of using English as primary language. Portes & Hao (1998) acknowledged that loss of fluency was due to a combination of factors.

Similarly, Fillmore (2000) stated language loss is a result of both internal and external forces operating on children. The internal factors have to do with the desire for social inclusion, conformity, and the need to communicate with others. The external forces are the sociopolitical ones operating in the society against outsiders, against differences, against diversity. The message is "The home language is nothing; it has no value at all" (Fillmore, 2000, p. 207). Indeed, in an earlier study, Fillmore (1991) stated that from the early beginnings children from immigrant families learn to feel ashamed of what their native language and culture represent in exchange for their academic success; these students felt that they needed to "act white" in order to be perceived as intelligent by their teachers. Paulo Freire (1970) made a strong case on the negative power of self-depreciation in education:

La autodesvalorización es otra característica de los oprimidos. Resulta de la introyección que ellos hacen de la visión que de ellos tienen los

opresores. De tanto oír de sí mismos que son incapaces, que no saben nada, que no pueden saber, que son enfermos, indolentes, que no producen en virtud de todo esto, terminan por convencerse de su incapacidad. (p.58-59)<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, one of the studies attempted to look at how acculturative stress affected self-esteem in a group of upper elementary school children in Puerto Rico. All participants were administered two tests, the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. A total of 240 children participated in the study. The subjects were divided into two groups: Puerto Rican children who have migrated (migrant) and spent at least one academic year in the U.S. and Puerto Rican children who have never migrated (static). The data suggested that children who come to the school system as migrants are disadvantaged initially. Overall, children in the migrant group perceived that their performance in school and learning were much lower than children in the comparison group (Prewitt & Santiago, 1998).

Many studies strongly emphasized the negative impact loss of the mother tongue had on children's social identity. Indeed, children become "Americanized" as the use of English increases at home (Tropp et al, 1999). This process of assimilation and devaluation often creates a person who has a distorted sense of identity and does not fit into either culture (Zimmerman, 2000), which could bring about detrimental consequences to the student.

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<sup>2</sup> "Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything-that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive-that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitnes" (Freire, 1968/1972; p. 49).

Indeed, "Doing away with a language, or prohibiting its use, tears away at the soul of a people" (Nieto, 1999, p. 60). Another study depicted statistics about drug abuse by Puerto Rican adolescents in New York City.

Unfortunately, drug abuse was found to be higher in those born in New York City (81%) and those who emigrated from Puerto Rico (63%) than those still in Puerto Rico (52%) (James, 1997).

A case study with a Cantonese Family arriving at the U.S with three children showed that the shift from Cantonese to English and the loss of the family language by the children had a deteriorating impact on communication between the adults and the children (Fillmore, 2000). Another study by Flores & Murillo (2001) described family bonds deterioration:

One of our nieces, at the tender age of three, has learned a very important lesson; ... She understands Spanish but will not speak it with us. After much grief and pain at seeing that this lovely girl will not be able to communicate with her own grandmother, we realize that the most important lesson she learned is that Spanish is not something to be valued. (p. 184)

Finally, the loss of bilingualism can be economically detrimental to the society and the individual since there is an increasing demand for language skills in the labor market. Indeed, Portes & Hao (1998) affirmed that, "more business leaders have recently complained about the dearth of fluent bilinguals" (p. 272). Indeed, many Latin American immigrants do not speak fluent enough Spanish to be able to conduct business transactions. As many have stated,

there are many negative consequences when an individual loses the mother tongue. In addition, there have been many studies acknowledging the positive effects of maintaining mother tongues as well as a good level of English.

Bilingualism is important to success in the global U.S. multicultural labor market of today (Clachar, 1998; Fillmore, 2000; Kouritzin, 2000; Nieto, 1999; Rothstein, 1998; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000). Several studies have urged educators and administrators to reflect on their perspectives towards bilingualism and second language acquisition. Kouritzin (2000), a mother of a Japanese born child, described social, emotional and cognitive advantages to bilingualism. Indeed, she stated that bilingual children are more able to draw from both of their linguistic heritages in order to best negotiate their individual cultural and linguistic identities. In addition, she described her experience and strongly encouraged parents to follow her example.

Moreover, the research literature makes a strong case for the positive intellectual effects of bilingualism. Portes and Hao (1998) have suggested that loss of the mother tongue represents not only a drawback for the children of immigrants and the communities in which they live, but also for the nation as a whole. Likewise, the best means to an academic road for limited-English-proficient students is the students' native language (Valdez, 2001). Soto's (1993) research among 30 Hispanic families of young children with low and high academic achievement found that parents of the higher-achieving

children inevitably favored a native-language environment to a greater extent than those of lower-achieving youngsters. Similarly, Nieto (1999) emphasized the importance of maintaining native languages since they develop children's metalinguistic awareness, that is, a greater understanding of how language itself works.

As we can see, the educational implication of these research studies is that development of literacy in two or more languages entails linguistic and academic benefits for individual students, in addition to preparing them for a working environment (Crawford, 2000; Cummins, 2000). Furthermore, Macedo (2000) emphasized the need for a diverse classroom where cultural identities are respected and bilingualism embraced. Indeed, Ovando (2000) concluded "it is crucial that educators, researchers, and policymakers stay attuned to the inner voices of language minority students, who may be prisoners of silence in English-dominant classrooms" (p. 20). Indeed, he noted, "it is axiomatic in educational circles that all students learn best when they experience curricular content and processes that mirror their lives, cultures, languages, and socioeconomic realities" (p. 20).

By and large, the English language is fast becoming the only language for global communication. This is not due to English having innately better capacity over other languages, but to a combination of economic, historical, and political circumstances (Seaton, 1997). However, can we conclude then that Americans don't need to learn other languages? Or that immigrants need

to assimilate English and lose their mother tongues? Is it not also true that bilingualism is viewed as an asset in today's multicultural business world?

This review of the literature provided tacit encouragement for pursuing the answers to some of these questions. Indubitably, the history of the U.S. policies towards other cultures other than Anglo Saxon English-only has followed many traveled roads. Different ideologies have prevailed over time. Indeed, recently, we have seen the U.S. English-only emerging stronger in California and spreading over the country. In addition, demographic facts depicted in this review, project the drastic change in U.S. population from today until 2050. At last, the analysis on factors that contribute to the loss or maintenance of mother tongues as well as the benefits of bilingualism enlightened the current concern over bilingualism and cultural awareness that many educators and researchers share. Certainly, as it was demonstrated through scholarly sources, maintenance of both English and family language other than English seems to be the main worry. This research study is designed to shed some light in understanding patterns of language use of one bilingual adolescent and her apparent success in maintaining her mother tongue, Spanish.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Choosing a study design requires understanding the philosophical foundations underlying the type of research, taking stock of whether there is a good match between the type of research and your personality. (Merriam, 1998, p. 1)

I must admit my life as a graduate student changed before and after the thesis process. As many of you know from experience, it is not an easy task. By all means, it requires a lot of time and involvement. The moment I knew that a thesis was part of my requirement for graduation, my mind started to search for topics and the famous research questions, which eventually came to be: what patterns of language use does one bilingual person demonstrate in various contexts? And, how do teachers and parents respond to these different patterns of language use?

Well, having accomplished that, I realized that there were many ways to approach the research, but what more important than doing it the way I am! That's when I truly understood Merriam's words. I am a social being; I am an observant of behavior, not only as an educator, but also as a friend, colleague, wife, sister and daughter. I love being among people, I

accomplished so much more with a face-to-face conversation than with a telephone call, e-mail or letter.

Accordingly my study was framed in the qualitative paradigm because it best addresses the question. Indeed, I shadowed my participant in various settings, including school and home, from the beginning of March through May.

### Participant

This case study is about one immigrant adolescent having Spanish as the heritage language living in the U.S. At the time of the study, Camila, (a pseudonym) was 16 years old and had been living in the U.S since the age of 2. She came from South America with both Latin-American mother and father and elder brother, who is 3 years older than she is. At the time of this study the family had two additional members, a 12-year-old brother and a dog. In an initial interview, the mother recounted that her child did not speak English when they first got here. In fact, she told me she panicked because her daughter did not utter many words until the age of two when her older brother, who was 5, got a really good command of English and communicated with his sister in English. The mother also mentioned Camila and her older brother had spoken mainly English between them ever since. However, she mentioned the language at home is mainly Spanish and has always been.

According to the mother of the participant, Camila spoke fluent English by the age of 4. In fact, she shared her dilemma at that moment when she hesitated into continuing with Spanish for the fear of confusing the child.



Finally they resolved to speak Spanish most of the time, except when helping their kids with school homework where specific vocabulary in English had to be used. As regards my participant's education and socioeconomic status, Camila comes from an upper middle class family. Her father is a doctor and her mother has an undergraduate degree from their country of origin. In addition, Camila has attended several different schools since the age of 4 because they had moved around several occasions. She also mentioned her daughter has never taken any Spanish classes at school before, but she has been taking French, in which she is an advanced learner. In addition, when my participant was 13, she spent the summer with her grandparents in South America. According to her mother, her child showed a great interest in her heritage and language and decided to start taking Spanish at her high school for the first time the year this study took place (2001-2002). Finally, her mother affirmed that my participant's friends are all native born to the United States.

I met my participant, Camila, in February 2000 at a social dinner. Her parents invited my husband and me so we can meet with other Latinos in the area. That night I met several children coming from Hispanic families but living in the U.S. Many of them had troubles understanding Spanish or they would readily switch to English, however, my participant called my attention. Camila would not only speak Spanish when she could, but also, her understanding and fluency in both English and Spanish was excellent. I knew right away that I wanted to know more; I started asking casual question to her

family and her. I kept telling myself that I wanted to raise my kids bilingual. But, how shall I achieve that? Also, I kept wondering how she interacted at school. So, when the opportunity to do the thesis arose, she was the obvious choice.

There were several criteria to select my candidate. First, and most important criterion was the participant's uniqueness in her fluent knowledge of both languages. As I have described through the review of the literature, maintaining a good command of both English and mother tongue seems to be a very challenging undertaking. However, it is also a possible one. Indeed, upon meeting Camila, I realized she was a vivid exception to most of the research I have read. Therefore, I intentionally chose her so that I could learn more about her story, and her bilingualism. Other criteria were positive attitudes and willingness to participate of my participant and her family. Indeed, upon interviewing the participant alone, she showed excitement at the fact that she would be helping me analyze her language use in the classroom and at home. Third was the convenience of location of participant's home and school, which are close to my home location.

At the time of the study Camila was a sophomore at a Catholic high school with an enrollment of 982 students. The majority of the students are Caucasian (67.2 %), the second largest group is African American (26.5 %). Hispanic represents 1.3 % and Bi-racial represents 1.7 % of the population of the school. Pertaining to gender, there has been an equal enrollment of female and male for the last 5 years. In addition, most of the students come

from catholic schools (78.5 %). Only 10.8 % comes from public school. The school is situated in a downtown area of a medium size city of southern Ohio.

### The Role of The Researcher

My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as researcher ... Seen as virtuous, subjectivity is something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise. (Glesne & Peskin, 1991, p. 104)

As stated earlier in the thesis, many reasons powered my interest in this subject; consequently, they shaped my role as a researcher in various ways. Glesne & Peskin (1991) also stated that subjectivity is that invariable presence of personal factors in any qualitative research study. In fact, they clearly acknowledged the importance of perceiving subjectivity as a constant dimension in the entire research and urged researchers to reflect on when, which ones, and with what impact these personal factors will emerged.

Upon reflection on my subjectivity, I realized that my role as a researcher was being constantly shaped by several "selves": Hereby I define them:

- My teacher self: This is the self of a teacher shaped by more than 5 years of teaching in my country of origin and 9 months teaching in the U.S. in both English and Spanish as a second language. My role as a

teacher takes me to observe the classroom setting thoroughly in search of clues to answer my research question.

- My Christian self: Fashioned in the Catholic tradition, especially in the Marianist Charisma (Congregation of the Society of Mary). This self will certainly contribute in the field since the school where the case study took place is a Catholic one. However, this self might encourage me to “judge” when observing, which is not the point of my study.
- My Latin self: This is my outgoing and energetic self, the product of growing up in a country of difficulties where you have to be proactive in order to survive. This has been an essential characteristic when you set a goal and strive to achieve it.
- My political self: Closely connected with my Latin self. Growing up in South America helped me realize the importance of education. I have worked with children at risk ages 5-20 in extremely poor conditions for almost 10 years. I would help them with their school homework and also teach some of them how to read and write. This experience opened my eyes and showed me that many people were living in substandard life conditions, very different from my own reality. I was only 14 years old when I started, but I knew at that time that I wanted to become a teacher. I truly understood the importance of an authentic dialogue between teachers and learners as equally knowing participants. Indeed, as stated by Paulo Freire (1968):

El hombre radical no teme enfrentar, no teme escuchar, no teme el descubrimiento del mundo. No teme el encuentro con el pueblo. No teme el diálogo con él, de lo que resulta un saber cada vez mayor de ambos. No se siente dueño del tiempo, ni dueño de los hombres, ni liberador de los oprimidos. Se compromete con ellos, en el tiempo, para luchar con ellos por la liberación de ambos. (p. 26)<sup>4</sup>

- My bilingual self: This self will be essential in analyzing language use in the field. I am a native Spanish speaker and English is my second language. Though I am fluent in English, writing a thesis in my second language might impose some limitations. Certainly, Spanish is the language that reaches my heart because I was brought up with it, therefore, I used some Spanish throughout the study with translations provided in footnotes.
- My wife and prospective mother self: This is the self that made me think about the research question at first. The one that made me wonder what shall we do with our children if they are born in the U.S.? How should we educate them to be bilingual, to understand and embrace both cultures? The self that made me to wonder why my participant was different from many immigrant students?

