Teachers' Native Languages

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Abstract

There is currently no research in the United States that addresses Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) who teach in transitional bilingual (Spanish/English) education programs related to the reading achievement scores of those

teachers' English language learners (ELL) at the elementary school level. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between bilingual education teachers' native languages (either Spanish or English) and their respective native Spanish-speaking ELL students' reading achievement in Spanish (L1) or English (L2). Sixty-three third grade transitional bilingual teachers and their ELL students were selected from 31 elementary schools in one region of an urban school district in Texas. Results suggested that teachers' native languages did not relate significantly to their ELL students' reading achievement in either L1 or L2. Educational implications are discussed.

The demands for bilingual teachers continue to grow, and for over a decade, the number of English language learners (ELLs) in the United States has been growing at an average annual rate of five times that of the total school enrollment (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2011). During 2008-2009, NCELA reported the ELL enrollment with over 5 million ELLs in schools across the country, accounting for a 51% growth since the 1998-1999 school year compared to a 7% growth of the total public school population for the same time period. Such large numbers of ELLs have exacerbated the need for school districts to serve these students with qualified bilingual teachers who can address their specific academic and language learning needs.

To date, there have been no published studies conducted in the United States regarding any relationship between ELLs' reading achievement in English or Spanish in transitional bilingual (Spanish/English) classrooms and their teachers' native or non-native languages. In fact, there are no studies that have been found related to any type of academic achievement outcomes of teachers who are classified as native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) or non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) in bilingual programs.

Recently, Moussu and Llurda (2008) reported in their extensive review of the literature related to NEST and NNEST numerous studies, but no studies were reported that addressed outcomes of students taught by NESTs or NNESTs. After thorough review of the literature, the researchers found that studies that do exist on NESTs and NNESTs (a) have involved adult ELLs rather than ELLs at the elementary school level (e.g., Cheung & Braine, 2007; Mahboob, 2001; Moussu, 2002), (b) have been conducted in countries such as Canada, Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Japan (e.g. Amin, 1999; Beckett & Stiefvater, 2009; Liu & Zhang, 2007; Ma, 2012; Moussu, 2010; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Tajino & Tajino, 2000), and/or (c) have been focused on perceptions of how NESTs or NNESTs are viewed from either a teachers to teacher (e.g., Amin, 1999; Guo, 2006); Li, 2006; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Tang, 1997) or students to teacher perspective (Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Li & Beckett, 2006; Llurda, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

There is no particular theory related to native language speakers. In the published literature, there have been linguists such as Chomsky (1965) who advocated that the speaker of the native language is the *only* person who is in an ideal position for communicating with others within a similar speech community, and thus, such native language speakers would be, then, the only

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reliable source for language teaching. However, several scholars challenged Chomsky's perspective on the native language speaker three decades later. Cook (1997) challenged Chomsky's comments by indicating that the concept of native language speakers as ideal creates a monolingual bias, and Firth and Wagner (1997) indicated that Chomsky's model native speaker is placed into an unequal position of dominance over a non-native language speaker. We, the researchers, even recognize the fact that in this study that even the use of the terms, non-native and native English speakers, creates the potential for perceived inequity; however, it is important that the terms are used for practical distinction.

