

6-24-2020

Spanish-Speaking Parents' Perceptions and Experiences Before and After English-only and Spanish-only Interactions with Their Children

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERISTY

Miami, Florida

SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES BEFORE
AND AFTER ENGLISH-ONLY AND SPANISH-ONLY INTERACTIONS WITH
THEIR CHILDREN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

by

Maria Morales

2020

To: Dean Ora L. Strickland
Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences

This thesis, written by Maria Morales, and entitled Spanish-Speaking Parents' Perceptions and Experiences Before and After English-only and Spanish-only Interactions with Their Children, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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The thesis of Maria Morales is approved.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Ramos and Dr. Medina, for the time, support, and feedback they have granted me throughout the process of writing my thesis. I would especially like to thank my major professor, Dr. Alliete Alfano, for inspiring me to set aspirational goals for myself. I am grateful for her dedication and efforts in helping me throughout this process, and for always being an email, phone call, or even zoom call away whenever I needed guidance, assistance, or direction.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES BEFORE
AND AFTER ENGLISH-ONLY AND SPANISH-ONLY INTERACTIONS WITH
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by

Maria Morales

Florida International University, 2020

Miami, Florida

Professor Alliete Alfano, Major Professor

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of Spanish-speaking parents who are learning English, before and after English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children to find what their interactions would look like if they followed the advice of speaking English only with their children, as opposed to speaking in their native language. Eleven primarily Spanish speaking parents of typically developing children 12-46 months of age were interviewed prior to completing play samples with their children and again afterwards. The interviews were transcribed, translated, and analyzed using thematic analysis procedures to identify salient themes. Four major themes were found based on their perceptions and one on their experiences. Overall, participants expressed feeling limited and uncomfortable during their English-only interactions, including those that perceived feeling comfortable with English beforehand. Both English and Spanish was also found to be an extremely important part of their everyday lives.

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I. Introduction

Children in immigrant families are the largest minority and fastest growing group of children in the United States (Toppelberg & Collin, 2010). Roughly 20% of children in the U.S speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the most common one (Kohnert, Windsor & Ebert, 2009). Many of these children are born to parents who were minimally exposed to English or began to learn English as adults once they immigrated. Children born to these adults are exposed to their parent's native language, in addition to the majority language needed to succeed in school (Stikpek, 2001). Dual language development depends on the amount of exposure and the age of acquisition of the second language (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010). The amount of exposure to each language may be fairly balanced for some of these children in dual language environments, however, for others it may not be as balanced as they hear much more of one language than the other (De Houwer, 2009). The two languages may be separated in their experience, or frequently heard within the same sentences or conversations (Place & Hoff, 2011). There are various types of bilinguals such as simultaneous bilinguals and sequential bilinguals. Sequential bilingualism refers to bilinguals learning their first language before they are 3 years old, and then learning a second language afterwards. Simultaneous bilingualism is when the individual acquires both languages as a first language (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010). Language competence is not a stable construct but rather a fluctuating, dynamic, multidomain entity composed of competences in specific domains of language development. This includes the sound system (phonology), principles that govern word order and word formation (syntax and

morphology), and vocabulary and meaning (lexicon and semantics), which all interact with pragmatic language usage (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010). For monolingual children, word frequency and syntactic complexity in the speech that they hear influences their language skills. The same can be said for bilingual children, however, for bilingual children in bilingual environments, the language exposure varies more, such as in which context each language is used (Carbajal & Peperkamp, 2019)

There are many perceived advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism when selecting how to raise these children. The abundance of opinions and lack of education has led to many myths and misconceptions. This includes the common belief that exposing young children to two languages at once causes confusion and language learning delays. This belief has caused many families to give up their home language and only speak to their children in English (Moore & Perez-Mendez, 2006). The fact that English is not the parents native nor dominant language is a bigger cause for concern than the children's dual language learning as seen in many recent studies (Place & Hoff, 2011). This qualitative study aims to investigate and answer the research question: "What are the perceptions and experiences of Spanish-speaking parents who are learning English before and after English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children?"

II. Literature Review

Adult Second Language Acquisition

The acquisition of a second language (L2) as a child differs greatly from the acquisition of L2 as an adult. Current research concludes that children are more successful at acquiring L2 than adults (Baker, Trofimovich, Flege, Mack, & Halter, 2008). It can be challenging to differentiate between adults who learned an L2 in early childhood from native speakers, while on the other hand, those who began to acquire an L2 in adulthood have speech that is accented with various grammatical errors (Hartshorne, Tenenbaum, & Pinker, 2018). Children are biologically prepared to learn languages while adults are not; the existence of a “critical period” for L2 acquisition serves as a possible explanation for these differences (Bialystok & Miller, 1999). This means that for the learner to reach native speaker like proficiency in the L2, they must be exposed to this language within a neurologically determined time frame, or “window” (Baker et al., 2008).

The critical period hypothesis is based on the assumption that age related effects are seen in L2 studies due to the maturation of brain structures that are used to learn and process language (Flege, Yeni-Komshian, & Liu, 1999). As part of the principles of neuroplasticity, it has been hypothesized that as the brain matures, it becomes less “plastic” and the lost neural plasticity imposes further demands on L2 learning (Flege et al., 1999). Whether children’s advantage comes from superior neural plasticity, the early start giving them additional years of learning, limited cognitive processing that does not allow them to be distracted by irrelevant information, lack of interference from a well-established first language, or a greater willingness to make errors is still largely unknown

(Hartshorne et al., 2018). The critical period hypothesis implies that after a certain age, adults lose their natural language acquisition skills and therefore cannot successfully acquire the second language with the same level of eventual fluency children may acquire (Deng & Zou, 2016).

Others have proposed that age-related changes in L2 may come from the nature and extent of the interaction between the two language systems of each bilingual individual (Oyama, 1979). This second belief assumes that the more fully developed first language (L1) system is when one begins learning the L2, the stronger the L1 influence will be on the L2. However, it is very difficult to distinguish between maturational and interactional age-related effects and their outcomes on L2 performance (Flege et al., 1999).

It is often agreed upon that the outcomes of L2 acquisition and proficiency are affected by variables such as aptitude, attitude, motivation, age of acquisition, time spent learning new language, and context of learning (Albarracín, Cabedo-Timmmons, & Delany-Barmann, 2019). For over two decades a great deal of research has been conducted exploring the effects of age on L2 acquisition, which tend to focus on the end state of this L2 acquisition (Birdsong, 2006). This is important because this evidence gives us the upper limits of L2 attainment, allowing us to make inferences about what may have impacted their learning (Long, 1990). Various studies that examine factors related to L2 success have found age of acquisition (AoA) to be the strongest predictor of ultimate attainment and it negatively correlates with L2 proficiency (Birdsong, 2006). Cummins (1979) supports this by stating that AoA and proficiency in the L2 are two factors widely known to be indicative of an individual's ultimate L2 attainment. AoA is

said to be the age at which learners are immersed in the L2 context and deeply involved in it. This is different from the age of first exposure (AoE) which can occur in a variety of situations such as the schooling environment, visits to the country of the L2, and contact with relatives who speak the L2 (Birdsong 2006). Some studies that explore AoA, note that other variables such as AoE are often confounded with AoA and can also be predictive of L2 acquisition. For this reason, they are often controlled statistically or reported as factors in their experimental design (Birdsong 2006).

The age at L2 acquisition is an important factor in the speech perception of this language acquisition because if the L2 is learned later in life when the L1 categories have been established, the L2 phonemes in turn can be assimilated and highly similar to L1 sounds, creating accented speech (Archila-Suerte, Zevin, & Hernandez, 2015). Research examining overall degree of foreign accent in the L2 have also revealed strong effects of age (Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995). Flege and colleagues (1995) state that if the L2 learning begins around age 7, it can be spoken without a detectable accent, however if learned beyond 7 years of age, the degree of perceived accent increases with age. Phonological production is said to be the least controversial of linguistic domain to be affected by age (Huang & Jun, 2011). It is argued that the age effect exists only for phonology because the ability to master the sound patterns of an L2 is vulnerable to neurological development (Scovel 1988). The results of the few existing empirical studies examining the effect of age across various linguistic domains agree that the AoA inhibit phonological outcomes more than morphosyntactic outcomes (Flege et al., 1999).