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<sup>4</sup> “The radical man is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. He is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them. He does not consider himself the proprietor of history or of men, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he does commit himself, within history, to fight at their side.” (Freire, 1972, p. 24)

Certainly, all these “selves” are not isolated from one other. On the contrary, they are connected and interact with each other constantly. Indeed, they shape my role as the researcher in this particular study situation, making it unique.

### Data Collection and Strategies

The data collection mainly consisted of observations. I kept a journal at all times while shadowing Camila. I recorded field notes in that journal. Like Harry F. Wolcott (1984) in his ethnographic study of a principal, I shadowed my participant, which meant being with Camila everywhere she went. For that purpose, I observed her at least twice a week in school, plus one after school and one family activity at least once every two weeks.

Visits to the school for the entire school day were only for the first week. However, after further analyses and consideration, I realized that the data I was interested in collecting, Camila’s patterns of language use in various contexts, were present mainly in two of her classes: French and Spanish, which I observed twice every week. In addition, I also observed English and Religion classes for the purpose of answering my second research question as well: How do teachers respond to these patterns of language use? Not only did I record notes into my journal, but also videotaped and audio taped some of the language classes.

As regards after school observations, I had dinner with Camila and her family once a week almost every week for the purpose of gathering data of her patterns of language use within the family context. Furthermore, I

participated in three social activities after school. I collected data during a meeting of Camila's youth group, during a dinner she had with friends of the family and their children, and finally, doing volunteering work one evening in the World Fair. I recorded field notes in my journal for these visits, except for the dinner observations, which I audiotaped since I was having dinner as well. However, right after dinner I took a few minutes and wrote my comments in the journal.

All of Camila's teachers that I have observed were interviewed individually once. In addition, I interviewed Camila's youth group coordinator individually twice. Moreover, I interviewed my participant's parents twice, once at the beginning of my study, early March, and once at the end of it, early May. In addition, I interviewed Camila's close friends and classmates once, also individually. Last, I interviewed my participant several times, not only at the beginning and at the end of the study but frequently for the period of the study as well. Indeed, we had frequent mini interviews every week since I read the field notes periodically and questions arose.

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed by me. The interviews were neither unstructured nor highly structured. I had prepared questions in advance but I would also ask new questions as the conversation advanced or I simply let my interviewees expand on their comments. The interviews to my participant's parents focused on their perceptions of Camila's patterns of language use at home, their reasons for maintaining mother tongue as well as eliciting some personal information about Camila's past.

Overall, I conducted a total of 20 interviews, I videotaped one Spanish class and observed a total of 40 class sessions throughout the three months in which my study was conducted.

### Data analysis

Being mainly an ethnographic case study, the data were analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive narration of the findings and the results are the heart of this study. In addition, first-person accounts are used in order to narrate the story of my research adventure! Indeed, this research adventure began with the collection of the data on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Data were organized and refined periodically. As Merriam (1998) states, "without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious and overwhelming in the sheer volume of materials that needs to be processed" (p.162).

Once interviews were transcribed along with my journal field notes, I began to code the data and search for "regularities- things that happen frequently with groups of people" (Merriam, 1988, p. 131). Indeed, these patterns and themes later emerged into categories. The data under these categories were organized in labeled file folders. I reread the file folders in search of similarities and differences across the data. Finally, through the continued reading of them, I condensed the data into five units, each one with their subunits as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Merriam, 1988, p.132).



### Ethical considerations and trustworthiness

Shadowing my participant was much more than just following her everywhere she went. During those three months her privacy was affected, I was part of her life. Indeed, she shared her everyday life with me.

I am really glad I am not a stranger to her. I already shared many social events with her family such as dinner, birthday parties, and barbecues. Be aware we are not friends; the age difference, fortunately for a research study, makes it somehow not possible. There is trust though, essential in this kind of study. What is more, after our first informal meeting, we reached to an understanding that while shadowing her, I would suppose I was welcome unless she informed me otherwise. In addition, she always had the option of excluding me from any activity. To preserve anonymity, pseudonyms were used not only for my participant, but also for teachers, family members, and my participant's friends. What is more, I was the only one to access the volume of data during the fieldwork. Journal entries were only read and typed by me as well audio taped and videotaped interviews or sessions.

Since she is a minor, informed consent of parents, student, and school personnel are provided on Appendix A, B, and C, which show samples of the letters that were sent to the family and the school.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE USE

Knowledge.... necessitates the curious presence of subjects confronted with the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant searching. It implies invention and reinvention...In the learning process the only person that really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriate learning to concrete existential situations. (Freire, 1989; p.88)

This chapter contains the story of the patterns of language use in one bilingual student, Camila. This story is told in sections. The first section is the analysis of classroom discourse, where I recount my first day at school with Camila, followed by a description of my observations of her in different classrooms and her patterns of language use there. Subsequently, there is a section on analysis of social discourse where I describe Camila's patterns of language use with friends and acquaintances followed by a description of friends, teachers, and family responses towards Camila's social discourse. The next section is the analysis of family discourse. Indeed, patterns of language use in the family context, which is the fruit of several dinner observations, are portrayed. Within this section there is also an analysis of parents' reasons for the language choice at home as well as their philosophy towards bilingualism. After that, there is the analysis of researcher and participant discourse, which describes Camila's

patterns of language use with me throughout the study. Finally, the last section highlights the importance of bilingualism, and it is supported by Camila's teachers' voices, her parents, friends, and her own voice as well.

By and large, this thesis was a way of confronting the researcher with the world. The story that is told in the following pages is the process of a constant searching, invention, and reinvention. As it was cited above, Paulo Freire (1989) stated that "the only person that really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriate learning to concrete existential situations" (p. 88). My hope as a researcher, educator, and mother to be is that this story not only enables me but also the reader to apply what we have learned to concrete existential situations. Thus, let this story transform you...

### Analysis of Classroom Discourse

#### *First day at school*

Many memories flashed by as I found myself walking into Camila's Catholic high school for the first time on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Not many years ago I had attended a Catholic high school myself. I had never been in a Catholic high school in the United States before, so no sooner had I walked into the building than I found myself remembering my high school good old times, especially when I was sixteen. Camila is sixteen now and a sophomore here. However, this high school is nothing like my high school in my country, Argentina. On the one hand, there are no lockers back home. In fact, we do not need them since students do not change classrooms. Indeed, teachers are the ones who walked around when

the bell rings. Students are supposed to stay in their classes and wait in silence; yet silence was a commodity hardly achieved! On the other hand, the group of students I studied with all through high school stayed the same. In other words, I had the same 38 classmates for five years, except for those who changed schools or were “suggested” to change school.

The bell rings and Camila gets into the French class so I follow her. First period has started. Oh wait, not quite, I notice they all stand up so I stand up as well. Unexpectedly I hear a beautiful prayer over the loudspeakers. The French class answers “Amen” and the student over the loudspeakers wishes them a wonderful day of classes. I am astonished and about to sit down when they all face the U.S. flag and pledge. Definitely, nothing like my Catholic high school in Argentina. We neither pray in the mornings nor pledge to our flag! We take for granted Catholic religion and patriotism. U.S. citizens take for granted simple life commodities. I wonder if there is a need for equilibrium in our cultures.

Fifteen minutes after my entrance in the school, the French class starts. After French, comes Spanish, then Ceramics, a lunch break, then Religion followed by English, Math; and last, but not least, Biology. My first day of school, the adventure of data collection has just started...

### *Camila in the Classroom*

During my observations in the months of March, April and May, the French class was working with the well-known book “The Little Prince.” The French instructor usually read it aloud in French and then she would ask the students comprehension questions, which Camila usually answered correctly. Indeed, she was probably the most engaged learner in this class. Not only did she know all

the answers but also answered them in French. Likewise, Camila's instructor, Ms. Johnson, commented about Camila in the classroom:

She is an excellent student. She does a lot more speaking than the rest of the class. She takes many more risks because she knows the sentence patterns better. She is not afraid to try and her vocabulary is really good. She makes some mistakes in spelling because she confuses it with Spanish but she is a very positive person overall so her attitude towards learning French is always great. Her confidence is really high and she attempts to speak French most of the time (4/9/02).

Moreover, Camila had also a lot of insight about the meaning of the book and she shared that with the class. Indeed, on one occasion, talking about the meaning of the story, she said that people are biased by appearances many times. On another occasion, the teacher asked the class what age could someone fall in love. And seeing that no one was answering seriously, Camila said firmly in English: "It is not about age but maturity to love." Everyone just gazed in silence. Indeed, she was the only one in the classroom that commented seriously. You could see that the French teacher was pleased with the answer and I found myself reflecting on that reaction as I wrote in my field notes on 4/9/02: "Is her deep understanding due to her knowledge of different cultures and languages?" On the same day Ms. Johnson verbalized Camila's deeper understanding in our interview as well. She said, "She is almost trilingual and has so much understanding for other cultures. She's been exposed to so many different things that her mind is open to many different ideas."

Camila kept surprising me as an excellent language learner. On 4/18/02, the instructor asked for volunteers to read aloud a chapter on the book "The Little

Prince.” Predictably, the only hand up was Camila’s. She read throughout the entire class and she was not afraid of making mistakes at all! She had a great intonation and when the teacher asked for more volunteers and no one was willing to read, Camila willingly continued.

Certainly, she enjoys learning French. She was very active in the classroom and asked the teacher questions about sentence formation and grammar. She also used the dictionary when she was not sure. Indeed, my observations supported the fact that her overall attitude was much better than the rest of the class. As a matter of fact, she mentioned she traveled to France the summer before my observation, which possibly motivated her even more to become fluent in the language.

This was Camila’s third year taking French. However, it was the first time she was taking Spanish classes formally. Indeed, as a researcher and educator, I was very interested in observing her patterns of language use, what her role was in the class as a native speaker of the language and what the teacher’s approach was.

From what I observed, she gets bored easily, and I could clearly see her getting more and more bored as the Spanish classes progressed. As my field notes after three weeks of observation reflected: “Camila’s mind is definitely not in this class” (3/20/02). Certainly, this class was not sufficiently challenging for her and her participation differed from that in French classes. Indeed, she would only participate the number of times to get credit. What is more, she would frequently ask how many more questions she was supposed to ask since the

teacher gave them points for participation and she would only ask the amount of questions she needed to get her by. On the contrary, during French, Camila participated willingly and enthusiastically.

As regards her role in the Spanish classroom, she was expected to answer her classmates' vocabulary questions. This was not a role imposed by the teacher, but merely a role that she gradually acquired. Throughout every classroom, at least one student would ask her in the middle of an individual or even a group assignment the most fearsome question: Camila! What does "...” mean? Days passed and I observed Camila getting more and more tired of answering vocabulary questions. But do not get me wrong; she almost always answered their questions with a smile, the smile of frustration. Indeed, in one of our interviews, Camila reflected on her role in the Spanish class and said,

*De vez en cuando la profesora me mira... (every now and then the teacher looks at me) like when she has a million things to do and she says teach the class y me tira el libro encima y se va corriendo. (and she throws the book to me and she runs out of the classroom) Like when she has to make emergencies copies (3/17/02).*

Catalina, my participant's friend from the Spanish class, also reflected on Camila's part in the classroom. She shared,

*The way the teacher involves her is when we are playing a game she thinks it is not fair to let Camila play so she has her be the MC of the game. Or sometimes when the teacher needs to go out of the classroom, Camila is in charge and she asks us questions in Spanish (3/19/02).*

By the end of April, my field notes echoed her frustration as I wrote: "The students are using her as a walking dictionary instead of a learning experience. I think many of them are taking the easy way out." Indeed, once there was an

assignment to finish in class and Camila started doing it alone. Since some students complained it was difficult, the instructor allowed them to work in groups. Camila pretended she did not listen and continued working alone but many students around her asked her if she could help them. She unenthusiastically joined the group and no sooner had she done that, the students started asking her vocabulary questions. She answered only a couple but then she told them, with a smile, they should be looking for clues in the context since they were supposed to know those words.

This was also true almost every Tuesday for a two-month period when an elementary group of children from a local Catholic school joined the Spanish class to experience the language. The teacher and students prepared activities in advance, generally the day before their arrival. The elementary children along with the high school students were divided in groups called "familias," which means families. The groups were identified by a Hispanic last name. The context of collaboration among the high school students in Camila's group was poor. Surely, they usually expected her to take the initiative, which I frequently observed during my study. Indeed, most of the times Camila was the one who started with the first activity in the lesson plan. In addition, she was also the one who explained what the vocabulary meant to the elementary students.