Even 50 years ago, Lado (1964) suggested, "it is not enough to speak a language to be qualified to teach it" (p. 9). There are other qualifications needed whether a teacher is a NEST or NNEST (Nayar, 1994; Phillipson, 1996). Macaro (2005) indicated that using *only* native language (L1) in teaching has not been noted exclusively to improve second language acquisition, and others (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002) have suggested that the use of the target or second language (L2) is necessary for students to acquire the language. Cummins (2000) further stated that L1 instruction effectively promotes L1 proficiency and that this proficiency transfers to the second language, given adequate exposure to L2 and a determination to learn it. This concept assumes that there is a *common underlying proficiency* (CUP) -- cognitive/academic proficiency that triggers performance in both languages. Therefore, it would stand to reason that when children learn L1 skills in Spanish or another language, they are also learning underlying conceptual, linguistic, and academic skills.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) proposes a teacher as a model. Therefore, perhaps, what Cummins (1981) purported in terms of students who learn concepts in the students' L1 being able to transfer those skills learned into L2 furthers the basis of this study in terms of researching how NESTs and NNESTs who teach in transitional bilingual classrooms relate to students' academic achievement. Perhaps, based on Cummins' and Bandura's theory, ELL students may benefit from being taught by a NNEST who shares the same L1, because the teacher may serve as a model in L1 for students to follow, and the students' developed L1 proficiency may then be transferred to the advancement of L2 for academic gain in the second language. The opposite as a model may occur for bilingual teachers who are NESTs as they may serve as models for the students' L2, but also, they may serve as a model for the students who are learning a second language as they too have had to do the same. However, going back to Nayar, as well as Phillipson, the students' performance is based on more than a model for the language; they suggested that other credentials matter as well, as do Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, and Kwok (2008) who highlighted that the quality of instruction is at least equally important.

Bilingual Transition Program

The Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP) transitions the language – using the native language to support students in their acquisition of the English language (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Meyer, 2001). The TBP can be defined as a particular school program in which non-native English speakers are taught in L1 as a foundation to acquiring English. In TBP, ELLs are first taught in their L1. As students become competent in L1, the assumption is that their L1 will facilitate the process of L2 acquisition (Cummins, 1984; Krashen & Mcfield, 2005).

There are two basic types of transition bilingual education models: (a) the early-exit model where instruction in L1 fades quickly and students are expected to be exited as early as first or

second grade; (b) the late-exit model where students are maintained in the program until the end of elementary school and receive 40% or more of their instruction in their L1 (Thomas & Collier, 2002). According to Thomas and Collier (2002), late-exit bilingual models produce much better achievement results for ELLs over the early-exit bilingual programs. In this study, the participants came from a late-exit TBP, and it may be noted that differences may occur if NNESTs and NESTs are studied under an early-exit program.

Bilingual Teachers

Bilingual teachers are defined as educators who teach ELLs using the student's native language while ensuring that the student is learning English. In Texas where our study was conducted, NESTs and NNESTs in bilingual classrooms are responsible for teaching the second language in bilingual classrooms. Therefore, it is important that the bilingual teacher be academically proficient in both languages to meet the requirements of the student's needs. More importantly, NESTs and NNESTs must be proficient in the students' native language because this is where the learning of concepts will occur, and they must also be proficient in English, because they must guide students into transferring knowledge into the second language. If the NESTs or NNESTs are only proficient in one language, their students' learning may be inadequate in the other language due to the teacher's deficiency.

NESTs and NNESTs Related to Student Achievement

There is evidence from a study by Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, and Hartford (2004) that when administrators hire teachers for English as a second language (ESL) classrooms, there is a preference to hire NESTs. Guo and Beckett (2007) indicated that students prefer to learn from NESTs, and Butler (2007) found that elementary school teachers in Japan believe that NESTs should teach English. However, over a decade ago, Canagarajah (1999) cautioned about the NEST fallacy, which is that native English speakers are considered superior over non-native English speakers, and suggested that it is not relevant linguistically or pedagogically for those learning English. Even Teachers of English Speakers of Other Languages organization (TESOL, 2006) took a position which strongly discouraged discrimination against NNESTs.

Whether a teacher is native English speaking or non-native English speaking is not the sole indicator of success in the classroom. According to Chait (2009), one of the indicators of an effective teacher is student achievement results, especially in school districts that have adopted the value-added system, a statistical system that measures teacher effectiveness in promoting student learning in specific content areas. Furthermore, Chait noted that evidence suggests that teachers are the most important resource and make the greatest impact on student learning. A central precursor to value-added systems is the No Child Left Behind ([NCLB], 2002) that mandated that teachers be highly qualified and be held accountable for student achievement. In schools, accountability equates to teacher effectiveness.