Phonological production includes suprasegmental and segmental properties that are both required for phonological acquisition (Huang & Jun, 2011). Suprasegmental

properties include prosodic properties such as rhythm, stress, and intonation while segmental properties are sound units that can be separated and compared to other units in the phonological inventory (Lehiste, 1970). Studies on segmental properties have also revealed a clearly negative relationship between AoA and native-like accuracy of the production of segmental properties (Flege et al., 1999).

The importance of suprasegmental features in language acquisition is seen in L1 acquisition studies where prosodic properties including rhythm, stress patterns, and lexical tones, are shown to have language-specific perceptual organization during the first year of life (Nazzi, Jusczyk, & Johnson, 2000). Studies by Golinkoff (1983) found that suprasegmental features such as lexical tones and word stress are acquired even earlier than consonants and vowels. Prosodic cues have also been seen to play an important role in facilitating infants word learning (Nazzi et al., 2000). Existing research on age effect on L2 prosody point largely to AoA, however, L2 use, L1 use, and media exposure have all also been found to substantially contribute to the acquisition of native-like L2 prosody (Flege et al., 1999).

Morphosyntax and pronunciation are the two areas of language most commonly investigated and morphosyntactic errors and the degree of judged nonnative accent were shown to increase with advanced age of acquisition (Birdsong, 2006). In a study conducted by Flege and colleagues (Flege, Mackay, & Meador, 1999), they found that Italian speakers who arrived at the United States at a younger age produced L2 vowels and consonants more accurately than those who arrived later in life. Higher rates of nativelikeness in morphosyntax are associated with certain L1-L2 pairings, along with increased L2 use (Flege et al., 1999). When it comes to pronunciation, native speakers

judge learners with high levels of L2 practice, high motivation to sound like a native, and L2 phonetic training to sound the most native-like (Birdsong, 2006).

Parent Perception's on Bilingualism

Bilingualism, a prevalent worldwide phenomenon, can be defined as the use of two or more languages (Grosjean, 2010). Bilingual language acquisition has become the norm in many parts of the world and has led to the current belief that young children can effortlessly acquire two or more languages. At the same time, there is widespread belief that early bilingual exposure may negatively affect young children and their language acquisition. This is often referred to as the bilingual paradox (Petitto et al., 2001). Petitto and colleagues (2001) state that parents who visit their laboratory question whether it may be better to establish one language firmly before exposing their children to another language to avoid confusing them or causing a language delay. Lee, Shetgiri, Barina, Tilliski, & Flores (2015) conducted focus groups in which they interviewed primarily Spanish speaking parents to identify and examine their experiences and preferences in raising Spanish/English bilingual children. They found that parents believed being bilingual would provide their children with better opportunities in life, such as better jobs. Several parents also believed that language and culture are intertwined and maintaining their L1 was an important way to stay close to their cultural roots and with the older members of their family (Lee et al., 2015). Some perceived barriers to raising bilingual children included the children's resistance or defiance to learn Spanish as they claimed it was more difficult than learning English (Lee et al., 2015).

Another study conducted a quantitative survey in which some of the participants also participated in qualitative interviews to explore parents' perspectives on their

children's home language and bilingual development (Mosty, Lefever, & Ragnarsdottir, 2013). The parents in this study indicated that they believed that if children possessed good language skills in the home language, they would be better prepared to learn a second language (Mosty et al., 2013). Over half of these parents also felt that learning the home language would increase their child's general cognitive development. These beliefs are supported by Cummins (2001) who stated that children who come to school with a solid foundation in the mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in their school language. The amount of formal home language support a child receives was found to be the most significant predictor of L2 attainment (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Quality of Language Input

According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory, language is the most potent tool that culture provides for children. He believed it mediates their social cognitive development, and that it is the channel by which they may organize and shape their thoughts (Vygotsky, 1978). Language is also the instrument by which adults transmit information to children (Menashe & Atzaba-Poria, 2016). Children's early language exposure lays the foundation for their language development (Hoff, Core, & Shanks, 2019). Parental language input plays an important role in their child's language acquisition, cognitive development, emotional skills, conscience development, moral understanding, and development of brain structures (Menashe & Atzaba-Poria, 2016). The linguistic input children are exposed to is an important environmental factor that causes differences in their development (Hart & Risley, 1992). Both the quantity and quality of language input play a large role in language learning. Input quantity is the amount of exposure available to a child, while input quality refers to the type of exposure available to the child

(Unsworth, Brouwer, Bree, & Verhagen, 2019). The majority of studies on bilingual experiences focus on the quantity of language input as increased amounts of exposure generally lead to faster language learning; however, the quality of language input also plays a considerable role in the language outcomes of bilingual children (Unsworth et al., 2019). Considering that half of the population of the world is currently bilingual, analyzing the impact of language input on language acquisition is very important (Grosjean, 2010).

The quality of input is dependent upon various factors such as the richness of the input, the context, and the variety in the source of this input (Unsworth et al., 2019). The use of a varied vocabulary, complex and varied syntax, and decontextualized speech have also been found to be positive predictors of children's language growth (Moore & Perez-Mendez, 2006) Quality features also include social pragmatic features such as maternal responsiveness, mutual engagement, joint attention, and turn-taking between adult and child (Zimmerman et al., 2009). Vocabulary size is the most reliably observed difference between native speakers and non-native speakers, many of the predictors of children's lexical and grammatical development depend on the size of the vocabulary the speaker uses (Bialystok, 2009). In a longitudinal investigation of the role of quantity and quality in child-directed speech in vocabulary development, Rowe (2012) found that by the third year of life, lexical diversity in the parent's input was a stronger predictor of their children's later vocabulary abilities than the quantity of words in the parent's input.

Whether the source of input is from a native or non-native speaker of that language affects the quality of input as well (Fernald, 2006). Some non-native speakers are said to have less diverse and rich vocabulary, less accurate and sophisticated

morphosyntax, and have some phonological imprecision (Core & Hoff, 2014). Some professionals continue to advise parents to pick one language and advocate for English only interactions as many of them believe that children exposed to two languages may experience confusion and learning delays (Hoff & Core, 2015). However, those professionals are failing to take into account the fact that differences in proficiency among non-native parents are also related to the language outcomes of their children (Chondrogianni & Marinis, 2011). Studies on the relation between source of input and the benefit of that input on child language reinforce the idea that input from non-native speakers is less supportive for language growth than that of native speakers (Place & Hoff, 2011). A study of immigrant families living in an English-speaking Canadian province found that the parent's use of their L2 (English), at home was not a predictor of the children's English skill, however the children's exposure to English outside of the home through friends and organized activities was a more significant predictor. These findings further suggest that there is a limited value in the input provided by parents who are not highly proficient in the target language, perhaps due to a lack in richness and diversity in their vocabulary in their second language (Hoff & Core, 2015). Hoff, Core, and Shanks' (2019) research report on the quality of child-directed speech states that current literature suggests that language exposure provided by non-native speakers, particularly by those that are less proficient, is less beneficial to children's lexical and grammatical development than is exposure to the speech of native speakers.