The relationship that Camila had with her Spanish classroom was defined by two contrasting forces. On the one hand, her bilingualism made her a source of fast and easy consultation for the students, especially comprehension and vocabulary questions. However, she could not be of much assistance when it



came to grammar questions, such as verb tenses usage. Indeed, the Spanish instructor reflected on this, "I know that some students have gone to her house to study before a test. She can tell them the answer. I do not know if she can help them so they can do it on their own" (3/21/02). What is more, Catalina, Camila's friend, concurred with the Spanish teacher as she stated in our interview,

Camila doesn't know as much grammar as we do so we help her in that way too. Because in family quizzes she can help us translate some things and we can help her put "acentos"<sup>5</sup> and grammar things, she doesn't really know the reason behind certain tenses choices (3/19/02).

In addition, Camila also expressed she was able to help the students only with certain things as she put it:

A veces cuando tengo que ayudar con la tarea de gramática...a veces Catalina me llama, muchos me llaman y en la gramática no les puedo ayudar.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes I feel like...oh sorry maybe, or I think it is this way but you should check with Mrs. Smith. And they are like yeah yeah you are just trying to be humble (3/17/02).

But on the other hand, this same bilingualism created an aura of frustration and intimidation in many of the students. As the Spanish teacher commented in our interview: "Like sometimes when she answers some of my questions, she answers fast and you can see that kids are intimidated by it. I don't think they hold it against her, but they just think: wow, I wish I had that!"

Indeed, on 4/11/02, when the students were working in their "familias," there was a competitive activity and the elementary kids had to come up with a list of Spanish speaking countries without help from the high school students. It

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<sup>5</sup> Accented marks

<sup>6</sup> Sometimes when I have to help with grammar homework and Catalina or many others call and I cannot help them with grammar.

ends up that Camila's family won, and the immediate reaction of many of the high school kids was unanimous! They all shouted "cheaters" at the same time pointing towards Camila and her group who only shook her head negating. I asked her later how she felt and she said that it was funny at first but then when they repeated the comment several times she felt it was not funny any more. Furthermore, she mentioned a time when they had a test and the best scores were all students that sat next to her. She assured me they had not cheated. In fact the teacher's desk is right behind Camila but the class said that it was not fair and complained to the teacher. Camila shared that she did not like that attitude from the class but she affirmed, "These are little trivial things." But, are they really trivial?

This attitude towards Camila is frequent. One morning the instructor was taking oral exams and when it was Camila's turn, one student said: "Oh, come on! It is not fair! She knows this stuff! Camila seemed a little bit upset but she forced a smile. After class I had the chance to talk with this student whose name is Jorge. During our short conversation he explained bilingual students had an advantage over monolingual students not only in language classes but overall since as he expressed: "Camila is very smart...she does good in all her classes!" He also shared that being bilingual is extremely important in today's U.S. society, especially in Florida, New Mexico, and California. Indeed, he said that it is essential to get a well-paid position in the government. As regards Camila in the classroom, he confessed "sometimes I am a little mad at her because she knows everything." Indeed, I have the impression he is a very self-exigent person, he

wants to succeed in all his classes but he knows there is someone in the Spanish class who will be definitely better than him. Unfortunately, this situation was preventing him from improving. As a matter of fact, he expressed his frustration with the Spanish language and wished he had started learning it from kindergarten.

Jorge is not the only one that feels Camila's bilingualism is a real asset and advantage for her. In fact, one morning the students were revisiting the future tense in the Spanish class. Each student was supposed to write a prediction for every member in the classroom. First they had to work alone and then they went to the board where there were papers posted with each student's name. It was very interesting to see where they foresaw Camila after high school. The predictions for her were many but they all had the same theme in common, bilingualism. These are some of the predictions as I copied them from the posted paper on the board:

- Traducirá español a inglés y viceversa<sup>7</sup>.
- Será profesora de español<sup>8</sup>.
- Hablará muchos idiomas y será embajadora<sup>9</sup>.
- Traducirá para personas de Perú<sup>10</sup>.
- Visitará otros países y tomará el sol con muchachos muy guapos<sup>11</sup>.

Notice the students predicted her using her bilingual abilities in the future either teaching, translating, traveling or working as an ambassador. This showed that they truly recognize her ability in both languages; some even predicted she

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<sup>7</sup> She will translate from English to Spanish and vice versa.

<sup>8</sup> She will be a Spanish teacher.

<sup>9</sup> She will speak many languages and she will be an ambassador.

<sup>10</sup> She will translate for people from Peru.

<sup>11</sup> She will visit many other countries and she will lay under the sun with handsome guys.

would learn many more languages easily. Indeed, Camila was the only student in the classroom who had predictions related to language acquisition.

Fortunately, not all the students “use Camila as a walking dictionary.” In fact, there is one classmate that truly tries hard to learn Spanish and communicates with Camila in her mother tongue. Indeed, excerpts from our interview were introduced earlier in this section. The student’s name is Catalina and together they seemed to create a very positive environment for the use of Spanish. Certainly, Catalina affirmed she really enjoyed having my participant in the classroom:

I think she is an asset. She is one of my friends and a lot of time we speak in Spanish between us. She also sits next to me and we talk in Spanish all the time and the teacher gets pretty upset. She says “quiet, escuchen chicas”<sup>12</sup> She helped me with vocabulary we have not learnt and to say things differently. Since our teacher does not really speak Spanish to us like that. I mean she does it with Camila but she speaks English to the rest of the class and I don’t think it is fair because I would be able to speak to her in Spanish if she spoke to me in Spanish (3/19/02).

This student also added later in our interview conducted on 3/19/02,

Well, I think Camila has improved my Spanish experience a lot, you know, to have somebody who is bilingual. Because I think the best way to learn a language is by total immersion so when she talks to me I just learn a lot. I think it would help a lot to have more students like her in the classroom. During my observations, Catalina had a really positive attitude towards language learning. Indeed, not only did she talk in Spanish almost all the class but also tried hard to express herself in Spanish in order to communicate with Camila.

Mrs. Smith, the Spanish teacher supported my observations saying:

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<sup>12</sup> Listen girls!

And Catalina, her friend, she is really good too. She sits next to her, they speak Spanish all the time because Catalina really enjoys it and Camila really appreciates having someone else who really wants to speak it. I think Camila speaks it with people that really enjoy speaking it (3/21/02). Unfortunately, Catalina was absent a lot but every time she was present the difference in Camila's attitude was obvious. Unquestionably, she tried harder to use Spanish in the classroom and she also explained Catalina's when she had a doubt. She took the time only with her. I think Camila felt Catalina's real interest in learning her language and much more, which she did not sense from the rest of the class. What is really interesting is that, Camila's friend moved out of the city and changed schools. Indeed, during the last week of my observations, from 5/5/02 to 5/9/02, Catalina was not present in the Spanish classes. Camila's behavior visibly changed and differed from previous weeks when Catalina was there. During her absence, Camila was unusually quiet, did not participate much, and she did not use as much Spanish with any of her classmates; however, she continued to answer classmates' comprehension and vocabulary questions, though as in the following short excerpt from a class conversation with a classmate, she sometimes lost her patience:

Classmate: How do you say: When she came to the door I was talking on the phone with my mum?

Camila: [sighs] Why do you have to make it so complicated?

Classmate: Well, because we want *you* to make it simple!

Camila: Well, make it simple for *yourselves*! (Italics added)

In addition, I have observed that my participant does not really use Spanish with the teacher all the time even though the teacher affirmed in our interview that Camila uses Spanish with her all the time. For instance once she asked her teacher if they she could put some music. She did it in English. I did not see a consistent effort to speak Spanish all the time. Indeed, I witnessed that the teacher addressed her in Camila's mother tongue most of the time, but Camila answered in English. On 3/14/02, she asked the teacher: "Is this the whole quiz?" She used English again. I have plenty of examples where Camila used English to ask the teacher short questions. In order to monitor her patterns of language use with the Spanish teacher during the class period, I developed a chart in where I recorded the language Camila chose to ask her questions. (See Appendix E.) Overall, only half of the questions were in her mother tongue. What is more, that question in Spanish was usually translated into English immediately when the teacher could not understand or hear Camila's question. It is worth mentioning her questions were grammatically correct but her tone of voice might have been too low for a classroom with more than 30 students so when the teacher responded with a puzzled face, Camila immediately translated the question to English instead of repeating it in Spanish.

Even though Camila's discourse in the Spanish classroom was not mainly in Spanish, her willingness to help and share her heritage was always visible. Indeed, when my participant was given the chance, she brought music to the classroom. In fact, on 3/26/02, I videotaped Camila teaching a song from Peru called "Mayonesa," which means mayonnaise. It is a very lively song and also

the story of a man falling in love with a girl as they dance together. Camila spent the entire class period of 55 minutes talking only in Spanish. First, she handed out copies of the song to every student and explained the lyrics to them. She approached the teaching of new vocabulary and phrases in two ways. She would not only explain it with her own words, in Spanish of course, but also role-played the situations in various contexts so that the students could gain a better understanding. Indeed, the students were delighted and participated actively to Camila's questions. She would frequently said: "¿Entienden? ¿Qué significa esto<sup>13</sup>?" After working with the lyrics, they listened to the song together. Finally, they all stood up and danced following Camila's choreography. It was an activity worth watching; Camila certainly enjoyed sharing that part of her culture and she certainly used Spanish all the time. Likewise, the students showed their appreciation clapping their hand at the end of the period.

By and large, Camila was not as involved in Spanish as she was in other classes observed, such as French, Religion, and English. Indeed, during my observations Mrs. Smith, the Spanish instructor, did not plan any activities specifically for my participant and when I asked her in what ways she included Camila in the classroom. She responded:

Well, sometimes I ask her: How do they say this in Peru? Or...she is very good at bringing music...oh she has this dance and she really wants to share that with the class. Like next week she is going to teach them a song and a dance to the students.

Camila was just one more Spanish learner in the classroom even though she was clearly not like any other student in that classroom. Indeed, she was a native

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<sup>13</sup> Do you understand? What does that mean?

fluent speaker of the language. Thus, it was not surprising that Camila expressed in our final interview conducted on 5/15/02:

Cynthia: Reflecting on your Spanish class, does it fulfill your expectations?

Camila: ¡No! ¡No aprendo ni michi<sup>14</sup>! Plus sometimes I see where the teacher could do things differently that would help the kids more or when she butchers the accent. I don't know what to expect but I should be in Spanish five, not three.

As I mentioned above, Camila is an energetic participant in all her classes.

Indeed, the Religion class is a dynamic class, where everyone is welcome to participate. They shared their points of view while they learned about Jesus.

Camila had always been very actively involved here and often gave her opinion.

In addition, she volunteered to read the bible often, which she did smoothly. I

only observed a couple of Religion classes since I just wanted to make sure she was participating as much as she participated in language classes. Indeed, the

English classes I observed were no exception. Camila was a very frequent

participant in this class as well. Mrs. Brown, the English instructor, agreed with

the other teachers and supported my observations: "She certainly participates a

lot in class. Participation is not a problem for Camila. She is very outgoing and very social"(4/23/02).

I did not observe many English and Religion classes for reasons I have already explained in the introduction of this chapter. However, I did observe a couple of weeks in which the English class was discussing a book they were reading called "The Bean Trees." On 3/12/02, a very interesting discussion

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<sup>14</sup> No! I don't learn a thing!



developed. The teacher asked the class to reflect upon two of the themes in the book: family and growth. She also reviewed a part of the book where two of the characters introduced themselves to an American character. Even though the characters were immigrants from a Spanish speaking country they changed their Hispanic names to English ones when they introduced themselves. The teacher wanted to know why they did this and my participant answered that the immigrants were afraid of addressing themselves with Hispanic names because immigrants were seen as thieves of Americans' jobs and services. What surprised me is that the English teacher agreed but rapidly changed the subject. She did not go any further with the discussion despite the fact that Camila was an immigrant herself and had an interesting story to tell about her family struggles at the beginning of their stay in the U.S.

After the class, I wanted to know more and asked Camila what her thoughts were about that English discussion so while walking to the following class we engaged in a very enlightening conversation. The transcription of some parts of our dialogue is as follows.

Cynthia: Do you think your teacher should have talked a little more about immigration?

Camila: My teacher is kind of like...she doesn't really focus on external things about the book, she just focuses on the book. I think it would have been more like a learning experience if she had talked about immigration and how immigration was harder. Mm... that is why they were illegal because it was harder to become real immigrants. Yeah it definitely would have been good because my class doesn't know anything about the immigration process.

Cynthia: What do you know about the immigration process?

Camila: Well, we had to go through the whole immigration process; I didn't so much but my parents like they had to take tests. Like I remember once I had to go out of school and we went and signed papers and I had to pledge that I will give my life for America, which I will never do but they made me stand next to the flag and pledge it.

Cynthia: Have you ever shared that?