The connection between native language of the teacher and student achievement, however, is lacking in the literature. There are virtually no published studies on NESTs and NNESTs serving in transitional bilingual classrooms linking their native languages to ELLs' student achievement. The lack of published information on effectiveness of NESTs and NNESTs at the elementary school level and their students' performance is particularly why this study is an important

contribution to the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' native languages and their ELL students' reading achievement levels in English and Spanish. In this study, the teachers that served in the late-exit English/Spanish transitional program were either native Spanish speakers with English as their second language or native English speakers with Spanish as their second language. Specifically, we, as the researchers, sought to answer the following question: What is the relationship between teachers' (NESTs and NNESTs) native languages and their native Spanish-speaking ELL students' reading achievement levels in English and Spanish in transitional bilingual education classrooms?

Method

Context

The large urban school district where this study was conducted consists of five administrative regions. Each administrative region includes vertical clusters of elementary, middle, and high schools. At the time archival data were examined, the administrative region in our study had 63 schools: 45 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, and 8 high schools. The total number of students was 39, 035 of which 31% were ELL and 92 % of all students were low socioeconomic status (SES). Even though the region consisted of 45 elementary schools, only 31 of the schools offered a transitional bilingual (Spanish/English) program at the third grade level. The region did not offer bilingual programs for any other languages other than Spanish and English.

Participants

The target population was third grade transitional bilingual teachers and their native Spanish-speaking ELL students from 31 elementary schools in one region of an urban school district in Texas. All the third grade bilingual teachers from the 31 elementary schools were selected. The criterion for teacher participant selection was that they were teaching in one of these 31 schools in an English/Spanish transitional bilingual program at the third grade level. In addition, these teachers were also selected because third grade is the first time that native Spanish-speaking ELLs are administered the state-mandated standardized reading test (i.e., Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills [TAKS], see below for more description) in Spanish as well as the state-mandated English reading proficiency test (i.e., Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System [TELPAS]). All data from students were archived at the time of the study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the teachers.

A total of 63 teachers, 24 NESTs and 39 NNESTs (whose native language is Spanish), were targeted in this study, of which 38 are female teachers and 25 are male teachers. NCLB (2002) requires that all teachers be *highly qualified*, which means teachers must be certified in the area in which they are teaching. Therefore, all 63 teachers held a teaching certificate from the state of Texas that permits them to teach in a third grade bilingual classroom. In the state of Texas, bilingual teachers must pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities TeXes, EC–4, EC-6, or 4-8, a test to measure the professional knowledge required of an entry-level educator in Texas public schools, as well as the Bilingual Generalist EC–4, a test to measure the requisite knowledge

and skills expected of an entry-level educator in this field. Both tests are requirements for candidates seeking a Bilingual Generalist EC–4, EC-6, or 4-8 certificate (State Board for Educator Certification, 2008). Teachers from non-English-speaking countries must also pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language, the internet based test (TOEFL-iBT). The TOEFL-iBT measures the ability of non-native English speakers to use and understand English as it is spoken, written, and heard in college and university settings. Table 1 provides an overview of the average years of teaching, highest degree obtained, and gender of the teacher.

Table 1

	NEST	NNEST	Total
Average Years of Teaching	9.3	6.5	8.2
Total with Bachelor Degree	34	20	54
Total with Masters Degree	5	4	9
Total with Doctoral Degree	0	0	0
Female	28	10	38
Male	11	14	25

Bilingual Teachers' Background (n=63)

In this study, the NESTs were those teachers who received the majority or all of their education in United States schools and who graduated from United States universities. The NNESTs were those teachers who were recruited from Spanish-speaking countries who received the majority or all of their education in their native country and who graduated from universities in their native country.