Code-Switching

Bilingual parents may also encounter moments where they mix the languages together. This "mixing" of languages while speaking is referred to as "code-switching"

and may occur for different reasons, in various ways, and to different degrees (Bail, Morini, & Newman, 2014). Some factors that influence code switching include the speakers linguistic background, their age, and their role in conversation (Cheng & Butler, 1989). There are also different types of code-switching. There is inter-sentential code switching, which happens across sentences, and there is intra-sentential code switching, which occurs within sentences (Bail et al., 2014). Inter-sentential code-switching is often comprised of long strings of words in each language (e.g. “I like the blue car! Cual te gusta a ti? (Which one do you like?)). While intra-sentential often involves primarily words in one language, with one or very few words in the other language (e.g. “The blue carro (car) is the one I like!). The type of code-switching used is possibly related to the language proficiency of the speaker. Intra-sentential code-switching is said to require a higher level of grammatic mastery for both languages in order to code-switch appropriately (Bail et al., 2014). The individual is forced to keep both language structures in mind while switching and be sure to not violate the syntactic structure of either language (Montanari, Ochoa, Subrahmanyam, 2019). While on the other hand, inter-sentential code-switching requires minimal proficiency. Code-switching or mixing is often the result of proficiency related factors such as lexical gaps that are filled by borrowing words from the dominant language when interacting in the weaker language (Montanari et al., 2019). Code-switching allows for the speaker to precisely express their intended meaning and bypass lexical gaps (Green & Wei, 2014). This may explain the code-switching patterns of children who are in the process of developing two languages and code-switch to fill in any gaps they may have in their vocabulary (Montanari et al., 2019). In the case of caregivers, it is also possible that they may use code-switching as a

way of teaching translation equivalents across languages; such as by saying “Look it’s a puppy! El perrito!” (Bail et al., 2014). There are many questions regarding the effects of code-switching on young children’s language development, however, it is generally believed that the advantages associated with being able to code-switch between languages outweigh the possible processing costs, if any (Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019).

Very few studies have examined the relationship between exposure to code-switching and these bilingual children’s language performance, and the findings of the ones that do, do not paint a clear picture (Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019). In two studies conducted by Place & Hoff in 2011, and again in 2016, they found that exposure to mixed-language input was not associated with language outcomes in Spanish-English bilingual children 25 to 30 months old. Additionally, Bail et al. (2014) found that intra-sentential code-switching was positively related to the vocabulary size of bilingual children ages 18- to 24-months-old. On the other hand, Lipsky (2013) found that the amount of code-switching to Spanish during an English reading session by a teacher was negatively related to children’s English receptive vocabulary outcomes as measured by a standardized test. Both studies had distinct approaches to measuring mixed-language input, making it difficult to accept the contradictory findings across the studies (Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019). Some neuroimaging literature has reported that code-switching seen during comprehension tasks elicit responses that suggest increased efforts in memory updating processes (Moreno, Federmeier, & Kutas, 2002). Kaushanskaya and Crespo (2019) sought out to answer the question: “Does exposure to code-switching carry consequences for bilingual children’s language development?” Their findings suggest

that it likely depends on the children's verbal working memory (WM) capacity. In this study researchers discuss that for children with lower levels of verbal WM, code-switched input appeared to carry risks as increased exposure to code-switching was associated with reduced language scores. While for children with higher levels of verbal WM, code-switched input does not seem to carry risks as increased exposure to code-switching was linked to improved language scores. These findings were true for both of the bilingual's languages as well as for both expressive and receptive language skills (Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019). The mixed findings in this area of language suggests there is a need to further explore this topic due to the many possible variables.

Advantages of Native Language Usage

The previously mentioned findings regarding the quality of speech input propose that when immigrant parents speak to their children in their late-acquired English, they are not providing the children with the benefits they believe they are and are also curtailing their opportunities to learn their parent's native language (Hoff & Core, 2015). Teaching children their heritage language is advantageous because language is a considerable part of one's cultural identity and it leads to the maintenance of their cultural heritage. Children in immigrant families who can speak their parents' native language have better familial relationships and stronger ethnic identities than those who cannot (Oh & Fuligni, 2010). Good family relationships and strong ethnic identities are positively correlated to many desired outcomes such as high academic achievement (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). Parents may more positively impact their children's language development by providing cognitively stimulating input of higher quality in their native language compared to their L2 (Hoff & Core, 2015). These parents may also help their

children acquire school related skills through their native language because there is evidence that higher-order language comprehension and literacy skills appear to transfer from one language to another. For instance, children who can read well in Spanish, tend to also read well in English (Goldenberg, Reese, & Rezaei, 2011).

Bilingualism Myths

There is a rapid growing interest regarding dual language learning because there is growing awareness of how common it is in children (Genesee, 2015). Basic research on bilingual development reveal various conclusions that can be used to inform professionals, especially those working with children from bilingual environments that differ from the common misconceptions many adults have (Hoff & Core, 2015). Professionals have long believed that children exposed to two languages would not realize they were hearing two languages and in turn develop a single, fused system to hold the input for both languages (Volterra, 1978). They also were concerned that the simultaneous language acquisition stretched the infant's ability to acquire language and they would be unable to differentiate between the two if parents use both languages at home (Genesee, 2015). However, we now know that infants are able to distinguish between two different languages since birth. Infants tested within days of birth were found to change their sucking behavior when recorded speech played to them changed from English to Tagalog. This was accurate for infants born to monolingual English-speaking mothers and bilingual English Tagalog-speaking mothers (Bosch & Sebastian-Galles, 2001). Studies of lexical development in bilingual children have found evidence that children use dual language input to build two separate linguistic systems demonstrated by the phenomenon of lexical overlap (Hoff & Core, 2015). This is that

young bilingual children know the words for the same thing in both languages (Pearson, Fernandez, & Oller, 1993). Since monolingual children do not need to know two words for the same thing, the lexical overlap in bilinguals serves as evidence for the existence of two separate lexicons and therefore disproving the belief that there is a single fused system in place (Hoff & Core, 2015).

Another aspect that has received much attention is the belief that language separation by speaker is necessary for successful bilingual development (Carbajal & Peperkamp, 2019). Language separation by speaker was first suggested by French linguist Maurice Grammont, as cited by Ronjat (1913), and it is a one-person-one-language (OPOL) approach. The OPOL approach has been recommended to parents raising bilingual children for decades, however most of the research was based on case studies by linguistics raising their own children (Carbajal & Peperkamp, 2019). In a large study of ~2,000 bilingual families of school-aged children, it was found that an OPOL approach was neither necessary nor sufficient to guarantee that the child would be an active bilingual (Houwer, 2007). In a study of 2-year-old children in Spanish-English bilingual homes, researchers found that the degree of language intermixing children were exposed to was largely unrelated to their language skills in either language. It was also noted that all children in the study experienced a high degree of language mixing and researchers are unable to determine what language separation development would have looked like because that did not happen for any of the children in the study (Place & Hoff 2011).

It is often believed that exposure to two languages may interfere with the rate of development of both languages for young language learners; -however, it is possible for

bilingual children to exhibit the same rate of grammatical development as children learning only one language (Moore & Perez-Mendez, 2006). Even children who are strongly dominant in one language are very likely to perform within a normal range of variation for monolingual children (Hoff & Core, 2015). Strong dominance may be exhibited in one language through the ability to produce longer utterances, a more diverse vocabulary, and speak with fewer pauses and hesitations. This however is closely related to the amount of input received and not a lack of ability (Moore & Perez-Mendez, 2006). Bilingualism does not slow language growth if outcomes are measured appropriately; Pearson has found that when a bilingual child's vocabulary of each language are combined, only counting translation equivalent once, their conceptual vocabulary is similar in size to that of monolinguals (Pearson, Fernandez, & Oller 1993). This qualitative study will investigate the perceptions and experiences of Spanish-speaking parents who are learning English during English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children to find what their interactions would be like if they were to follow the advice of speaking English only with their children as opposed to speaking in their native language.