Camila: No. People that are born in America, citizens, they don't even know that! I guess it is just assumed? Like my parents know a lot more about American history stuff because they had to take lots of tests and stuff than one of my parent's friend knows. Like I think lots of people take citizenship in the United States for granted: Freedom, freedom of speech... I mean they don't know all that entails.

As we can see, she feels strongly that her class could actually have learned more meaningful things if the teacher would have addressed the issue a little deeper. She also reflects upon being an American and how many might take citizenship in this country for granted. Indeed, she seems to be a little bit upset with the fact that she was forced to pledge to the flag. I don't think it is the actual pledging to the flag but the fact that she undergone her parents' process of immigration, which entailed many efforts and struggles in order to be accepted in the U.S.

On the whole, Camila is very energetic in her classrooms. She is also a very bright language learner as well as an active participant in class discussions.

Analyzing her classroom's discourse provided a very useful insight of the context in which she used the Spanish, English and French language. In addition, teachers' perception of Camila in their classrooms as well as their responses to her different patterns of language use provided an excellent support to my observations. However, my observations went beyond her patterns of language use. Indeed, as I shared earlier when describing the French classroom, her very positive attitude in class and her mature comments during class discussions made me think her bilingualism and multicultural experience gave her a uniqueness that no other student showed during my collection of data. As a result, I decided it was worthwhile to peruse this aspect and asked Camila's teachers; youth group coordinator, and friends if they thought my participant's knowledge of two languages and her Hispanic culture influenced her in any way.

### *Responses to Camila's uniqueness*

As a matter of fact, the Spanish teacher affirmed on 3/21/02, "I think she is proud of being Hispanic, and do not think that is an issue. You know, I've had students in the past that did not want me to point them out but she does not care. I mean she is very self-assured and very open-minded." Similarly, the French instructor commented on 4/9/02, "She is almost trilingual and has so much understanding for other cultures. She's been exposed to so many different things that her mind is open to many different ideas." Likewise, the English teacher asserted,

I think her experience gives her a little more perspective than other students. She was very reflective when we were talking about immigration

and its connection to the book... She is a very well rounded young lady. She is very open to new things. She is not narrow minded and I think that could possibly be traced back to the influences of the family and the fact that they have been in other places and they have traveled and she has had these other experiences (4/23/02).

This same theme appeared once again in the conversation I had with Andrea.

She was born in the U.S but lived in Mexico doing missionary activities.

Therefore she is fluent in Spanish. She has known my participant for two months since she joined the school to work as a nurse and religious teacher assistant.

She is also one of the coordinators of the youth group that Camila is part of.

Andrea emphasized in our conversation after Camila's youth group meeting,

Andrea: Well, she is very motivated. Wants to meet others and get to know others and she tries to adapt. I think she recognizes a difference in herself from other teenagers.

Cynthia: In what ways is she different from other teenagers?

Andrea: I think she recognizes her cultural differences. You know when topics of conversation come up. Students here that have grown up here and never really have been out of this city. They don't have the same outlook of the world that she does. She has a more world-rounded view of the world and she voices that. She also speaks her mind and there is a risk there because other students have not seen that or lived there. Just today I overheard a conversation between her and a couple of other students. Camila was telling them that a bomb exploded in Peru and several people from Peru were killed. The students' reaction was to say: I am glad no Americans got killed! And she immediately said something like, "People from Peru are human beings, too, you know!" Mm. She has that multicultural perspective plus she is bilingual. That's great! (3/21/02)

As all the previous teachers, Andrea also made the point that Camila was unique and that her look at the world was much open minded and broad that many students of her age. By and large, these educators shared the same perspective about my participant. First, they all agreed in Camila's exceptional participation and enthusiasm in class. Second, they all expressed the fact that Camila has a unique perspective of the world.

Similarly, Camila's friends also echoed parallel responses. Indeed, Catalina, from the Spanish class, believed that the fact that Camila was brought up bilingual made her "cultured and more well rounded." I have also had the chance to talk with one of Camila's best friends at the moment, Paul. He uttered,

I'd say that, you know the whole side of being Peruvian. She is more cultural and she knows a little bit more about the world than most people. Because you know a lot of people who I've been to school with, have not really seen the world. They think differently than someone who has been around and seen different parts of the world and how it is (5/9/02).

This analysis of Camila's patterns of language use in the classroom as well as several people's responses to my participant's discourse in the classroom, clearly supports the importance of embracing bilingualism at home and school since it seemed to affect positively in Camila's performance at school and her overall perception of the world. Now, let us have a look at Camila's patterns of language use in social contexts.

### Analysis of Social Discourse

In this section I will describe Camila's language choices when communicating with friends or acquaintances after school. I have observed her

during many after school activities, including dinners, youth group, volunteering activities, as well as social gatherings.

On the week of April 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, a family from Boston with their children came to visit Camila's family and stayed with them. The father and two of their kids were born in South America and the mother, who also speaks Spanish since she is a Spanish teacher, is American. I have attended several dinners and birthday parties during that week since I am a friend of both families and it was very interesting to see Camila use her Spanish with the adults but not with the children. The fact is that, even though two of the children were born in South America, their Spanish is not fluent and they hardly speak it. I will not expand on this since I do not have any evidence to support any conclusions. However, it is a part of my study to observe Camila during her interactions with others. Indeed, she did not even use Spanish once with them. English was the dominant language during the children interactions. On the other hand, whenever she was around the adults, Spanish was the language being spoken and she immediately blended to the conversation using it fluently. In fact, Camila's dad said in our final interview:

"Especially socially, when Spanish-speaking friends of the family come, she speaks in Spanish most of the time. Mm. I truly believe she is more bilingual than I will ever be" (5/8/02).

On 5/1/02 it was Camila's mum's birthday. Camila, her mum, and I were having another of those delicious dinners together when, suddenly, the telephone

rang and Camila picked it up. The father from the family from Boston was on the phone. Here is the beginning of their conversation:

Camila: Hello? ¡Hola Pepe! ¿Qué haces? Sí como no. Besos<sup>15</sup>.

Notice that Pepe, born in South America, spoke Spanish to her and she chose to answer in Spanish, as well.

Two days later, on 5/3/02, there was an international festival in the downtown area of the city. She volunteered to help there. She told me she did that every year because she loved meeting new people and learning about many cultures. She added that by volunteering she got to enter for free and in addition she usually ended up working for a Hispanic country booth. I asked her if she did not mind if I came along and as she willingly accepted my company. So there we were, at six in the evening, walking into a crowded convention center, full of people from many different nationalities. We were directed to the volunteer's tent, where she was informed of the choices. There were many booths that needed an extra hand, one of them was Peru and she enthusiastically proclaimed that as her choice!

When she got to the booth, she introduced herself in Spanish and told them she was from Peru as well. I also introduced myself and explained I was there to observe her. They offered me a chair where I sat in a corner of the booth, trying not to influence the conversation so much. There were three people there, a woman and her son in his thirties, both from Peru; and a young man from Mexico probably in his thirties as well. Nevertheless, I have never been accurate as regards other people's ages so I apologize if I am offending anyone.

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<sup>15</sup> Hello Jose! What's up? Yes, sure. Kisses.

Indeed, they were delighted to have her. Again, she instantly blended right in and engaged in a vivid conversation about Peru and the city where her family lives. What is more, in the booth they were selling traditional products from Peru and she showed an immense enthusiasm when people approached her to try a necklace, a ring, and several other traditional crafts. In fact, there was one old man who approached her in Spanish; he was a learner of the language. He introduced himself and started practicing all the basic questions with her. Such as: ¿De dónde eres<sup>16</sup>? ¿Cuántos años tienes<sup>17</sup>? Indeed, he was trying out his communicative skills in Spanish! Camila was a little hesitant at first. In fact she answered the first couple of questions in English. But then seeing he was really trying she started to use some Spanish with him and ended up talking for several minutes. I must tell you that man walked out of there with a feeling of triumph. He just had a conversation with a native Spanish speaker and actually understood! I think his smile illuminated the entire room.

The evening went smoothly. Camila kept using Spanish when talking to her contemporaries. Without a doubt, it has been a very interesting evening where the Spanish language found her way to connect people together.

As regards Camila's close friends, none of them is a native Spanish speaker. Therefore she spoke mainly English with some Spanish when she was around them. In addition, two of them are taking Spanish classes and they spoke some Spanish so it was not uncommon to see them addressing Camila with an:

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<sup>16</sup> Where are you from?

<sup>17</sup> How old are you?



“Hola, ¿Cómo estás<sup>18</sup>?” whenever they saw her walking along the school corridors. One of them is Becky. She is Camila’s same age and a sophomore at school. She is taking Spanish for the first time in high school and she seemed very motivated to learn the language. She also said Camila challenged her daily to improve her Spanish and shared, “Once Camila put a video about her grandparents, all in Spanish and she told me to listen to it. And if I know how to say something in Spanish I would say it in Spanish to her” (5/9/02). Likewise, Camila also spoke some Spanish with her friends, particularly with Catalina, her classmate and friend from Spanish class. Indeed, Catalina said: “She and I speak Spanish to each other. We don’t have conversations in Spanish but we use phrases like: “chau<sup>19</sup>”, and “que tal<sup>20</sup>?”, and stuff like that.” She then added, “We went to this concert: “Justo Lamas” and she spoke Spanish pretty much the whole night.”

Another friend is Paul who is one year older than her and a junior at Camila’s high school. At the time of the study he was taking French 3 and had not taken any Spanish classes in high school before. Even though he did not speak Spanish he shared with me how he related to Camila’s cultural and language heritage:

Cynthia: Does Camila use some Spanish with you?

Paul: She will use some sayings but then I will ask what they mean and she will explain them to me.

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<sup>18</sup> Hi, how are you?

<sup>19</sup> Bye

<sup>20</sup> What’s up?

Generally, my participant spoke only Spanish with native speakers. As I recounted she spoke Spanish only with the adults during the visit of family acquaintances, and not with their children. She later used Spanish to socialize during the world fair but only with the native speakers, since she codeswitched between English and Spanish when she talked with the old man who was learning Spanish. As regards her friends, she used mainly English with some words or phrases in Spanish depending on their Spanish level. However, outside the school setting, her disposition to use Spanish and teach new vocabulary or expressions to them as well as her openness into sharing her culture and country traditions had always been outstanding.

My observation of Camila's overall positive attitude was also echoed in excerpts of my interviews with her friends as well as her teachers. Paul, her friend, said:

She talks a lot about Peru and how much she likes it and how great it is there and so forth and so on. She says: Oh, when I went to Peru, or this is how it is in Peru. It's actually a lot of interesting stuff. Ahh. She gave me a tape of Peruvian music that she likes to listen a lot in the car (5/9/02).

Becky, another friend, shared:

She always has very interesting CDs or tapes from Peru or Argentina. It is real great music and some in French even. But I really like the music and I love the sound of the language. And one day, science fair, the last science fair we went to. We had to sit for a long time to wait to be judged and by coincidence our displays were right next to each other so we were lucky. Anyway, she brought a CD player and a Spanish CD and we sat there listening to the music as she was translating it.... She showed me a lot of pictures from her trip to Peru and also when her mum was younger. She

showed me the beach and the mountain and told me how beautiful it was!  
(5/9/02).

Andrea, the school nurse, a nun and youth group coordinator, expressed:

I just had many experiences with other Hispanic kids in many schools I have worked. These kids do not want to speak Spanish in front of their friends. But Camila, I have had a much better impression with her. She is proud of her heritage and she talks marvelous things about her country and culture (3/21/02).

Likewise, her French teacher explained, "At a more personal level she tells me about her country. She loves her country." Catalina, also said Camila taught her new things in Spanish, especially if the teacher was giving the students not updated information, "Like sometimes she tells me: Oh, they don't really say it that way, people don't really use that word anymore and she would tell me what they say in Spanish."

As we can see, Becky shared that Camila loves talking about her country and its music. Likewise, Paul, Catalina, Andrea and Camila's French teacher also stated that Camila's pride in her cultural heritage and language is shown in her positive comments about her country, her lively music and her willingness to teach them a few Spanish expressions and words. The fact is Camila is in love with her Hispanic identity, and love was meant to be shared as she voiced that in our final interview:

Cynthia: Are you proud of your heritage? Do you feel part Hispanic? How?

Camila: Yes! I love it! It is so true and solid. Could you tell me what American heritage is? There is no such thing! My culture has real flavor, real character, real personality. I love traveling to South America. In a way

I feel more in touch there than I do here in the U.S.A. It is so different. I prefer there.

Cynthia: Do you feel the need to share your cultural heritage with others? How do you do that?

Camila: Yes! How? I tell them stories, share anecdotes, go dancing, music! Help them and teach them Spanish.

So far, I have analyzed Camila's classroom and social discourse. In the following section, patterns of language use in family contexts will be depicted.