The late-exit TBP is one type of English learning programs offered at the elementary level in the urban school district. The implemented TBP uses the students' native language (Spanish) for instruction for initial instruction. Additionally, at pre-kindergarten through third grade, the program implements an English as a second language (ESL) component with time increments that increase at every grade level. Additionally, the program calls for the teacher to review all previously mastered L1 concepts in English. At fourth and fifth grade, the students are in a preexit program instructed in English, using ESL methodology, and staffed by a certified bilingual teacher. This program is intended for students to eventually mainstream into the English curriculum (Houston Multilingual Department, 2005).

Instruments

The scores used in this study were derived from the third grade 2007-2008 results of the

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) reading test and the Spanish reading Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The English Pre-IPT scores and the Spanish Aprenda 3 scores were used as covariates for data analyses.

TELPAS. The TELPAS consists of reading tests and holistically rated assessments of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In accordance with NCLB (2002), all students in Texas in kindergarten through grade 12 who are ELLs must be assessed annually to measure their English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Further, under the NCLB and the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standard, students are required to progress from one level of language proficiency to the next every year. The proficiency levels are labeled as beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2006).

The TELPAS reading test was administered to ELLs in grades 3 through 12 for the first time in spring 2008. This test was in a pencil and paper format, and districts were given the option of administering the test to students online if they desired. The large urban school district sector where this study took place opted to administer the test to all their students online. Beginning with the spring 2009 administration, the state of Texas administered this test exclusively online.

TELPAS reading was designed to ensure that across the state the tests measure the academic English proficiency that enables students to understand and process the English that they will encounter in mathematics and science written materials as well as materials encountered in language arts instruction. The TELPAS test is aligned with the state curriculum, i.e., Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and was reviewed by numerous committees of Texas educators to ensure the highest level of construct and content validity. The TEKS framework outlines what students should learn at each grade level in each core subject (Texas Education Agency, 2004). The reliability of the TELPAS was calculated based on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20) and was reported to be in the high .80s to low .90s range (Texas Education Agency, 2004).

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The TAKS test, used for this study, measures students' academic success in content areas including reading, math, science and writing. It is a criterion-referenced test aligned with TEKS, specifically designed to help students make progress by emphasizing the knowledge and skills most critical for student learning. Since the TAKS reading tests are closely aligned with the TEKS, students who effectively learn the TEKS should become proficient readers who are more likely to score well on the test without unnecessary emphasis on test preparation (Texas Education Agency, 2006). The TAKS Spanish reading test, first administered during Grade 3 for Spanish-speaking ELLs, is designed to measure the extent to which a student has learned and is able to apply the defined knowledge and skills at each tested grade level in Spanish reading. Spanish-speaking ELLs who are not otherwise exempt can take the TAKS in Spanish for up to three years in grades 3 through 6.

Construct validity of the TAKS Spanish reading test has been established using confirmatory factor analysis with good model fit for the trans-adapted Spanish forms for reading in grades 3 and 5 (Burk, Johnson, & Whitley, 2005; Davis, O'Malley, & Wu, 2007). For example, Reyes (2007) investigated the construct validity of Spanish version of TAKS reading and found a moderate correlation with the English version. It is determined that students who pass TAKS reading (English or Spanish) in third grade demonstrate satisfactory performance at or above state passing standard and a sufficient understanding of the TEKS-aligned reading curriculum. The level

of commended performance reveals high academic achievement, considerably above state passing standard; and a thorough understanding of the TEKS reading curriculum. The test reliability is based on internal consistency measures in particular on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20). The internal consistency reliability of TAKS ranges from 0.93 to 0.94 due to stratified coefficient alpha involving a combination of dichotomous and polytomous (short-answer and extended response) items (Texas Education Agency, 2004).

Aprenda 3. The Aprenda 3 was used in this study as a covariate to control for any potential differences between the two groups (students in NESTs' and NNESTs' classrooms) on Spanish reading. The Aprenda 3, a norm-referenced test with Latino authors from several different Spanish-speaking countries, measures students' knowledge in several academic areas in Spanish: math, reading, language arts, social studies, and science. In the large urban school district where our study was conducted, Aprenda 3 is used to determine whether a student will be promoted to the next grade level. The Aprenda 3 score report provides teachers with information to make data-driven decisions to meet the instructional needs of their students. The reliability of the Aprenda 3 was calculated based on the KR20 and is reported to have a high degree of internal consistency (Pearson, 2005).