III. Methods

Participants

A sample of 11 native Spanish-speaking adults who are learning English and are parents of typically developing children within the ages of 12-46 months were recruited from Miami, Florida and the surrounding community. This community included bilingual preschools, as well as social media outlets such as Facebook groups. Inclusion criteria also required the parents to be primary Spanish speakers with novice high to advanced low English oral proficiency levels as described by The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (Found in Appendix A). This was required in order to ensure that the parent had sufficient English to participate in the English-only portion of this study. The language function for a novice high speaker is described as someone who communicates minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases. The intermediate levels language functions are all described as the ability to create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversation by asking and responding to simple questions. Finally, advanced low may be someone who can narrate and describe in the past, present, and future. The parents must also be at least 18 years old with their child being typically developing and between the age of 12-46 months. Any parent that was younger than 18 years old, had an English oral proficiency level lower than novice high or higher than advanced low, had a child that was not between the ages required for this study, or had a child with a disability were excluded from this study.

Procedures

Before this study took place, Florida International University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. Interested parents were screened for inclusionary and exclusionary criteria and then the first session was scheduled at their convenience where written consent was obtained. Data collection then began and took place over three data collection sessions.

During the first session, their English and Spanish language proficiency was measured using the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey-R NU (WMLS-R NU), which provided a standardized measure. A pre-activity interview was also conducted on this date, in Spanish, in which each parent was asked a variety of open-ended questions surrounding their perceptions of the Spanish and English language usage as well as their thoughts opinions on some experiences. Subsequent data collection took place in the second meeting where the parent played with their child for two 15-minute sessions, one speaking only Spanish, and another speaking English only. The language each participant began with was randomly selected. Following the two play sessions, a post-activity interview was conducted regarding language usage and their experiences during these forced English-only and Spanish-only play sessions. The third meeting consisted of the same procedures for meeting two, except the order of the languages was reversed.

Both the pre-activity and post-activity interviews were recorded using cellphones or iPad devices to be later transcribed and translated. The pre-activity questions asked can be found in Appendix B, and the post-activity questions in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

The pre-activity and post-activity interviews were transcribed in Spanish, and then analyzed using a thematic analysis procedure to find common themes among Spanish-Speaking parents learning English and their experiences prior to and following English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children. Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, organize, describe, and report themes found in data sets (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research because qualitative data analysis is mostly inductive and the meaning emerges from the data, while quantitative data is more deductive (Kuper, 2008). In this study the transcripts were read over several times and common thoughts and ideas were separated first by highlighting physical copies. Next, the transcripts were uploaded to NVivo© qualitative data analysis software where they were read over several more times and coded again into several groups to better organize the data. The highlighted quotes from the physical copies were then cross checked with the codes created on NVivo© to assure the same ideas were found under both conditions. The codes were then narrowed down and divided into salient themes. Following Braun and Clarke (2006) 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis, each data item was given equal attention in the coding process, it was thorough, inclusive and comprehensive. The selected themes were then discussed with the major professor, and committee members and agreed upon. Because this study aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of these parents, it was deemed important to separate the results of the pre-activity interviews and the post-activity interviews. The pre-activity interviews depicted parent perceptions and the post-activity interviews depicted their actual experiences after

completing the study. Once the themes were established, they were translated from Spanish to English. The researcher, who is a proficient bilingual Spanish and English speaker, was in charge of the translations. The translations were completed using a combination of google translate and the researchers own understanding of Spanish and the context in which the statements were made. Transcripts were analyzed and themes were established prior to translating the transcripts to ensure the participants thoughts, ideas, and frequently used word were not lost in translation.

IV. Results

After in depth analysis of the participants' responses to open-ended questions in the pre-activity and post-activity interviews, 4 major themes emerged from the pre-activity interviews, and 1 major theme emerged from the post-activity interviews. Parent's perceptions were measured by the pre-activity interviews, and their experiences were measured by the post-activity interviews. The pre-activity, or parent perception themes were: 1. "Importance of Child's Native Language Usage", 2. "Impact of Using One Language Only", 3. "Comfort Levels", and 4. "Attitudes Towards Code-Switching". The post-activity, or parent experience theme was: 1. "Barriers Experienced During English-only Interactions". Individual participant quotes are presented across multiple themes and subthemes. Similarly, multiple quotes from single participants are present in particular themes and subthemes. Thus, the number of quotes (N= 98) is greater than the number of participants (N=11) in the tables.

Parent Perception Themes

Theme 1: Importance of Child's Native Language Usage

Information on their native language usage was a salient topic discussed throughout all of the interviews. All eleven participants expressed that it is of high importance, and even essential, that their child maintain their native language. Six of the eleven participants expanded on their responses and specifically mentioned that they believe it is important for their child to maintain their native language in order for them to maintain family ties and be able to communicate with family members who only speak Spanish, to be able to fully immerse themselves in their culture, and for job purposes. Additionally, two participants reported only speaking Spanish to their children because

they know they will be exposed to English as they grow older. The participant quotes for this theme can be found in table 1.

Table 1

Parent Perceptions Theme 1

Main Theme	N	Participant Quotes
1. Importance of Child's Native Language Usage	N=11	<p>“Very important, in fact, we only speak Spanish to my daughters, and I want them to speak Spanish forever and also that they learn English and other languages that they want, but for me it is very important that they speak Spanish and that they maintain it. Therefore, we have a goal my husband and I and for my family that when the girls start school and start learning more English, and come home speaking English to us, not speak English, but speak Spanish and ask them to speak to us in Spanish always.” [P1]</p> <p>“It is fundamental because I feel that it is part of our culture and language, I learned in the University, is how we appropriate the world and learn. We each learn in a language and we have a different perspective of things, therefore it seems to me that it is fundamental that they [my daughters] also speak Spanish.” [P2]</p> <p>“It is essential.” [P3]</p> <p>“It is super important, 100% important, very important. For me it is very important that my daughter speak Spanish for many reasons. Number one, because I am Mexican and I continue to travel to Mexico and for me it is important that she understand my family, and when my mom comes to visit, my mom understands English but she does not speak it, therefore it is only way they would be able to communicate. Also, when she is in contact with my family and friends in Mexico, then there are conversations that we have through FaceTime or any other application, they are in Spanish, therefore for me it is very important culturally that she learn</p>

	<p>Spanish and that she speaks it. Super important” [P4]</p> <p>“100% [important] because it is necessary to have two languages in order to communicate with family and for her job.” [P5]</p> <p>“It is extremely important because if not it would make communication difficult if she only spoke English and I only spoke Spanish, well it would be a bit more complicated. They are children, and it is important to understand children’s needs, therefore for me it is very important that they speak it and that they have learned it the way they have.” [P6]</p> <p>“It is extremely important that she speak Spanish because I know in the future it will give her advantages as to jobs and work opportunities, and even her studies. Also, to socialize with other people when she is traveling and learning other cultures. For many things it will give her advantages over other people.” [P7]</p> <p>“Super super important that she speak Spanish, it is super important. In fact, I only speak to her in Spanish now because eventually she will be exposed to English.” [P8]</p> <p>“It is important because it is my native language.” [P9]</p> <p>“Extremely important, super important that my daughter learn my dominant language, I believe it is a tool if she can dominate two languages that she has my dominant language. It is very important for me.” [P10]</p> <p>“For me, it is extremely important that my daughter is exposed to Spanish all of the time. That she can communicate with her grandparents correctly, in Mexico, if we go on vacation, she won’t be lost without recognizing the language. For the cultural part it is very important to me.” [P11]</p>
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Theme 2: Impact of Using One Language Only

Participants were asked how having to speak Spanish only would affect their daily life, family life, social life, and their jobs. From this came the subtheme “Speaking Spanish-only would affect daily life, social life, and jobs.” Six participants mentioned that speaking only their native language would affect them in these aspects because there are people in their lives that they need to communicate with in English. Many of them would not be able to complete their jobs in the same way. However, none reported that it would significantly affect their family life or dynamics.

When asked how having to speak English only would affect their daily life, family life, social life, and their jobs, the subtheme “Speaking English-only would affect daily life, family life, social life, and jobs” arose. Within this theme, seven participants said it would have a great impact and it would take away their ability to communicate with people in their lives who only speak Spanish, especially within their family and jobs.