### Analysis of Family Discourse

During my first interview with Camila, on 03/15/02, I asked her what language her parents speak at home. She replied, "Spanish to me always; unless I am with friends because they don't want to offend them. Sometimes, though, I answer in English but mum stays in Spanish. It is easier for her. When she gets mad she can barely make sense in English." Likewise, one of Camila's friends commented as regards family discourse: "Well, when she calls her mum on the phone they always speak Spanish between them" (Catalina, 3/19/02). Indeed, my observations confirmed Camila's answer and Catalina's comment. Her parents spoke only Spanish all the time through my entire study. However, Camila's patterns of language use in the family context would vary.

My first dinner with Camila and her parents was on 3/5/02. We talked mainly in Spanish. Camila said only a couple of words in English related to the school. What surprised me is that she made a mistake with prepositions "por"

and “para”, which both mean “for” in English. Her dad corrected her only by saying the same phrase but with the correct preposition. There was no further explanation. In fact, I doubt that any native speaker has a lot of awareness as regards when and why you choose one and not the other. Indeed, only those who studied the language or those who teach the language would know. Camila took her mistake naturally, said it correctly and moved on. Indeed, she did not seem to be bothered by the correction at all.

During all my dinner observations at their house with her parents Spanish was the dominant language of the conversation. Throughout one of the evenings on 03/12/02, the dialogue went on about Camila’s late arrival at a meeting place where her dad had to pick her up. She retold the story completely in fluent Spanish. Certainly, she used many native like expressions and vivid details. Even though the conversation continued mostly in Spanish, she made some grammar mistakes and codeswitched a couple of words in English. In order to facilitate the flow of conversations, translations from Spanish to English will be provided in two forms, either as footnotes if the comment is long or between brackets next to the comment in Spanish, if it is a short phrase or question. Here is a transcription of her grammar mistakes and codeswitching with English during that evening:

Camila: Nosotros estabamos mirando que linda la casaca de Ana era<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> We were looking how nice Ana’s jacket was!

A native would have said: *Nosotros estabamos mirando que linda era la casaca de Ana.* She misplaced the verb at the end, which is where it is placed in English.

Later in the conversation she showed some codeswitching:

Mamá está leyendo un libro sobre una mujer que conoció a un chico que resultó ser un serial killer. It's a true story. Entonces ¿qué es la primera cosa que me dice cuando llega a casa<sup>22</sup>?

I believe that whenever she used a couple of words in English she was tempted to go on in English, but she always came back to Spanish with is truly predominant in family talk. Further on in the conversation Camila made another grammar mistake and her mother corrected her:

Camila: Me desperté antes que mi alarma sonó. Llena de energía (*I walked up before my alarm went off*)

C. Mum: ¿Cómo dices? Me desperté antes que mi alarma... ¿Cómo conjugas el verbo? (*How do you say it? I walked up before my alarm ... How do you conjugate the verb?*)

Camila: ¿sonó? (*Went off?*)

C. Mum: Sonara, ¿no? (*Went off, right?*)

Camila: Pero sonará es el futuro. (*But will ring is the future*)

Dad: Sonara, tienes que decir sonara. (*It is sonara. You have to say sonara*) **Bold added**

Camila: ¡Pero tienes que decir sonó! (*But you have to say went off!*)

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<sup>22</sup> Mum is reading a book about a woman who met an adolescent who turned out to be a serial killer. It is a true story. Then, what is the first thing she says when she gets home?

This type of grammar mistake is very common in non-native speakers. Notice that she needed the subjunctive mood. Camila was using the simple past tense that English uses in these cases. Her mum and dad corrected her with the right use of it but did not know how to explain why. Camila was obviously frustrated with that but did not carry on questioning why.

The following is a transcription of another grammar mistake on a conversation we had 4/5/02 when talking about Spanish class and the activity they did every Tuesday with elementary school children from another Catholic school in the area. Again transposing English verb structures to Spanish.

Camila: Mañana vienen niñitos. Son niñitos nuevos. Ojalá que son mejores que los otros. (*Kids are coming tomorrow. They are new kids. I hope they are better than the other ones.*) (Underlined added)

After expression of wish and hope the subjunctive is used in Spanish. This is not an option in English since the simple present is used in that case. That is why Camila used the present of the verb “to be” instead of using the subjunctive “sean”. This mistake was not corrected formally; rather, her mum simply repeated the same phrase correctly after telling her daughter that she also hoped these kids were better.

C. mum: ¡Si, yo también espero que los niñitos sean mejores que los otros!<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, redoing the sentence correctly, generally with no further explanation, was the parents’ common pattern when facing grammar mistakes. I was really interested in knowing more about Camila’s parents’ response to her patterns of

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<sup>23</sup> Yes, I also hope that these kids are better than the others!

language use. Following are some excerpts from our final interview on 5/8/02.

Notice that my observations are confirmed.

Cynthia: Let's talk a little bit about mistakes. Do you notice when she makes them? And what do you do?

Father: Yes, there are a number of common usages of language that are not at all inherited to the English-speaking people. For instance, gender and things like that. She commonly makes mistakes like that. And we tried to address it and she likes to be corrected. She sounds like she wants to improve her Spanish.

Cynthia: How do you correct her?

Father: Telling her how to say it. We tell her you are supposed to say it this way. Even though I think my Spanish is pretty good, I don't remember my grammar rules. We always tell her this is the way you say it, especially with prepositions.

Similarly, following are some excerpts from my final interview with Camila's mum.

She also stated they redo the sentence and added she tried to explain some grammar rules when possible. Indeed, at the very end of this excerpt she said, "It is more an intuitive thing." This comment supports my conclusion that it is difficult to explain grammar rules if you have not studied them specifically. Indeed, a native speaker manipulates the language "naturally".

Cynthia: What do you do when she makes grammar mistakes in Spanish?

Mother: I try not to say much. But, you know, if it's something that comes up all the time, I try to let her know. But not correct her all the time.... I just tell her. Well, sometimes I can explain her grammatically. Well, I just say



the correct phrase and tell them that's the way to say it. The way my kids learn Spanish is different from the way other kids learn. To me is more an intuitive thing.

Finally, I also asked Camila how grammar mistakes were handled in the family. She affirmed that her parents only redid the sentence. Furthermore, I recorded in my field notes that she seemed not to mind being corrected. Indeed, my observations were confirmed as she shared, "I like it when they correct me. It makes me talk more educated" (3/17/02).

So far, I have analyzed only one side of my participant's patterns of language use in the family context. The other side I have only mentioned briefly. Indeed, Camila's common pattern in the family discourse was a recurrent codeswitching with the family's mother tongue being the most frequent choice. However, English was also present. Indeed, codeswitching is the current term to describe essentially the use of two different languages or language varieties within a single conversation or written text. For instance, on 4/23/02 we had another lovely dinner. Camila's mum, dad, and younger brother were present as well as Camila and I. Camila was telling me about Shakespeare day at school:

Camila: Entramos y nos hablaron creo que para 20 minutos, no se que. Bueno, en fin<sup>24</sup>. First we go in and they showed us all the customs and they were like...your custom depended on your social class and how much money you had and we were all like dozing off. Basically, nos contaron que fue su cumpleaños hoy<sup>25</sup>.

As I mentioned before, this codeswitching of both languages was common when she was telling a story in more than two sentences. However, when she asked

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<sup>24</sup> We came in and they told us for about 20 minutes, I don't know what. Well, basically.

<sup>25</sup> They told us it was his birthday today.

short questions or answered in short sentences she generally chose to do it in Spanish.

Likewise, on 5/1/02, Camila's younger brother joined Camila and me after dinner. He was telling a story on how his sister burnt herself making crêpes. He was codeswitching English and Spanish and when he finished Camila said:

Camila: Let me correct the situation. He said, "I can do it myself." And I said, "no you can't, you can burn yourself" He said "I can do it" so I said, "Ok I'll just watch"... Then I said, "really you should wait for this to cool" and then I turned off. And I totally forgot and I grabbed it like this. And the weird thing is ni me acuerdo que me quemé. Se que me dolía pero estaba buscando burnt cream y de ahí no me acuerdo nada más. La próxima cosa que sé es que estoy en el baño llorando, descontrolada, agua fría<sup>26</sup>. I don't even remember!

Once more, Camila is using both languages to tell a longer story. It was just the three of us. Camila's mum was on the phone so I cannot really say why she switched to Spanish to tell the end of the story.

On 5/7/02 we shared another dinner. This time, Camila's dad was not present. We were five: Camila, Camila's younger brother, her mum and my husband and I. In addition, Camila was unusually quiet and only spoke a few times. Here are some excerpts she uttered during this dinner.

C. Mum: ¿Qué quieres tu? (*What do you want?*)

Camila: La parte mas suave y mojada (*The most tender and wet part*)

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<sup>26</sup> I don't even remember I burnt myself. I know it hurt but I was looking for burnt cream and from there, I blacked out. The next thing I know is that I am in the bathroom crying, out of control, cold water.

My husband: ¿Cuándo terminas las clases? (*When do you finish your classes?*)

Camila: Creo que June 7<sup>th</sup>. (*I think June 7<sup>th</sup>.*)

Camila: Si alguien quiere biscuits made by me. But not the burnt ones, this two are burnt. (*If anyone wants biscuits made by me*)

Camila: Mami se puede comer esto. (*Mum, can I eat this?*)

My husband: Me anoté para correr en la maratón de Chicago (*I enrolled to run the Chicago marathon*)

Camila: ¿Cuánto cuesta? (*How much is it?*)

Even though she only spoke a few times, Spanish was the chosen language whenever she asked short question or answered in a short sentence. However, if she had to say something longer she would codeswitch Spanish and English.

In order to better understand her patterns of language use with her family, it is essential to be familiar with the parent's philosophy and its implications in the family discourse. Certainly, the way they approached bilingualism clearly emerged in our final interview, which I conducted separately. The reason for having a conversation with each one of them personally was more of a time-constrained issue. It was difficult to find both of the parents at home and available to talk to me for more than 15 minutes without someone being around. Indeed, if it was not Camila, it was her brother or the dog so we finally arranged to meet Camila's dad at his office on 5/8/02. Indeed, first her dad reflected about Camila's first years at the U.S., "When we first arrived to the U.S., she was

almost two. Well, we wanted the kids to be bilingual and initially we tried not to speak in English at all and that's all we did." Likewise Camila's mum stated:

When she first came here, she forgot her Spanish, she wouldn't speak Spanish and then her brother was five years old and he was in school so as the months progressed, her brother would come home speaking more and more English and he would talk to her in English. But at home we spoke Spanish so she sort of had both languages when she started kindergarten (5/9/02).

Furthermore, Camila's dad later added as regards family discourse,

Well, we talk in Spanish all the time at home and she is taking Spanish at school for the first time. We feel strongly that it is our heritage and we don't want it to go to waste. You know it is very common for the immigrant to assimilate to the new culture and forget about the old culture and that's not something we want for our kids. We feel very strongly but without closing doors to other things. For instance she loves French and we have always supported that (5/8/02).

However, when I asked him if sometimes it was challenging to maintain only Spanish at home he said:

It is becoming a bit more of a problem now. I think because of our getting more comfortable with English. But now speaking to the kids occasionally we find ourselves lapsing into English and it's kind of curious and we try to fight it a little bit. What used to be natural before has become a little less natural now (5/8/02).

Camila's mum also agreed with him and admitted that at the beginning Spanish came naturally, but as years of residency in the U.S. passed by they sometimes had to make a conscious effort to speak Spanish at home.

Additionally, their reasons behind not losing their mother tongue were also portrayed in the final interview. Indeed, they both agreed that being bilingual is a

real asset in today's society. Camila's dad said: "I think if you are bilingual you have an extra door open when you go out to the real world." Similarly, her mum stated, "they can have the advantage of learning both languages without putting extra time or money. It has several benefits...I read studies that say that it helps you with other subjects, in your mind, the way you think and approach things and it also expands your horizons." However, the most important reason behind their decision of maintaining Spanish as the family language was their strong conviction that Spanish would always be part of their legacy. Thus, Camila's dad emphasized, "We just didn't want her to lose her roots." Camila's mum agreed,

A very important reason for us is that we have family in Peru and when they go and visit they can speak and relate to the relatives and also understand the culture better and not feel so out of it. If you don't have the language you don't feel part of the culture (5/9/02).

She also added that their efforts would not only help Camila maintain Spanish and find her identity, but also acquire other languages in the near future.

It is not just the language. It's the place where they come from. I think my main idea is when they grow up and they start questioning who they are, that they would find a place. Because they are not from here but they are from there. So it's more something like that. In general I like languages. She is also learning French and it has come easier for her having the same Latin root (5/9/02).

Finally, I was also interested in knowing what strategies, apart from speaking the language at home all the time, they had utilized over the years to embrace the mother tongue. This is what Camila's dad shared: "speaking Spanish at home and keeping close contact with the family. We usually went to Peru once a year

and my parents would visit us here once a year too.” Camila’s mum stated as well,

Well, we do things to expose them to the culture. Like when we meet with friends who speak Spanish, even if they are not from our country mm that the kids are here too so they can meet other children or people. We also go to festivals, or we listen to music. My hope is that when they go to college they can take Spanish literature and learn more about history.... I think she had a big change when she was fourteen and she went to Peru. When she saw the culture and was there with her family. It seems to me she enjoys speaking the language. A big part of it is going back home regularly (5/9/02).