Pre- IPT. Designed to assist in the initial designation of oral English proficiency level among non-English speaking preschool children, the Pre-IPT-Oral English provides information to help place students in the most appropriate instructional programs. In addition, it may be used for assessing a child's progress in English oral language development (Ballard & Tighe, 2009).

According to August (2008), oral English proficiency is a strong indicator of good reading comprehension skills and writing skills in English. Therefore, the Pre-IPT was used in this study as a covariate to control for any potential differences between the two groups (students in NESTs' and NNESTs' classrooms) on initial oral proficiency in English that could influence students' subsequent reading comprehension. The validity of the Pre-IPT is based on construct validity of the test design and development; content validity which also includes the test design and development, scoring, and field testing; consequential validity which involves test design and development. The reliability of the Pre-IPT is based on the stability and consistency, internal consistency, generalizability, and classification consistency of the test design and development. According to the manual, Pre-IPT demonstrates high internal consistency at or above .90.

Data Collection

Data that were collected to answer the research question were from the 2007 - 2008 school year. Scores on the third grade TELPAS scores, the third grade Spanish reading TAKS scores, the second grade Aprenda 3, and the English Pre-IPT scores were collected through archived data from the research department of the school district. The third grade Spanish reading TAKS tests scores were retrieved from the first TAKS administration.

The data were acquired by using an in-house computer at the administrative region that housed the achieved data through the Chancery software student system. The students' scores from the 31 schools in this study were extracted filtering by student participation in a Spanish/English bilingual program since Pre-Kindergarten. Students were coded for anonymity. The results were

printed and reviewed by the research team. Then the team excluded information that was not pertinent to this study. The researchers selected 534 students' scores that met the criteria. The researchers did not have access to records regarding whether these students had NESTs or NNESTs prior to third grade.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed at the student level. The independent variable was the native language of the teachers of these students. The dependent variables were the English TELPAS and the TAKS Spanish reading scores of the students in transitional bilingual classrooms taught by NESTs or NNESTs. To control for initial difference in English and Spanish reading performance, students' scores in Aprenda 3 administered during second grade and Pre-IPT given in Pre-Kindergarten were used as covariates. One-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to compare the differences between the two groups. In cases of statistical significance, effect size in the form of partial eta squared was also reported to examine if the observed difference was meaningful (Thompson, 2001, 2007).

Results

English Assessment

Descriptive statistics for TELPAS reading are presented in Table 2. The mean scaled score of the group with NNESTs is 40.06 (*SD*=10.01), and the mean scaled score of the group with NESTs is 40.25 (*SD*=10.30). The following assumptions for ANCOVA were tested. First, the absolute value of the skewness was less than 2, and the absolute value of kurtosis was less than 7, which indicated that the data were normally distributed (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). Second, homogeneity of regression slopes was also tested prior to conducting the ANCOVA to determine if there was a significant interaction between the covariate and the independent variable. Results indicated that the interaction between the teacher's native language and the covariate, the Pre-IPT, was not significant, F(1, 533)=1.66, p=.198. Third, Levene's test for equality of variances revealed that there was no significant variance among groups, F(1, 532)=.28, p=.600.

Teacher	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
NNEST	221	40.96	10.01	546	468
NEST	313	40.25	10.30	305	929
Total	534	40.55	10.18	401	767

Table 2Descriptive Statistics for TELPAS by Group

Results from ANCOVA suggested that the main effect of teacher's native language on students' TELPAS reading scores was not significant, F(1, 533)=1.66, p=.20, partial eta

squared=.003 using the Pre-IPT as the covariate. The partial eta squared was .003, indicating that the teacher's native language by itself accounted for only .3% of the overall variance in TELAPS reading. Therefore, scores of ELL students taught by NNESTs did not differ from those taught by NESTs when taking into account initial oral English proficiency.