These findings suggest that being a bilingual Spanish and English speaker is an important part of their everyday lives. The participant quotes for this theme can be found in table 2.

Table 2

Parent Perceptions Theme 2

Main Theme	Subthemes	N	Participant Quotes
2. Impact of Using One Language Only	i. Speaking Spanish-only would affect daily life, social life, and jobs.	N=7	“It would impact me in my University because I would not be able to do anything, unless it was in English only.” [P1] “I would lose 40% of my territory and I would not be able to communicate with my clients or with many of my co-

			<p>workers at work. The social aspect too, many of my friends do not speak Spanish, I would not be able to communicate with them if I do not have English.” [P2]</p> <p>“My job, well, it might impact communication with my boss because she does not speak too much Spanish.” [P6]</p> <p>“Yes, it would impact me because I am in a country where the main language is English, so if I do not speak it, I would also feel excluded because I need to understand and make myself understood in the I have been living in for so many years.” [P7]</p> <p>“It would definitely impact my job because I need English in order to communicate certain things. Not being able to communicate in English would have a negative impact.” [P8]</p> <p>“Socially, it would definitely impact me negatively because there are certain people that I would not be able to communicate with.” [P8]</p> <p>“Yes, it would impact me because I need to communicate with people that do not speak my language and it would impact me in all aspects. With family less but in the social and at work it would impact me negatively.” [P10]</p>
	<p>ii. Speaking English-only would affect daily life, family life, social life, and jobs.</p>	<p>N=10</p>	<p>“It would impact my job because I have many territories that speak Spanish; therefore, I would practically lose communications with 60% of my territories.” [P2]</p> <p>“My social life too, imagine. All of my friends even if they speak English, the natural thing to do is speak Spanish.</p>

		<p>We only speak English socially when there is someone, for example, when there are Italian friends, or when there is a Mexican friend that is not Latin, is when we speak in English, but normally it would affect the fluidity of the communication.” [P2]</p> <p>“Even once the girls understand English, normally the games and everything is done in Spanish, so of course with our family and our parents it would be hard.” [P2]</p> <p>“My job requires it; therefore, I would not be able to, I do not know how. My other job on Wednesdays are classes for purely Latin students, so I would have to stop working there. I do not think it is possible.” [P4]</p> <p>“No very bad. I do not think it is possible, I can’t. No. No. How? If I had to do it I guess I will do it, but if you tell me I can only speak English well my daughter would lose her opportunity to learn Spanish, no no no, I can’t.” [P4]</p> <p>“Well in my family life it would have an impact basically with my husband who is the one who speaks the least English out of all of us.” [P6]</p> <p>“I would feel incomplete because Spanish is part of my roots, it is part of who I am. It is the same in our familial environment and it is a part of our lives, therefore I would feel incomplete if I had to exclusively speak only English.” [P7]</p> <p>“In my family it would impact it very much because Spanish is our native</p>
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			<p>language and it would not be natural for us. Same with my social life.” [P8]</p> <p>“Greatly because English is not my dominant language therefore, I would not be able to use it daily.” [P9]</p> <p>“It would impact me because obviously being in the United States, and they tell me to only speak one language it would have to be English to be able to communicate in the work aspect but it would be weird to have to communicate with my family in English, with my husband, with my daughter, with everyone. I think it would just be better for me to move to Mexico to then just speak Spanish.” [P11]</p>
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Theme 3: Comfort Levels

The third major theme that explains the participants perceptions is the theme of comfort levels. Throughout the interview, derivatives of the word “comfort” frequently appeared. Participants often discussed whether they felt comfortable or uncomfortable speaking each language in different situations. The three subthemes are: “Not comfortable in English”, “Comfortable in English”, and “Comfortable in Spanish.”

When discussing not feeling comfortable in English, five participants mentioned feelings of discomfort or not feeling comfortable enough speaking English for various reasons including not being familiar with certain phrases or not using it as much. Four participants mentioned feelings of comfort when speaking English which fall into the second subtheme. For the third subtheme, all eleven participants described themselves as feeling good and comfortable when speaking Spanish as it is their dominant language. The participant quotes for this theme can be found in table 3.

Table 3*Parent Perceptions Theme 3*

Main Theme	Subtheme	N	Participant Quotes
3. Comfort Levels	i. Not comfortable in English.	N=9	<p>“Well to be honest, I do not feel too comfortable because it is not the first language at home, we always speak in Spanish.” [P3]</p> <p>“It makes me a bit uncomfortable to know just a few phrases to communicate well with other people. But I. would like to get there” [P5]</p> <p>“I do not feel very comfortable, maybe 40% in English.” [P5]</p> <p>“It makes me uncomfortable because Latinos, whether they are family or not, make fun of you.” [P5]</p> <p>“Not very comfortable because my environment is almost always in Spanish, so when I have to speak English, I get scared.” [P8]</p> <p>“Not that comfortable in English because I do not speak it much, sometimes it makes me anxious not to be able to communicate.” [P8]</p> <p>“English at work makes me a bit uncomfortable because there is a lot of technical language that I do not handle.” [P9]</p> <p>“I need to speak English more frequently, very frequently because my job demands it, but I try to speak it as little as possible because I do not feel comfortable speaking English.” [P10]</p> <p>“I generally only use English out of necessity. When I have to communicate</p>

			out of necessity, and I do not feel very comfortable. I feel regular because I am not able to express everything I have in mind.” [P10]
	ii. Comfortable in English	N=6	<p>“Eh I feel comfortable.” [P1]</p> <p>“In English, comfortable.” [P1]</p> <p>“I feel good, it is natural for me, fluid.” [P2]</p> <p>“Good, I feel good in Spanish and in English when its necessary, normal too.” [P3]</p> <p>“I feel comfortable even when I do not dominate it completely, I do not have a problem speaking it. I try to speak it without getting embarrassed and to make myself understood.” [P6]</p> <p>“At work with my boss I feel comfortable. She understands me well and I like when she corrects me. I wait for her to give me corrections so that I can learn.” [P6]</p>
	iii. Comfortable in Spanish	N=11	<p>“Good, in Spanish I am super comfortable, it is my mother tongue.” [P1]</p> <p>“In Spanish evidently I am most comfortable because it is my native language.” [P2]</p> <p>“Good, I feel good in Spanish and in English when its necessary, normal too.” [P3]</p> <p>“It is very comfortable for me to speak Spanish of course. I can express more of what I feel, what I think in a faster way.” [P4]</p> <p>“Comfortable in Spanish.” [P5]</p>

			<p>“At work with the girls I speak Spanish and I feel perfectly comfortable.” [P6]</p> <p>“In Spanish I feel good, I feel comfortable in Spanish.” [P7]</p> <p>“Super comfortable in Spanish, 100%” [P8]</p> <p>“In Spanish I feel comfortable in all scopes.” [P9]</p> <p>“In Spanish I feel very comfortable because it is my native language and my dominant language. I feel very comfortable with family, at work, and day to day.” [P10]</p> <p>“Very comfortable.” [P11]</p>
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Theme 4: Attitudes Towards Code-Switching

The fourth theme found throughout these interviews is about the participants attitudes towards code-switching. The two subthemes in this major theme are that some feel they “Have no problem with it/understand it may be necessary”, or that the way they feel about it “Depends on the context”. Within the quotes of nine of the participants who said they have no problem with code-switching, four of them mentioned that it does not bother them because they understand it happens and for some it may be necessary. Four participants stated that the way they feel about code switching depends on the context or the person they are speaking to. It is mostly mentioned that if the person they are speaking with also speaks Spanish fluently, they would not feel comfortable with the code-switch. However, if it was in a context in which the speaker was a native English

speaker trying to speak Spanish, they would not mind the switch. The participant quotes for this theme can be found in table 4.