These interviews to both parents offered some insight into their philosophy towards their mother tongue, Spanish. Indeed, they are convinced that by speaking Spanish at home as well as exposing their children to their cultural heritage, they are embracing bilingualism and promoting cultural awareness. In the following section, Camila’s patterns of language use with the researcher are described.

#### Analysis of Researcher and Participant Discourse

I have mentioned earlier in my thesis that I have known my participant for more than a year now. My husband and I are good friends of the family and since the first time we met, we have visited them regularly for dinners and barbecues. Indeed, my communication with Camila has always been mainly in Spanish. However, I have never paid close attention to her choice of language with me until I began to collect the data for this study.

I remember our first conversation during my first week of data collection. It was that first day at her school for me on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002. We were walking to her class and she was explaining in Spanish how her school was organized. She probably mentioned how the school had three different third floors, which were not connected to each other. However, since I was so focused on her language choice, which was Spanish all the time, I totally missed that part and ended up getting lost twice in the same day! I must admit I learnt my lesson and became more alert after that. In fact, as a researcher, I should be paying attention to every single detail, not only to what Camila said, but how she said it, when, where, and why! There is so much a person says and not only with words!

Later that day, and after observing her English class, I decided to walk with her to her math class and on our way I asked her a few questions about the English discussion. As with all the short interviews we have had, I tape recorded it. Note that I asked the questions in Spanish and told her she had the choice to answer in English or Spanish, as she preferred. In addition, be aware that later in the conversation, I continued asking the questions in the language of her preference as the conversation went on.

Cynthia: ¿Qué piensas? ¿Por qué los dos inmigrantes dijeron sus nombres en inglés y no en español? Puedes contestar en Inglés o español, como prefieras<sup>27</sup>.

Camila: Porque los inmigrantes son ilegales y las viejitas que estan visitando para comer con ellos son muy fashion. No quieren que<sup>28</sup>. Like he

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<sup>27</sup> Cynthia: What do you think? Why do you think the immigrants said their names in English and not in Spanish? You can used English or Spanish as you wish

is kind of spoken about it before and he also speaks about it later in the book that you can't change someone who is already set like that. Like you know what you believe and you try to spread that but do not go out of your way to pick a fight. Like he definitely goes out of his way to spread like awareness and peace. But he already knows how they are.

Cynthia: How are they?

Camila: Well, she is always talking about how they should stay in their own country and immigrants shouldn't come because then... like before they know the whole world is going to be speaking different languages and America will be forgotten and the days of glory would be gone.

As we can see, she quickly changed to English for her answer. As a matter of fact, she definitely needed English to explain what was on her mind. Indeed, the book she was reading was in English and explaining some facts from the book and giving her opinion in Spanish as well would have meant to be constantly translating. A very difficult task for a young adult walking to class and talking on a microphone at the same time! As a matter of fact, instant translation is very difficult and being bilingual does not necessarily qualify you for translation.

A week later, on 3/17/02, I had a short conversation with her as regards her role in the Spanish class. Notice I asked my questions in Spanish and she started in Spanish and then changed to English. Nevertheless, she eventually switched back to Spanish.

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<sup>28</sup> Camila: Because they are illegal immigrants and they old ladies that they are visiting are very traditional. They don't want to.



Cynthia: ¿Cuál es tu papel en la clase de español? ¿Qué es lo que quiere la profesora que tu hagas? (*What is your role in the Spanish classroom? What does your teacher want you to do?*)

Camila: De vez en cuando me mira... (*every now and then she looks at me*) like when she has a million things to do and she says teach the class y me tira el libro encima y se va corriendo. (*and she throws the book to me and she runs out of the classroom*) Like when she has to make emergencies copies.

Cynthia: ¿Cómo te sientes cuando hace eso?

Camila: Mejor que estar sentada aburrída, a veces cuando tengo que ayudar con la tarea de gramática... a veces Catalina me llama, muchos me llaman y en la gramática no les puedo ayudar. (*Better than being bored seated in the classroom. Sometimes when I have to help with grammar homework and Catalina or many others call and I cannot help them with grammar.*) Sometimes I feel like...oh sorry maybe, or I think it is this way but you should check with Mrs. Smith. And they are like yeah yeah you are just trying to be humble.

This is the frequent pattern during our short interviews. There is a clear intermixing of Spanish and English. However, her Spanish choice of words is that of a native speaker and no mistakes were made during this conversation.

Furthermore, on 04/10/02, we had a short conversation about the Spanish class. As usual, I asked the questions in Spanish and she started up in Spanish but then codeswitched Spanish with English.

Cynthia: ¿Cómo te sentiste en la clase de español cuando tus compañeros te llamaron “cheater”? (*How did you feel in the Spanish class when your classmates called you cheater?*)

Camila: Mm...no no me importaba mucho. (*I couldn't care less*)

Cynthia: Y ¿por qué dicen eso? (*Why do they say that?*)

Camila: Porque claro, whenever I get a 100 in a test they are like: of course she got a hundred! Pero tampoco es de malos que lo dicen (*Well, of course whenever I get a 100 in a test they are like: of course she got a hundred! But they do not really mean it.*)

In addition, two days after our previous exchange we had a five-minute conversation mostly in Spanish on how her parents corrected her when she made mistakes in her mother tongue. In this situation, she managed to answer my questions using Spanish and only switch to English on my last question.

Cynthia: ¿Tu familia te corrige cuando hablas y cometes errores en español? (*Does your family correct you when you make mistakes in Spanish?*)

Camila: Si, a veces me corrigen. Siempre digo “la agua” cuando es “el agua” y cuando era Chiquita decía “¿Qué tiempo es?” en vez de “¿Qué hora es?”. Pero no me corrigen mucho pero preferiría que si me corrijan mas. (*Yes, sometimes they do. I always say “water” when it should be “water” and when I was a kid I used to say “What time is it?” instead of “What hour is it?” But they do not correct me a whole lot but I wish they would do it more.*)

Cynthia: ¿Cómo te corrigen? (*How do they correct you?*)

Camila: Bla, bla, bla, bla, bla pásame el agua. El agua. They redo the sentence. My mum usually says: used “habló” en esta situación y “hablado” en esta situación. (yahtah yahtah yahtah, pass me the water. The water. They redo the sentence. My mum usually says: used “talked” in this situation and “have talked” in this other situation.)

Cynthia: Y... ¿cómo te sientes cuando te corrigen? (How do you feel when they correct you?)

Camila: I like it when they correct me. It makes me talk more educated.

In this conversation she mentioned saying: “La agua” instead of “El agua” (agua is water in Spanish and nouns have gender such as feminine or masculine nouns. Articles in Spanish have to agree in gender with the noun. It is a common mistake of non-native speakers of Spanish to choose the incorrect article for some nouns for which the gender is difficult to recognize. Such is the case of “agua” (water). In addition, she shared that she used to ask: “¿Qué tiempo es?” instead of saying “¿Qué hora es?” This is also a common mistake since “¿Qué tiempo es?” is literally the translation for “What time is it?” However, a native would use “¿Qué hora es?” which literally means, “what hour is it?”

By and large, the patterns of language used with me, the researcher was an intermixture of Spanish and English with Spanish being the primary language of preference. The reason might be the fact that she knows I am bilingual as well so she can speak English whenever her Spanish does not come as fast and as naturally as English.

So far, I have described my observation of Camila in various contexts, her classroom discourse, her social discourse, her family discourse as well as her discourse with the researcher. It is time to hear the participant's voice and what she has to say as regards bilingualism. Also, teachers' and friends' point of view as regards language learning and maintaining mother tongues will be portrayed.

### The Importance of Bilingualism

Before moving into the conclusions and implications of this study portrayed in the following chapter, I would like to introduce to the reader excerpts from interviews conducted throughout the study in which the value of bilingualism and language learning is clearly stated. First, let's start with Camila's language teachers. Indeed, her Spanish instructor commented on the importance of studying a second language: "Well it is really important. In the United States we start language learning so late and it is so unfortunate that we do that.... No matter what your field is, learning a language can be very helpful." She then stated that knowing a second language was imperative in the U.S.,

Well, we are more global, and there are more international connections and to keep up you just going to need to have that. (...) It is easier for you to pick up a language when you already know another language. The younger you are that you learn that first foreign language the better to pick up something (Spanish instructor, 3/21/02)

Likewise, the French teacher asserted, "I just think it is important to see that there is a world out there with many different cultures other than America. There are also many jobs opportunities for those who speak another language other than English." Ms. Johnson's perception of the importance of being bilingual is

somewhat similar to that of Mrs. Smith, the Spanish teacher. Both recognized the importance of learning and understanding other cultures. Indeed, Mrs. Johnson expanded,

I wish more people could travel and see the world. Because until people get out of this bubble they won't even realize...even the kids think that everyone speaks English and we don't need to learn another language.

They don't realize what an asset is to speak other languages (4/9/02).

Further on, the conversation with both language teacher continued with stating the assets of being bilingual. In relation to the advantages a bilingual student may have over a monolingual one, the Spanish teacher said:

And it is not even eventually as business opportunities or those kinds of things. It is even things like SAT tests. Because if you have learned one language you can recognize cognates, you make guesses about things in contexts and that is helpful in SAT tests. Plus you can't learn a language without learning culture so it helps you to learn about other people and I think that is so important for us (3/21/02).

Similarly, the French instructor affirmed, "You look at your own language differently. You can play with words and understand why we express things in different ways. It deepens your vocabulary and it is proved that SAT scores improve when you take a second language."

By and large, both educators sustained the importance of second language learning for any student. They also echoed the position that bilingualism has cognitive advantages as well as it helps the bilingual student accept cultural differences. However, not only Camila's foreign language teachers but also her religion teacher, Mr. Thompson, declared how essential bilingualism is in today's world. Certainly, he shared he did not speak another

language, which he regretted since as he stated: “in learning another language you grow in appreciation for other people’s cultures. You gain a better understanding that English is not the only language, which in our culture we tend to believe that our language is superior to that of others.”

In the same way, Catalina, Camila’s friend, asserted:

I think people in America think English should be the ultimate language and everything but I think Spanish is so much prettier. It sounds so much better. I don’t know. People are just close-minded. I mean people in other countries other than the United States are bilingual. We just take it for granted that everyone is going to speak English everywhere we go and I think that’s kind of selfish of us (3/19/02).

Catalina also voiced the importance of being bilingual, “Well, I mean languages are what connect people to each other. I guess it helps to communicate with people in different ways.” Indeed, she also shared some of her own benefits of being bilingual,

It helps me realize the similarities between the two languages. It gives me more perspective. I mean not everything is English. Plus, I think in Spanish right now. I think it is really interesting that Spanish has two forms of “to be” and that they separate it into things that could change and things that don’t change. It is helpful to see things differently (3/19/02).

I must admit it literally “makes my day” when I see a 16 year-old student reflecting so wisely as regards language learning in the U.S. It makes me realize there is still hope for a better understanding of the importance of bilingualism, and maintaining mother tongues in this society. I would like to end this section with Camila’s own voice, which she passionately shared in our final interview,

which was conducted in English, the language of her choice to express thoughts and give reasons to support her opinion.

Cynthia: Is being bilingual important to you?

Camila: Yes! Yes! It's like as if you had access to a million bucks! Every language you know doubles your life, not time wise, but all you can do, and meet people, do things, go places, etc. It's awesome, powerful!

Cynthia: How will you work in the future to maintain your mother tongue?

Camila: Viajar, visitar, vivir <sup>29</sup>. Hopefully study a semester over in Spain or somewhere like that. Keep in touch with the relatives. Immerse myself!

Cynthia: Looking forward, when you have kids, what would you like to do as regards language learning? Will you consider speaking Spanish at home? Why? Why not?

Camila: My kids will speak Spanish and English. Hopefully we can have two homes. One in the U.S. or Canada, and one in South America. I'd rather not "Americanize" them. They definitely will study a language other than their native.

Cynthia: If you could give a message to those children, parents and educators who are trying to embrace mother tongues in the U.S, what would that be?

Camila: Yes! Do it! Try hard to take your kids to a two month immersion at least in your native home or if not possible, in your culture. It is something so valuable and cool. Don't be disheartened if they reject you or your ways

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<sup>29</sup> Traveling, visiting, living.

because it will pass. Always have the culture around (cooking, pictures, stories, etc) (5/15/02).

I hope you have enjoyed, as much as I did, meeting my participant. Her final message is passionate and clear: she is truly convinced that bilingualism is worth it. This story of the power of bilingualism, which was told through the lens of patterns of language use in one bilingual student, is coming to an end. I hope it has transformed you. Indeed, it has certainly transformed me and in the following chapter the reader will find not only, this case study implications for educators and parents but also conclusions.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In learning another language you grow in appreciation for other people's cultures. You gain a better understanding that English is not the only language, which in our culture we tend to believe that our language is superior to that of others. (Camila's Religion teacher, 4/9/02)

#### Camila: a Successful Bilingual Speaker

When I met Camila for the first time, she introduced herself in Spanish and we talked in our mother tongues for a while. That same night, we were having dinner with other children whose mother tongue was Spanish as well, but they wouldn't communicate in Spanish. I remember telling myself that I wanted my children to be raised bilingual, just like Camila. In fact, I must confess the pseudonym chosen for my participant, Camila, is also the name my husband and I had chosen a year before this study for our first baby girl. Since we do not have children yet, the name Camila was the first one to emerge when I had to decide for a pseudonym for her. That same night, I wondered, what made her a successful bilingual speaker?