Spanish Assessment

Descriptive statistics for TAKS Spanish reading are presented in Table 3. The mean scaled score of the group with NNESTs was 2299.01 (*SD*=181.93), and the mean scaled score of the group with NESTs was 2275.69 (*SD*=167.97). The following assumptions for ANCOVA were tested. First, the absolute value of the skewness was less than 2, and the absolute value of kurtosis was less than 7, which indicated that the data were normally distributed (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). Second, homogeneity of regression prior to conducting the ANCOVA slopes was tested to determine if there was a significant interaction between the covariate and the independent variable. Results indicated that the interaction between the teacher's native language and the covariate, Aprenda 3, was not significant, F(1, 533)=.754, p=.385. Third, Levene's test for equality of variances revealed that there was no significant variance among groups, F(1, 532)=.661, p=.417.

Table 3

Teacher	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
NNEST	221	2299.01	181.93	.030	.393
NEST	313	2275.69	167.97	089	.006
Total	534	2285.34	174.09	017	.216

Descriptive Statistics for TAKS by Group

Results from ANCOVA suggested that the main effect of teacher's native language on students' TAKS Spanish reading scores was not significant, F(1, 533)=.754, p=.385, partial eta squared=.001, using the Aprenda 3 as the covariate. The partial eta squared was .001, indicating that the teacher's native language by itself accounted for only .1% of the overall variance in TELAPS reading. Therefore, students taught by NNESTs did not differ from those taught by NESTs when taking into account initial oral Spanish proficiency.

Discussion and Conclusions

The significance of this study is that the research was conducted at the elementary level as no published research was found regarding NESTs' and NNESTs' native languages related to ELL students' achievement. Results of this study indicated that English or Spanish reading scores of third grade ELLs in transitional bilingual classrooms did not differ based on the native languages

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of their teacher. It was found that NESTs and NNESTs have an equal opportunity of achieving success with ELLs. Although there is no study with which to compare the findings due to the lack of such studies investigating students' performance as related to teacher's native languages in elementary schools, this study is supported by longitudinal research. Lara-Alecio et al. (2010) found that the total number of years taught by a NEST is not significantly related to an ELL's English language and literacy acquisition in grades K-3; rather, those researchers, based on that study, attribute student success in English language and literacy acquisition to the quality, on-going professional development provided to the teachers.

Limitations

There are several limitations identified in this study. First, it was limited to teachers and third grade students participating in a late-exit transitional bilingual program in one administrative region of a large urban school district in Texas. Interpretation of the findings cannot go beyond the research context of school demographics and the program model in this study.

Second, there was a lack of English test data available on the third grade students in this study. The only data available to consider as an English covariate were scores of basic oral language proficiency based upon school entry of the students at the Pre-Kindergarten level. In contrast, the data that were available for the Spanish covariate, Aprenda 3, were available from the time when students in this study were in second grade.

Another limitation was the lack of access to students' prior schooling, because they may have been in classrooms taught by NESTs and/or NNESTs and not necessarily have had only NEST or only NNEST teachers up until third grade; therefore, that variable is unaccounted for in the results. Some students may have also, for a limited time, experienced being in English as a second language (ESL) or regular education English immersion classrooms. This situation is highly unlikely, but it must be noted as a possibility.

In addition, all the NNESTs in this study came from Spanish-speaking countries; however, the researchers acknowledge that many bilingual classrooms are staffed by teachers who are NNESTs but were born and reared in the United States. Future studies should include this population of teachers while addressing the relationship between their native languages and students' achievement.