Table 4

Parent Perceptions Theme 4

Main Theme	Subtheme	N	Participant Quotes
4. Attitudes Towards Code-Switching	i. Have no problem with it/ understand it may be necessary	N=10	<p>“Good, if they do it because they do not have the word they need, it does not matter to me.” [P1]</p> <p>“I find it interesting because you have to understand that those people also handle two languages and how in the moment and in the conversation they decide, in a totally natural way, what they will say in English, and what they will say in Spanish, and it works out perfectly.” [P2]</p> <p>“Normal, it does not bother me.” [P3]</p> <p>“Good, I do not have a problem with it.” [P4]</p> <p>“Normal, it does not make me uncomfortable, it is something normal in society. It is customary and not for comfort.” [P5]</p> <p>“I do not have a problem with it. If they change languages is because they need to do it and to me, that is not a problem. I respect it perfectly if they need to code-switch in the conversation. To me, it is not a problem. I understand that if they do it, it is because the need to do it.” [P6]</p> <p>“It is fine. It does not bother me.” [P7]</p> <p>“Good, not a problem.” [P8]</p>

			<p>“I do not do it often. Well, with my brother-in-law, yes. Sometimes if I feel that he is not understanding something I am saying, I code-switch, and I do not have a problem doing so.” [P8]</p> <p>“It does not bother me because I understand that not everyone has the same switch and ability to change quickly from one language to another. Like me, let’s say, my classmates and I from elementary school, we all had the same level of English but not all of us made it out the same. Therefore, I understand that there are people whose brains get stuck and they cannot change the words, or they are so used to saying a word in English that they forgot the translation in Spanish.” [P11]</p>
	<p>ii. Depends on the context</p>	<p>N=5</p>	<p>“It depends on the setting, the place. You know, if I’m at my University or at work where everyone speaks both languages, it does not matter to me, but if I am in a place, that is more family oriented, and someone starts to speak to me in English, it sounds weird to me but I can understand it, and it is okay, but if we all speak Spanish, I rather speak Spanish.” [P1]</p> <p>“I do it when I need to say a word and I know the person I am talking to also speaks Spanish or English. It happens to me in Spanish when I am speaking English and I want to say something that I don’t know, and the person I am talking to also speaks Spanish, I say it in Spanish. But normally, no, if I am speaking in English, I try to finish what I am saying in English. If I want to say something else, then I start talking in Spanish, but I do not like to code-switch in one same sentence or in one same... well... sometimes I do it.</p>

		<p>Sometimes I do it, but I don't love it." [P1]</p> <p>"That depends on the context, depends on who I am with because if I know that we are in a context with friends who are only speaking Spanish, well then I am not going to switch the language in which I am speaking. But if I am in a context where more people speak English than Spanish, well obviously then I have to participant in English." [P7]</p> <p>"It depends on the context, if it is a person whose native language is English, and they are talking to me in Spanish, I do not mind that they make the switch. If it is a work conversation where there is technical language that does not have a Spanish translation, that also does not bother me if they make a switch. In a social or colloquial conversation where the all of people are Hispanic, the switch bothers me." [P9]</p> <p>"It depends on the context in which they do it. If it is because they need to explain, there are times when people cannot explain an idea in one language, then I do not feel bad as long as they involve you or they explain it to you, but I do not consider it adequate." [P10]</p>
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Parent Experience Theme

Theme 1: Barriers Experienced During English-Only Interactions

While participating in the English-only portion of the study, the majority of the parents realized that this was a new and different experience for them and that they were

not accustomed to speaking to their child in English. Stemming off this discovery, four participants discussed feeling that their child was not understanding them when they spoke in English, giving rise to the first subtheme: “Child was not understanding them”, Other barriers they experienced led to the following subthemes: “Felt uncomfortable/unnatural/limited”, and “Accidentally code-switched to Spanish”. Seven participants mentioned feeling strange, and or uncomfortable during the English-only portion of the study. Parents expressed feeling unnatural, feeling limited in what they were able to say, and that the interactions lacked the fluidity they would like to have in conversation. Additionally, for the third subtheme, four participants mentioned moments where Spanish words slipped out when they were in the English-only portion of the study. The participant quotes for this major theme can be found in table 5.

Table 5

Parent Experience Theme

Main Theme	Subtheme	N	Participant Quotes
1. Barriers Experienced During English-only Interactions	i. Child was not understanding them	N=9	<p>“I feel that she does not understand me because I never speak to her in English. I felt she was not understanding me, and I had the urge the speak to her in Spanish.” [P1]</p> <p>“I feel that in Spanish it is more natural, and in English, like I said, I feel she does not understand me.” [P1]</p> <p>“I was a bit frustrated in English because I saw she was not understanding what I was telling her.” [P2]</p> <p>“The English part was complicated because she was not understanding me, and she was responding to me in</p>

			<p>Spanish so sometimes words in Spanish slipped out because we are not accustomed to communicating in English.” [P7]</p> <p>“In English, like I was telling you, she was not understanding somethings because we never use it.” [P7]</p> <p>“She was not understanding some of the commands in English.” [P7]</p> <p>“Of course, during the English part, it was a bit interesting because I noticed that [child] did not understand me but it was cool.” [P8]</p> <p>“In English [child] definitely did not maintain the same level of attention because she did not understand me, so she would look at me with a strange face. For her it was something unfamiliar.” [P8]</p> <p>“In English I had to try to get her attention in other ways because she was not understanding what I was telling her.” [P8]</p>
	<p>ii. Felt uncomfortable/unnatural/limited</p>	<p>N=16</p>	<p>“Sometimes I feel strange talking to her in English...” [P1]</p> <p>“It is a bit, not natural, I felt strange talking to her in English all the time because I never do that.” [P1]</p> <p>“In English I felt that I spoke to her less because it felt less natural.” [P1]</p> <p>“I felt a bit restricted in English in saying other things because it is not what I naturally always do with them.” [P1]</p>

		<p>“Well, in English I feel I have less things to tell her, I tell her less. Less amount of words to tell her.” [P1]</p> <p>“A bit uncomfortable.” [P2]</p> <p>“The English was very strange.” [P2]</p> <p>“Eh it made me feel a bit uncomfortable in the English part because it is not natural. I am always with my daughters and the predominant language is Spanish, so some of the fluency is lost [P2]</p> <p>“The English was a bit forced and there was no connection between us two.” [P2]</p> <p>“In English when I tried to tell her things and they would not come out fluently, I had to think about it, and I would doubt whether I was using the verb tense correctly” [P6]</p> <p>“Apart from the fact that [child] was not understanding, for me, explaining certain things to her was not easy either. I noticed that for example, I do not use “phrasal verbs” very well, like “how”, “turn it”, or “lift it”, “put it down”, I don’t know, for me it was difficult to give her instructions in English. There were things I did not know how to say either.” [P8]</p> <p>“I also do not know how to express some things very well and I noticed that for example, ways of saying certain expressions in English related to moments when I am with her, I do not know how to say it very well.” [P8]</p>
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			<p>“Doing the activity in English made it more difficult to communicate with [child].” [P9]</p> <p>“Well when you contrast the two languages, it is frustrating to know that you cannot communicate in the same way or in a way that was more efficient in respect to the nondominant language. Your head hurts because you are predisposed because your mind has to work in another language.” [P10]</p> <p>“It is uncomfortable when you are so limited in one language to expand on.” [P10]</p> <p>“It was strange for me to talk only in English with her.” [P11]</p>
	iii. Accidentally code-switched to Spanish	N=4	<p>I had to remember that I could only speak English, sometimes I would switch to Spanish.” [P2]</p> <p>“Yes, sometimes suddenly Spanish came out.” [P6]</p> <p>“Sometimes words in Spanish came out because we are not accustomed to communicating in English.” [P7]</p> <p>“Sometimes when we were in English [section] obviously sometimes things would come out. She told me “the pig” and I told her “yes that one” so sometimes things would come out.” [P7]</p>

V. Discussion

In this study data was collected using pre-activity and post-activity interviews filled with open-ended questions to generate narrative responses on the perceptions and experiences of Spanish speaking, English learning parents. The pre-activity interviews were transcribed and analyzed to find common themes in these parents' perceptions before they were forced to complete English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children, and then translated from Spanish to English. After these English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children took place, post-activity interviews were conducted in Spanish. The interviews were also transcribed, analyzed to find common themes regarding the parent's experiences, and later translated to English. During the analysis of the transcripts four major themes were found for the perceptions of these parents and one major theme was found based on their experiences. Different subthemes were also found within some major themes.