As I have described in the previous chapter, my participant's patterns of language use in many different contexts points to the fact that she is a successful bilingual speaker due to several reasons. First, through the analysis of family discourse, I observed that the language spoken at home is Spanish with some

codeswitching to English in particular situations. Indeed, throughout each one of my dinner observations her parents spoke Spanish to her and her little brother. However, as you have read, Camila's response was not always in Spanish. In fact, only when she was asking a short question, answering in a short sentence, or making a short comment using a saying or fixed phrase, she used Spanish. Whereas, a frequent codeswitching occurred whenever she was expressing an idea in more than a couple of sentences. In this case she codeswitched English usually in the middle of her discourse but she often opened and closed in Spanish. Moreover, I stated earlier that I had the feeling she was tempted to continue to use English whenever she codeswitched a couple of words in that language. However, her parents always stayed in Spanish, which forced her to come back to that language. Indeed, I asked Camila if she felt she was making an effort to speak Spanish at home and she replied that her family had been using Spanish for years and that she is used to speaking it at home and feels comfortable with it. She also mentioned that she spoke only English with her brothers since she was little so she unconsciously chose that language when she communicated with him. Thus, as her parents emphasized, Spanish was the preferred language in the family and had always been. It is worth mentioning that her discourse was not perfect. Indeed, she regularly made some mistakes, as I have described, but these did not interfere with her fluent communicative Spanish skills. In fact, as her dad explained in our final interview, all the mistakes she made "are not inherent to English speakers" (5/8/02)

Second, Spanish is again the chosen language throughout many social conversations I have observed. Indeed, her predisposition to speak it with native speakers was excellent. I observed her at a social gathering with other family that is has both Hispanic and American family members. I also listened to a phone conversation she had with a friend of the family from South America. In addition, I attended a world fair where she was a volunteer and witnessed her using Spanish to introduce herself to native speakers in the booth she helped. Indeed, Camila always blended to these conversations using Spanish. As regards her discourse with me, the researcher, Camila codeswitched regularly with Spanish being the most frequent. The reason might be that we had many of our conversations at school, and the language spoken around us was English so even though she tried to remain in Spanish, she often lapsed into English. However, when at home or in the car on our way to school, Spanish was the usual choice, but again she codeswitched some phrases or words in English.

Third, Camila's s classroom discourse also reflected that she is a successful bilingual speaker. Indeed, at school, she is a brilliant learner in general, as most of her teachers have stated in our interviews, and I believe her bilingualism is at the core of that. Indeed, being bilingual seemed to help her cognitively, especially in French class, where she attempted to speak French more than any other student in the class. Furthermore, all her teachers agreed with the fact that her multilingual and multicultural experience gave her a well-rounded look at the world, which was reflected in most of her classes' discussions. Moreover, her attitude towards speaking her mother tongue and

transmitting the culture, her values, and traditions to friends, acquaintances, and teachers, was outstanding, especially with her Spanish class. Many of the persons I have interviewed stressed Camila's pride about her heritage. Indeed, Camila herself stated she loved her legacy and felt compelled to share that with her friends, classmates and teachers. As we can see, she is also a successful bilingual speaker at school.

Last, but not least, my participant has come in first in the 2002 National Examination from the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. This examination is divided in categories; Camila participated in the Bilingual-Native category Level 3. The exam is divided in Levels 1 through 5, according to age and years of language learning. Level 3 corresponds to 10<sup>th</sup> grade and third year high school Spanish. See appendix D for more information on levels and categories. There were 1572 students who took the same exam my participant did. The statistics showed that the mean for this level and category was 50.26. The minimum score was 14 and the maximum was 66. She placed first and her score was 60.

Certainly, she has successfully been brought up bilingual. Indeed, her mother tongue, Spanish, has been maintained after almost 15 years of residency in the United States. Indeed, not only does she speak her mother tongue, but also her overall attitude towards her culture is tremendously positive. However, as many scholars sustained in the review of the literature, Camila's bilingualism is not something easy to achieve in the U.S. Indeed, it is a difficult task in which, parents as well as educators should unite their effort to maintain mother tongues.

On the whole, this case study brings about several implications not only for parents but also educators. First, let us have a look at the implications for parents.

### Implications for Parents

Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be (Fillmore, 1991, p. 343).

I am not a mother, yet. But sooner or later, God's willing, I will be a mother of a little girl, Camila, or a little boy, Santiago. Why I am telling you this? If you are a parent of an immigrant child, or a parent with a different heritage other than American and your child was born here, in the States, or even your child is going to be born here. Indeed, maybe, you were also born here, and so were your children, but you still want to maintain your heritage and mother tongue. Then, this story concerns you as well.

At the time of this writing, I am certain we are not going back to our country of origin immediately since I signed a full time contract with the same university I completed my graduate studies to teach undergraduate Spanish for a year. Hence, my husband and I are staying in the U.S. so there is a high probability we will have our children here. Indeed, as the reader may recall from chapter III where I described the role of the researcher, there was one particular self that played a very important role throughout the thesis adventure: my wife and prospective mother self. This was the one that made me wonder what shall

we do with our children if they were born in the U.S.? How should we educate them to be bilingual, to understand and embrace both cultures?

Certainly, after analyzing Camila's discourse in several contexts, I realized what an essential part family talk played in her maintenance of the mother tongue and subsequent bilingualism. Indeed, as Fillmore (1991) asserted above, "Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be" (p. 343). Indeed, Camila's parents wanted her to be bilingual; they wanted to raise a well-rounded young lady aware that her family came from a different culture and proud of her South American legacy and traditions. In fact, Camila's parents' daily efforts strove to maintain their mother tongue and pass it onto their children, a difficult endeavor as many researchers emphasized. Indeed, learning English is not a problem for most of the immigrants that come to this country. However, as they assimilate into the American culture, many lose their mother tongues, and along with their native language, there goes much more...

In Chappell & O'Grady (2000), a teacher in the field described her experience with Hispanic students that did not succeed into maintaining the family language:

After I have made several tutoring visits, one of the younger male students shared some personal feelings with me. While he did at one time know Spanish, he said, he no longer could remember it very well. He explained that his parents were displeased with him if he did not use English. He said he felt stupid when he spoke it with his brothers (p. 217).

Is this what you, as a parent, want to transmit to your children? Compare this previous comment with this one made by Almirall-Padamsee (1999), a bilingual adult in an autobiographical narrative:

The multilayered, multicultural, multilingual, multipressured world, which I define and which defines me, doesn't fit neatly piece by piece into one another like a puzzle. In fact, it is precisely this ability to think beyond boxes which bejewels me with the most sparkling of diamonds and the yellowest of golds.... Had I not been raised bilingually, cognizant of what bilingualism really implies in terms of inherent linguistic creativity, I believe my life would have been a small iota of what it is now.... I do know that I've been very lucky, and that my bilingualism and biculturalism are at the core (p. 47, 48).

Certainly, I want my children to realize the importance of being bilingual, to recognize its assets and to be proud of their heritage. Camila is definitely a vivid example of what I desire for my own children. Indeed, she expressed a similar idea to that of the above when she said that being bilingual is like having "access to a million bucks ...it is awesome, powerful" She also added, "My culture has real flavor, real character, real personality."

As you have read in the review of the literature, exposing your child to a different culture, speaking your mother tongue at home, and exposing your child to a new way of life contributes substantially to the development of a worldview, to the maintenance of mother tongues, and at the same time, offers a keen sense of perspective that can foster a renewed pride in your cultural heritage (Chappell & O'Grady, 2000). Thus, as a researcher, I have witnessed Camila's pride for her cultural heritage, Camila's parents' effort in speaking Spanish at home, Camila's fluent Spanish in everyday conversations, and Camila's

willingness to share her legacy with others. I know that learning the language and accepting the culture with its values all at the same time is not an easy task, however, it a possible one.

Indeed, Camila claimed she went through a phase were she neglected her family language but as you read at the end of last chapter, she was glad her parents kept trying. Likewise, her parents honestly shared that it was challenging at times. In addition, Camila's mum stated that educating your children to be bilingual could be confusing at first, but as she said, when your children mature, they learn to manage both languages completely.

I think the way my children speak Spanish is very different, just listening and talking at home, it is not a formal teaching so, when Camila was young and she was learning new concept at school, I did not try to teach her how to say that in Spanish in a parallel way. It can be confusing if you are trying to learn something and trying to learn the language at the same time. But as they get older and they get more mature, they can handle it perfectly. But I have talked to teachers at school who have advised me not to confuse my kids. (Camila's mum, 5/9/02)

Notice she also expressed her frustration with uncooperative teachers.

Fortunately, Camila's mother also left a promising message to parents later in the dialogue, where she advised them to speak the mother tongue at home and more importantly, to transmit positive feeling towards that mother tongue and the family culture. Since, as she wisely put it, if your children see in you love for it, they will appreciate it more:

My advice would be that the parents keep speaking the language. By listening they will learn it sooner or later. I wouldn't present it as a negative way like you have to speak Spanish. I wouldn't impose it like that. I believe



that as long as the parents speak the language and they have friends and expose them to the culture, the kids come to like it and if they like it they would learn it. I think many people see a negative association with the language and if they transmit that to their children, well they will have no interest in learning it. So my advice is to speak your own language at home and your kids should pick it up. (5/9/02)

Though this was only a case study and just the beginning of Camila's long journey of maintaining bilingualism, it is hoped that it will enhance the awareness of parents about the importance in their children's bilingual education at home. I would like to close this section with my participant's final message to parents:

Try hard to take your kids to a two month immersion at least in your native home or if not possible, in your culture. It is something so valuable and cool. Don't be disheartened if they reject you or your ways because it will pass. (Camila, 5/15/02)

### Implications for Educators

Language is an indispensable bridge for sharing knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes within and across cultures. It has tremendous power as the paramount instrument of cognitive development, and it can open or close the door to academic achievement. (Ovando, 2001, p. 268)

I am an educator, and as such, I will be facing diversity in my classroom. If you are an educator in the U.S. schools, you will be managing diversity in your own classroom as well. Indeed, as shown in demographics facts depicted in chapter II, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in this country. Therefore, there is a high probability that you, as an educator, will have students with

Spanish as their mother tongue in your classroom, your school, and district. As Ovando (2001) stated above, will you open or close the door to their academic achievement? Is your institution promoting mother tongues? Do you speak a second language?

As an educator in today's schools, you need to be reflecting on these questions. The implications of this study clearly support the maintenance of mother tongues and the developing of students that are capable of managing more than one language. Students with a global perspective eventually will open the door to a deeper understanding of other cultures. Thus, if immigrant children are well served today, they will become important contributors to the future well being of the U.S. (Ovando, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) Indeed, Camila's patterns of language use clearly verified the advantages that bilingualism brought to her, which was not only supported by my observations but also by Camila's educators responses. Hence, what should we be doing to embrace mother tongues and bilingualism in our classrooms?

Surely, as it was stated through scholarly sources in the review of the literature, neglecting mother tongues has many detrimental consequences for our students. Indeed, "The loss of the native language often sinks them even further into the silence of the oppressed." (As cited in Galindo, 1997, p.173) Therefore, the goal for us teachers should be to build on what is already present in the lives of our students. That is to say, their culture, their mother tongues. If we do that, these students will come to see educators as professionals who understand the value of their heritage.

So far, I have verbalized the implications of this study to the broader community of educators. However, this case study also provided some insight into the manner in which one bilingual native Spanish speaker was involved in her high school classes. Indeed, let's take Spanish for instance. Camila was taking Spanish at school for the first time since her parents thought she needed some formal teaching of the language as well as more grammatical awareness. As I have described, her teacher did not provide her any individualized instruction. She was expected to do the same activities the rest of the class were doing. Camila was not challenged, and as a consequence, she seemed bored.

However, she was always open to sharing her music and traditions and asked her instructor for class time to do so. In fact, when Camila brought music and taught her classmates a song, she spoke Spanish all the time and the students seemed delighted. In sum, after analyzing her classroom discourse, I realized the instructor should be looking for more ways to get her involved, Camila should be challenged so that the Spanish class can be a learning experience and not a place where she is either asked vocabulary questions, or called "cheater" after having scored higher in an exam.

What about her other classes? How can teachers address students' various cultural legacies in the classroom? The reader should recall the episode I described during an English class discussion about immigration. Certainly, it would have been a learning experience for Camila and the rest of the class if the teacher had addressed the issue further. Camila had so much to offer...