Findings

The findings suggest that the teacher's native language does not relate to reading achievement scores in English or Spanish of third grade ELLs who are served in transitional bilingual education programs. In fact, the NESTs and NNESTs demonstrated success in teaching reading in English and Spanish as evidenced by the scores of their ELLs on reading tests in either language. Furthermore, based on our findings, a teacher's native language or their accent would not necessarily relate negatively to third grade ELLs' reading scores in English or Spanish. These findings have different implications from perception studies such as the one conducted by Butler (2007) that indicated that a majority of teachers in elementary school perceived that English should be taught by native English-speaking teachers. Such concerns about NNESTs are clearly not valid from this study, and more research is deemed necessary to clarify the misconception about NNESTs.

In addition, the success of NESTs and NNESTs and their students' English academic achievement in this study rebut Chomsky's (1965) claim regarding the dominance or power of native speakers only. The findings may be related to the social cognitive theory and Cummins' CUP model (1981) indicating that ELL students may benefit from being taught by a bilingual teacher because (a) the NNEST, who shares the same native language may serve as a model in the students' L1 and (b) L1 instruction promotes L1 proficiency and that this proficiency transfers to L2, given adequate exposure to the second language and a determination to learn it. When children learn native language skills in Spanish or another language, they also are learning underlying conceptual, linguistic, and academic skills that can facilitate the learning of a second language. We, the researchers, add to the concept of social cognitive theory and suggest that the modeling of the teacher may also come from the NEST who is also a second language learner and can serve as a reverse language model (an individual who has the target language of the student, but who has learned the native language of the student and is proficient in that language).

The fact that there were no differences in outcomes between ELLs taught by NESTs and NNESTs also implies that, although debates have been surrounding the issue of language of instruction, what is equally (if not more) important is the question on how to provide quality instruction to ELLs in order to ensure their school success (August & Shanahan, 2006; Slavin & Cheung, 2005) and perhaps the quality of the languages of the teacher. Empirical evidence has been provided regarding the quality of instruction that has contributed to ELLs' language and literacy attainment in L1 and L2 (Irby et al., 2010; Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2011).

Therefore, these findings may have a positive impact on the confidence of NNEST by making them aware of their ability to adequately serve their students' needs in English and Spanish. Relatedly, the contribution of this study to the field is that it allays the fears and addresses the biases that monolingual teachers, administrators, Hispanic parents, the Hispanic community, and other stakeholders may have against bilingual educators because of their accents. Therefore in many cases, linguicism appears to be minimal to non-existent with these findings.

Based on the findings, there may be implications for appropriate staff development for NNESTs and NESTs. The researchers recommend that staff development focus not exclusively on proficiency in English or Spanish and instead focus on student learning needs. Administrators, as they plan staff development, should be cognizant that native language is not the sole or even the most influential variable of ELLs' reading achievement. Furthermore, administrators should be cognizant that their teacher recruitment strategies may need modifying; for example, they may decide whether the strategy for recruiting bilingual teachers from other Spanish-speaking countries is or is not worthwhile.

It is not known whether it would actually make a difference in student performance in classroom-based assessments or even standardized reading assessments if these instruments contain oral sections such as imitation tasks or elicitation of answers, or performance tasks that need to be modeled by teachers orally to be rated by the teachers. Therefore, future studies are needed to examine type of instruments in relation to teachers' native languages and their ELL students' reading achievement. Another recommendation for future study is to further probe potential differences that exist between NNESTs and NESTs that matters in terms of their students' achievement. It is recommended that culturally-responsive pedagogical differences be studied between NNESTs and NESTs. Concomitantly, it would be advantageous to determine differences between NNEST's and NEST's metalinguistic knowledge and metacognitive knowledge and whether NNEST's can access such knowledge more readily.

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Finally, researchers are encouraged to (a) include students from additional urban as well as rural and suburban districts and (b) follow students randomly assigned to NNESTs or NESTs classrooms throughout their elementary careers to establish if there is a difference in ELLs' academic achievement in grades other than third grade by type of language teacher. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to analyze qualitative data collected from classroom observations at the elementary school level in TBP to further compare the effectiveness of NESTs and NNESTs who teach ELLs.

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