Parent Perceptions

In the first major theme for the parent perceptions, "Importance of Child's Native Language Usage", all participants strongly believe that it is very important to them that their child speak their native language. Some elaborated in their statements to include that it is important for cultural, familial, and job purposes. As Participant 4 stressed, "It is super important, 100% important, very important." Then adding, "For me it is very important that my daughter speak Spanish for many reasons. Number one, because I am Mexican and I continue to travel to Mexico and for me it is important that she understand my family, and when my mom comes to visit, my mom understands English but she does not speak it, therefore it is only way they would be able to communicate." Participant 11

similarly mentioned “For me, it is extremely important that my daughter is exposed to Spanish all of the time. That she can communicate with her grandparents correctly, in Mexico, if we go on vacation, she won’t be lost without recognizing the language. For the cultural part it is very important to me.” These findings are similar to those in the literature on parental perceptions of bilingualism where it was found that parents believed that language and culture are intertwined and maintaining their L1 was an important way to stay close to their cultural roots as well as with the older members of their family (Lee et al., 2015). This can also be tied back to a study by Oh and Fuligni (2010), where researchers actually found that children in immigrant families who maintained their parent’s native language actually did have better familial relationships and stronger ethnic identities than those who did not. Good family relationships and strong ethnic identities were also found to be positively correlated with high academic achievement (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). This shows the parents in this study seem to be on the right track in their beliefs regarding their child maintaining their native language.

Others such as Participant 7 mentioned “It is extremely important that she speak Spanish because I know that in the future it will give her advantages as to jobs and work opportunities, and even her studies. Also, to socialize with other people when she is traveling and learning other cultures. For many things it will give her advantages over other people.” Similarly, Participant 5 mentioned “100% [important] because it is necessary to have two languages to be able to communicate with family and for her job.” These quotes are comparable to the literature where a study found that several parents believed that being bilingual would provide their children with better opportunities in life, such as better jobs (Lee et al., 2015).

The second major theme, “Impact of Using One Language Only” has two subthemes that relate to each other because if the participants were forced to speak only one language, whether it be Spanish only, or English only, it would affect their everyday lives in their jobs, socially, and even with family. As Participant 11 stated, “It would impact me because obviously being in the United States, and they tell me to only speak one language it would have to be English to be able to communicate in the work aspect but it would be weird to have to communicate with my family in English, with my husband, with my daughter, with everyone. I think it would just be better for me to move to Mexico to then just speak Spanish.” Participant 7 discussed that having to speak one language only would impact her life whether it be Spanish only or English only. If she had to speak Spanish only, she would feel excluded if she was unable to speak the language used in the country she has been living in for so many years, while if forced to speak English only, she would feel incomplete because Spanish forms a part of who she is. This is demonstrated by her statement, “Yes, it would impact me because I am in a country where the main language is English, so if I do not speak it, I would also feel excluded because I need to understand and make myself understood in the I have been living in for so many years.” Also, “I would feel incomplete because Spanish is part of my roots, it is part of who I am. It is the same in our familial environment and it is a part of our lives, therefore I would feel incomplete if I had to exclusively speak only English.”

When specifically discussing being forced to speak Spanish only, most participants stated that it would not affect their family life as much because they only speak Spanish at home. Having to speak Spanish only would mostly impact the participants jobs. Participant 4 stated he would lose the ability to communicate with his

clients and many of his co-workers. Having to speak English only would also affect many of their jobs and would have the biggest impact on their ability to communicate with their family. Participant 4 felt very strongly about it and stated that it would not be possible, “No very bad. I do not think it is possible, I can’t. No. No. How?” She went on to say that her daughter would also lose the opportunity to speak Spanish and she cannot live life speaking English only. These quotes demonstrate that although the parents who participated in this study have maintained their native language while in the United States and it is very important to them, the English language is also a very important part of their everyday lives. As the literature by Petitto and colleagues (2001) states, bilingual language acquisition has become the norm for many people.

The third major theme, “Comfort Levels” has three subthemes under parent perceptions during the pre-activity interview; “Not comfortable in English”, “Comfortable in English”, “Comfortable in Spanish”. All of the participants reported feeling very comfortable speaking Spanish because it is their “mother tongue”, however only a few reported feeling comfortable speaking English. Many participants said they uncomfortable speaking English. Participant 5 stated “It makes me a bit uncomfortable to know just a few phrases to be able to communicate well with other people.” Participant 8 stated that since she speaks Spanish more frequently when she has to speak English, she “gets scared” and “anxious” about not being to communicate well. Participant 10 stated “Generally I only use English if necessary. When I need to communicate out of necessity, but I do not feel too comfortable. I feel regular because I am unable to express everything I have in mind.” The feelings of discomfort due to being limited in what they can express and how they communicate in English shared by these participants may be due to their

lack of proficiency in English. Because these participants learned English as second language at varying ages, it is possible this has affected their ultimate attainment of the L2 and their confidence in their ability to speak the language. This is demonstrated by previously mentioned studies that have found age of acquisition to be the strongest predictor of ultimate attainment and it negatively correlates with L2 proficiency (Birdsong, 2006).

The fourth major theme during the pre-activity interview, “Attitudes towards code-switching” has two subthemes: “Have no problem with it/understand it may be necessary”, and “Depends on the context”. These two subthemes share the thread that although some participants felt it depends on the context, they are okay with it in certain circumstances because they understand it may be necessary for some people. Participants showed that they typically mind code-switching when the person doing it is a primarily Spanish speaker. This idea is most clearly demonstrated by Participants 9 and 10. Participant 9 believes her feelings on code-switching depend on the context; however, if the person doing the code-switching is a native English speaker and is code-switching while speaking to her in Spanish, she does not mind the switch. She also states that “in a social or colloquial conversation where all of the people are Hispanic, the switch bothers me.” Participant 10 also stated that it depends on the type of conversation, however, if it is a familial conversation, he would not feel comfortable with it. He later expanded on his response by saying “if it is because they need to explain, there are times when people cannot explain an idea in one language, then I do not feel bad as long as they involve you or they explain it to you, but I do not consider it adequate.”

The idea that code-switching may be necessary for some people is supported by the literature because code-switching is said to be the result of proficiency gaps that are filled by borrowing words from the dominant language when using the weaker language (Montanari et al., 2019). The literature also supports the idea that some ideas are better said in one language because code-switching allows the speaker to precisely express their intended meaning by bypassing lexical gaps (Green & Wei, 2014).

Parent Experience

When asked about their feelings after completing the play samples with their children, many parents seemed to realize that they do not speak to their children in English and made comments about this. From some of these same statements came the first subtheme for this main theme as various participants realized that because they do not speak to their children in English, they felt their child was not understanding them. This led to feelings of frustration such as for participant 2 as he stated, “I was a bit frustrated in English because I saw she was not understanding what I was telling her.” Others, like Participant 8 felt that she had to try to get her child’s attention in another way because it was clear she was not understanding what she was trying to tell her.