Nieto (1999) stressed the importance of teachers' values in students' learning. She said, "Student learning is not simply a personal discovery, but also a social act; it is also deeply connected with the beliefs and daily practices of teachers" (p. xix). Hence, what kind of a message are we, as educators, putting forward if we do not value our students' family heritage? Camila certainly finds a strong pillar in her family. They passionately value her family heritage.

It is worth mentioning, her family came to the U.S. with an established middle class socioeconomic status, which they maintained and improved to the upper middle class socioeconomic status. Indeed, they live in one of the most prominent and expensive neighborhoods in this city. Thus, Camila's family had the resources, education level, and family support to maintain their heritage throughout the years, the uninformed teachers, and the detrimental U.S. attitudes towards mother tongues. Nevertheless, what about those students that do not have that strong pillar to support them? How can we, as educators, make a difference?

Jim Cummins's (1996) suggested, "Teacher-student collaboration in the construction of knowledge will operate effectively only in contexts where students' identities are being affirmed" (p. 26). Indeed, there is a need for the continued development and maintenance of social and cultural bridges between the language-minority student's home life and school life. Another scholar, Ovando (2001) explained, "An awareness of how language is used in the home community will enable educators to be sensitive to school genres that are different" (p. 288). In fact, Ovando (2000) concluded, "it is crucial that educators,

researchers, and policymakers stay attuned to the inner voices of language minority students, who may be prisoners of silence in English-dominant classrooms.” (p. 21) By and large, he noted, it is axiomatic in educational circles that all students learn best when they experience curricular content and processes that mirror their lives, cultures, languages, and socioeconomic realities.

Hopefully, this case study provided data to create the awareness Ovando and several researchers emphasized in their writings. Indeed, efforts to maintain mother tongues will produce positive results for all students in the classroom and, ultimately, in society. As an educator, I strongly believe embracing bilingualism is an achievable but challenging enterprise so in order to inspire you, I would like to close this section with Freire’s (1998) message to educators:

We must dare, in the full sense of the word, to speak of love without the fear of being called ridiculous, mawkish, or unscientific, if not antiscientific.... We must dare so as never to dichotomize cognition and emotion. We must dare so that we can continue to teach long time under conditions that we know well: low salaries, lack of respect, and the ever-present risk of becoming prey to cynicism. We must dare to learn how to dare in order to say no to the bureaucratization of the mind to which we are exposed every day. We must dare so that we can continue to do so even when it is so much more materially advantageous to stop daring. (p. 3)

## Conclusions

Doing away with language, or prohibiting its use, tears away at the soul of a people. (Nieto, 1999, p. 60)

Many research studies have stated that being bilingual is an asset (Clachar, 1998; Fillmore, 2000; Kouritzin, 2000; Nieto, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Portes & Hao, 1998; Rothstein, 1998; Ruiz, 1983; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Walqui, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000.) In fact, children who speak two or more languages may have special advantages. Some of the scholars above highlighted the evident job-market advantage of speaking more than one language. Indeed, as Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2001) summarized,

Others see bilingual speakers as having an edge in the cognitive and interpersonal realms. Bilingual may develop greater skill and empathy in dealing with people from a variety of backgrounds. Some have argued that by shifting from one code to another, bilinguals may also develop cognitive flexibilities that allow them, to approach other new language tasks more creatively. Still other scholars point to the aesthetic value of being able to easily navigate linguistic boundaries. In general, research suggests that bilinguals may have special advantage in their overall linguistic, cognitive, or social development over monolinguals of the same socioeconomic backgrounds. (p. 138)

In addition, Jiménez (2000) affirmed “the highest achieving bilingual Latina/o students created multiple connections across and between their two languages. The competent bilingual readers also provided clues that they knew about and used strategies such as transferring and translating” (p. 979). Indeed, bilingualism arouses children’s metalinguistic awareness to find similarities and disparities between both languages. (Li, 1999)

As we can see, bilingualism is an asset. However, it is also a human right. Many organizations have defined language as a right. Indeed, The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights sustains that “All languages are the expression of

a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions.” Likewise, the American Anthropological Association urges “Congress to pass legislation that will provide opportunities, not only for the mastery of English, but for the development of other languages spoken in our communities, and will respect linguistic rights among fundamental human rights, and will recognize that the development of our diverse cultural and linguistic resources enriches our national heritage and the lives of our citizens.” What is more, the Linguistic Society of America, founded in 1924, also recognized that children learn only when they understand their teachers. As a consequence, children should be educated in a manner that affirmatively acknowledges their native language abilities since “promoting our common language need not, and should not, come at the cost of violating the rights of linguistic minorities.”

Language is a right. Parents and educators today need to start promoting second languages now. Indeed, through bilingualism and mother tongue maintenance, parents and educators are working towards a national acceptance of diversity, essential in our global society. What is more, we need a pedagogy that builds on the language and culture and celebrates its diversity, which generates the opportunity to learn without judging other cultures.

I know this has only been a case study on one bilingual student and as such it imposes some limitations. Camila’s successful bilingualism and parental efforts only described one family discourse. Therefore, I invite other researchers to continue to write stories about successful bilingual students since parents and

educators need to become aware of the strategies they should be using to embrace mother tongues in their particular environments.

By and large, I encourage parents and teachers to work together to neutralize negative forces that operate on children in the U.S. society. Teachers should help parents understand that the only way ethnic languages and cultures can survive in societies like the United States is through community action. Parents must provide children opportunities to attain a mature command of their first language in the home. Indeed, parents should find time to read to them in their mother tongue and teach them cultural values (Fillmore, 2000; Nieto, 1992; Nieto 1999; Prewitt Diaz & Santiago, 1998; Seaton, 1997; Walqui, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). What is more, researchers acknowledged the need for a change. Not only do they agree on the detrimental consequences to the individual but they also understand that knowing English alone will no longer enable Americans to profit from this global economy where more and more languages and cultures are being integrated and mixed every day. Indeed, if I were you, I would start learning a second language today...it is never too late, you know.



## Appendix A

### Letter to Principal

XXXXXXXX, 2002

Dear Mr. :

I am writing this letter to summarize the main points of the research thesis project I intend to conduct in your school during the months of March, April and May of 2002. I have chosen to observe one student of your school, , and analyze her language patterns at school. The participant and her parents have already been informed and they are willing to cooperate.

In order to carry out my study, I will be observing her for at least two full school days a week during those three months. My collection of the data will include observations, videotaping some portions of Spanish and other classes she is involved, and interviewing her teachers.

This thesis research study is part of my requirement to fulfill my Masters degree in education at the University of Dayton. When my thesis is completed, I would be happy to share the results with you. I am doing the study under the supervision of Dr. Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch at the University of Dayton. If you have any further questions you can contact her at 229-3578 or e-mail her at [kinnucan@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:kinnucan@notes.udayton.edu)

Sincerely,

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## Appendix B

## Letter to Parents

XXXXXXXXXX, 2001

Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ :

Your daughter is being invited to participate in a research thesis study that I am conducting as a requirement for my Masters degree in education at the University of Dayton. The purpose of the study is to analyze her use of both Spanish and English at school, and home.

In order to carry out my study, I will be observing her for at least two full school days a week during those three months. In addition, I will also be observing her at home at least once every two weeks. My collection of the data at school will include observations, videotaping some portions of Spanish and other classes she is involved, and interviewing her teachers. At home, I will also be observing her and I will also need to video tape some portions of her interactions with the family members. In addition, I will be interviewing each member of the family at least once. What is more, you or your daughter may withdraw consent at any time.

When my thesis is completed, I would be happy to share the results with you. I am doing the study under the supervision of Dr. Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch at the University of Dayton. If you have any further questions you can either contact me at 229-2496 or her at 229-3578. You can also e-mail her at [kinnucan@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:kinnucan@notes.udayton.edu)

Sincerely,

Cynthia P. Fraga-Cañadas  
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 University of Dayton  
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---

We have read the letter outlining our daughter's involvement in the research study, and willingly agree to let her participate in the study.

---

 Please print name

---

 Please print name

## Appendix C

### Letter to Participant

XXXXXXXXXXXX, 2001

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study for my thesis at the University of Dayton's Department of Teacher Education. This letter is a description of the research and the protection assured you.

This research study is designed to shed some light in understanding patterns of your language use in the classroom and at home, and will take place over the course of March, April, and May 2002. I will be asking you to participate in taped interviews, which will be transcribed for my data for the study. The transcriptions will not include any identifying characteristics, so your identity will remain confidential and only those involved with the study (myself and my thesis committee) will have access to the transcriptions. I will also observe you in your school setting and at home. I will videotape some of these observations, and interview some of your teachers, friends, and family members in order to collect data for this study. Again, your identity will be known only to those involved in the research, and will be kept confidential. What is more, you may withdraw your consent at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to work with me on my thesis as ultimately I am hopeful this study will provide some tools for parents and educators who are undergoing the challenging task of educating students with mother tongues other than English. Please contact me at any time with questions or concerns at 229-2496.

Sincerely,

Cynthia P. Fraga-Cañadas  
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I have read the letter outlining my involvement in the research study, and willingly agree to participate in the study.

## Appendix D

### National Spanish Examinations-Student Level and Category

#### STUDENT LEVEL & CATEGORY:

The level and category of each student needs to be determined prior to ordering the tests.

#### 1. The Level:

There are 4 actual tests, but 6 levels of exams. Students taking Level 01 or Level 1 take the same exam, but are not graded or compared one to another. The same is true of Level 4 and Level 5. The 6 levels of the NSE are set up to cover a student's six-year sequence of language learning. No level of the exam may be repeated.

- ◆ Level 01 7<sup>th</sup> grade Course content = ½ of first year high school Spanish
  - Entry level for JHS / MS students whose first exposure to Spanish began during the fall of 2001.
  - Includes also a few 6th grade programs
- ◆ Level 1 8th grade Course content = second half of first year high school Spanish
  - Second year for JHS / MS students
  - Entry level for any program giving students a full year of HS Spanish, includes 7,8,9,10,11,12 grades
  - Any Level 01 student with positive OE experience must take the level 1 exam.
- ◆ Level 2 9th grade Course content = Second year high school Spanish
- ◆ Level 3 10th grade Course content = Third year high school Spanish
- ◆ Level 4 11th grade Course content = Fourth year high school Spanish
- ◆ Level 5 12th grade Course content = Fifth, Sixth\* year high school Spanish

\*The National office wishes to recognize the achievements of those students who have accomplished 6 full levels of study. In these cases, special permission will be given to take Level 4-5 for a third time, since it is a new exam created each year.

**IF YOUR PROGRAM DOES NOT FIT THE ABOVE MODEL, PLEASE WRITE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF IT AND INCLUDE IT WITH YOUR ORDER TO THE CHAPTER COORDINATOR. INCLUDE A RATIONALE FOR PLACEMENT OF YOUR STUDENTS.**

#### 2 The Category: Teachers will verify that their students are placed in the appropriate category.

- ◆ Regular ~ Students whose only contact with Spanish is in the classroom.
- ◆ Outside Experience ~ A positive response, in any one of the following, places student in this category:
  - Students who have participated in a strong FLES (Elementary program) of 3- 4 yrs or 5-6 years
  - Students who have had exposure to Spanish and LIMITED practice in their home environment.
  - Students who for the prior 3 years or more have been enrolled in a Spanish immersion program
  - Students whose principal language of communication at home is French, Italian or Portuguese.
  - Students whose principal language of communication outside of the home is French, Italian or Portuguese
- ◆ Outside Experience or Bilingual ~ A positive response, in any one of the following, places student in either OE or BL. Student to be advised by teacher as to which category is appropriate.
  - Students who have lived (after age 6) in a Spanish speaking country for 1-2 yrs, 3-4 yrs, 5 yrs or more
  - Students who have studied in a Spanish speaking country 4-6 mo., 9-18 mo., more than 18 months
  - Students whose principal language of communication at home is Spanish or Spanish English.
  - Students whose principal language of communication outside the home is Spanish or Spanish/English
- ◆ Bilingual-Native ~ The following students should be placed in this category:
  - Students reared in a Spanish-speaking or bilingual environment
  - Students reared where Spanish is a PRINCIPAL spoken and/or heard language.

(Any level 01, 1, or 2 student qualifying for bilingual status must take the level 3 Bilingual Exam.

Caution: Even though this student may be bilingual, he probably does not control enough of the structure of the language to have a successful experience. Starting at level 3, this student will have only 2 more levels of the exam to take. It would be better to wait until he is in Spanish 3 to take the NSE.)

## Appendix E

Chart developed to input Camila's choice of language (ENG=English or SPN=Spanish) to ask questions to the teacher during Spanish class.

Dates	Language Choice			
3/12/02	ENG	ENG	SPN	SPN
3/14/02	ENG	ENG	ENG	
3/19/02	SPN	ENG	SPN	
3/20/02	SPN	SPN		
3/21/02	ENG	ENG		
4/11/02	ENG	SPN	ENG	
4/16/02	ENG	ENG	SPN	ENG
4/18/02	SPN	ENG		
4/24/02	SPN	ENG	ENG	
5/5/02	ENG	ENG		
5/6/02	ENG	ENG	SPN	ENG
5/8/02	SPN			

ENG= 21

SPN= 12

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