The second subtheme that came about regarding the English-only interactions was “Felt uncomfortable/unnatural/ limited”. The majority of the participants expressed feeling uncomfortable, strange, and limited in what they were able to say and express to their children during the English-only portion of the study. Participant 2 stated that the English section was “uncomfortable, “not natural”, “a bit forced”, “there was no connection between us two” and that some of the fluency was lost. Similarly, Participant 6 stated “In English when I tried to tell her things and they would not come out fluently, I

had to think about it, and I would doubt whether I was using the verb tense correctly”

Participant 8 also questioned her verb usage during her English-only interaction, she mentioned that she noticed she does not know how to use “phrasal verbs” as well in English, which made it difficult to give her daughter instructions while they were playing. Participant 10 mentioned that it was frustrating not being able to “communicate in the same way or in a way that was more efficient in respect to the nondominant language.” The difficulty in communicating in English may again be tied to the parent’s proficiency levels and the age that they learned this second language. The existence of a “critical period” for learning a second language and achieving a high proficiency may be used to explain the difficulties these English-learning parents are experiencing when only using English to communicate (Bialystok & Miller, 1999). These findings also support the literature as some non-native speakers have been found to have less diverse and rich vocabulary, as well as less sophisticated morphosyntax (Core & Hoff, 2014). All eleven participants felt the Spanish-only portion was easier, more natural, and made them feel more comfortable because it more closely resembles their natural play style and what they are used to.

The third subtheme was “Accidentally Code-Switched during English-only Interaction.” Three of the parents mentioned that they noticed they accidentally code-switched during the English-only play samples. As the literature states, code-switching may occur for different reasons and in various ways (Bail, Morini, & Newman, 2014). Code-switching may also be influenced by factors such as the speakers age, and role in the conversation (Cheng & Butler, 1989). The fact that these participants are interacting

with their children, whom they are used to speaking to in Spanish only, may have been what caused them to code-switch.

VI. Conclusions

There is an ongoing belief that young children can effortlessly acquire more than one language at a time, while there is also the belief that exposure to multiple languages can have negative effects on children's language acquisition. This is known as the "bilingual paradox" (Petitto et al., 2001). Various studies on parental perceptions on bilingualism and their preferences when raising their children have found that parents believe being bilingual would greatly benefit their child (Lee et al., 2015). Others demonstrated that some parents question whether exposing their children to a new language before the first one has been established would confuse them (Petitto et al., 2001). Because of this paradox, ideas such as the "one-person-one-language" approach to separate language for more successful bilingual acquisition and reduced confusion have been suggested to parents (Carbajal & Peperkamp, 2019). However, this approach was found to be unnecessary and insufficient for bilingual acquisition (Houwer, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the perceptions and experiences of Spanish-speaking parents who are learning English, before and after forced English-only and Spanish-only interactions with their children to simulate what their interactions would be like if they followed the advice of speaking English only with their children as opposed to speaking in their native language. Participants were asked many questions about their language usage, their feelings, thoughts, and opinions. The results from this study show that these Spanish-speaking parents who are learning English feel more comfortable speaking to their children in their native language, which is also the language that they feel most comfortable in. Even participants who mentioned that they feel comfortable speaking English in the pre-activity interviews later discussed

feelings of discomfort and feeling limited and unnatural during the English-only section of the study in their post-activity interviews. Most of the participants mention in the pre-activity interviews that they only speak Spanish with their family and then in the post-activity interview realize and emphasize the point that because they only speak Spanish with their child, when they were speaking to them in English only, their child was not understanding them. When asked in the pre-activity interviews, how speaking either English only or Spanish only would affect their everyday lives including at work, with family, and socially, almost all participants mentioned negative impacts that speaking one language only would have. Whether it be speaking English-only or Spanish-only, the participants feel there would be negative effects in their lives.

After being forced to speak one language only, during the post-activity interviews, participants discussed having difficulty expressing themselves in English the way they would be able to in Spanish. When asked their opinions on code-switching and people who code-switch during the pre-activity interviews, the majority of the participants said they have no problem with it, and many acknowledge that there are instances where code-switching may be necessary. Later, during the post-activity interviews, three of the parents who said they do not have a problem with people who code-switch, mentioned having accidentally code-switched during their English-only play samples. When comparing the participant's feelings after the English-only and Spanish-only interactions, it is clear that forcing parents to speak to their child in their non-native language only, whether they are comfortable speaking it or not, causes strains in their interactions. In this case it may be because the majority of participants in this study are accustomed to speaking to their child in their native language only.

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Appendix A: Levels of English Proficiency

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines describes oral proficiency levels as follows:

ACTFL Level	Language Functions	Examples of Who is Likely to Function at this Level
Distinguished	Ability to tailor language to specific audience, persuade, negotiate. Deal with nuance and subtlety.	-Highly articulate, professionally specialized native speakers -language learners with extended (17years) and current professional and/or educational experience in the target culture
Superior	Discuss topics extensively, support opinions, hypothesize. Deal with linguistically unfamiliar situations.	-well-educated native speakers -Educated language learners with extended professional and/or educational experience in the target language environment
Advanced High	Narrate and describe in past, present, and future. Deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.	-Language learners with graduate degrees in language or a related area and extended educational experience in target environment
Advanced Mid		-Heritage speakers, informal learners, non-academic learners who have significant contact with language -Undergraduate majors with year-long study in the target language culture
Advanced Low		-Undergraduate language majors
Intermediate High	Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.	-Language learners following 6-8 year sequences of study (e.g., AP) or 4-6 semester college sequences
Intermediate Mid		
Intermediate Low		-Language learners following 4-year high school sequence or 2-semester college sequence -Language learners following an immersion language program in Grades K-6

Novice High	Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases.	-Language learners following content-based language program in Grades K-6
Novice Mid		-Language learners following 2 years of high school language study
Novice Low		

*The shaded area represents the English oral proficiency levels parents needed to be included in the study.

Appendix B: Pre-Activity Questions

- Rate how well you feel you speak English?
- How balanced a bilingual do you think you are?
- How often do you need to speak English? Spanish?
- What language(s) did you go to school?
- Describe your formal schooling in English? Spanish? Explain
- How comfortable are you speaking each language?
 - Family (adults/siblings/children)
 - Work (adults/children)
 - Social settings
- How often do you speak in each of the above situations?
- Describe how important you feel speaking your stronger language is for your child?
- Describe how important you feel maintaining Spanish is for your child?
- How do you feel when people switch languages in conversation (code-switching)?
- How do you feel about people who code switch?
- How do you feel about your codeswitching?
- Have you ever been told you need to only speak English to your child? If so:
 - By whom?
 - In what situation(s)?
 - By what types of people?
- How would you feel if you were told you could only speak English in your current life?
 - How would it impact your work? Social life? Family life?
- How would you feel if you were told you could only speak Spanish in your current life?
 - How would it impact your work? Social life? Family life?
- What language would you pick?

Appendix C: Post-Activity Questions

How did this activity make you feel?

How did the two languages differ in this activity?

Which language felt easier?

Describe any stress you may have felt during this activity.

Was it uncomfortable for you to have to speak in only one language?

Is it easier to speak in one language versus another language with certain people?

With Children?

Is there anything else you would like to ask about this activity?


Appendix D: FIU IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity
Research Compliance, MARC 414

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Alliete Alfano
CC: File
From: Maria Melendez-Vargas, MIBA, Coordinator
Date: November 25, 2019
Proposal Title: "Spanish-Speaking Parents Learning English: Quality and Quantity of Adult Language in Parent-Child Conversations"
Approval # IRB-19-0144-AM02
Reference # 107855



The Social and Behavioral Institutional Review Board has approved the following modification(s):

- Removed Funding.
- Updated Consent forms to remove compensation.
- Updated Consent forms to include data collection held in individual's homes.
- Updated Pre- and Post-Activity Questions.

There are no additional requirements in regards to your study. However, if there are further changes in the protocol after you commence your study, then you are required to resubmit your proposal for review. As a reminder, you are still required to receive continuing review and re-approval prior to your expiration date **April 26, 2022**. For further information, you may visit the FIU IRB website at <http://research.fiu.edu/irb>.

HIPAA Privacy Rule: N/A

Special Conditions: N/A

For further information, you may visit the IRB website at <http://research.fiu.edu/irb>.

MMV/em