Middle-Class English Speakers in a Two-Way Immersion Bilingual Classroom: “Everybody Should Be Listening to Jonathan Right Now . . . ”

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Two-way bilingual immersion education, offered in a fast-growing number of primary schools in the United States, provides primary language maintenance to minority language speakers while simultaneously offering an enrichment “foreign” language immersion experience to English-speaking children in the same classroom, generally with the same teacher. This fusion of two different groups of children, two different sets of expectations, is controversial: Is it possible to accomplish both goals at once, or will teacher and program inevitably end up serving the needs of dominant English-speaking children first? The equation is further complicated when the English speakers in a program come from mainly highly educated middle-class families, and the Spanish speakers come from mainly working-class immigrant families, as is the case in many of these programs. Drawing on audio and video data from a year-long study in a second-grade two-way classroom that shares this class gap between language groups, and using a methodology that fuses ethnography and discourse analysis, this article explores the ways English-speaking children can impact classroom conversational dynamics.

One afternoon in May, a second-grade two-way immersion class in northern California begins a lesson on fruits with the specialist garden instructor. The children, approximately half of whom are English-dominant and half of whom are Spanish-dominant, generally receive about 70% of their instruction in Spanish. Everyone in this classroom is expected to learn both languages by learning in both languages.

Having opened the lesson and helped the class define fruits, the (English-only-speaking) instructor is ready to take the children out to the garden for exploration time. However, one student, English-dominant Jonathan, has his hand up again. He has already offered a valuable example of a fruit for the lesson, but the instructor sees his hand, and although she has no question on the table, calls on him. Jonathan begins a long explanation of something related to the science
of fruits—surely a valuable contribution, definitely elevating the level of discourse on the topic. However, this interlude was not exactly what the garden teacher was looking for. The class, ready to go outdoors to the garden, grows restless. In her efforts to model respect and maintain order, the garden instructor tells the group, “Class, everybody should be listening to Jonathan right now.” Jonathan finally finishes, she acknowledges his contribution (without actually expressing appreciation for the content of his comment), and she begins to explain what they will be doing outdoors. Once again, before she can get the class out the door, Jonathan’s hand goes up. She turns to him, asking politely, “Jonathan did you want to ask one more question before we go outside?” This kind of undivided attention is exactly what Jonathan appears to be demanding, and expecting, from his teachers (Field Note, 5/2/03). His contributions are rich, interesting, and on topic. Yet, at this moment, they appear to offer more than the teacher expects, and unfortunately, they end up serving only to delay the lesson. The garden teacher does not appear to want to point this out to him, and his classmates do not speak up. This is an example of what Ms. Melanie, these children’s regular teacher (who almost always speaks to them only in Spanish), describes in the following statement:

I have a hard time when we’re with … other (specialist) teachers [who are all English-only speakers] where they allow the English speakers to totally dominate the whole discussion … They keep calling on James constantly … and they let him interrupt and other kids interrupt, and Nick, and allow them to have the complete power of the learning process, that goes especially during discussion.

(Interview, Spanish Teacher, 4/4/03)

Ms. Melanie is an exceptional teacher. Although a native English speaker herself, she makes deliberate efforts to balance what Bourdieu would term the “linguistic market” within this classroom, offering English and Spanish-dominant speaking children as equitable as possible an opportunity to participate in the academic life of their learning community (see Palmer, 2008, for more examination of this teacher’s strategies). Yet, even under her tutelage—and even when the instruction is in Spanish, their nondominant language—the English-speaking middle class children in the classroom are continually challenging. Ms. Melanie frames her work with these children as follows:

I feel like I need to put those white kids in their place … I think so many white privileged kids then there’s already so much personal power that they have in their lives that my perspective is that their lesson to learn in life … is to learn humility and to learn how you can learn from someone else. And also how to … help teach someone else a concept in a compassionate, caring way rather than gloat about what you know. I think that’s
the lesson that most of the white or English-speaking kids come to me ... needing to learn ...  

(Interview, Spanish Teacher, 4/4/03)

Thus Ms. Melanie feels her White students need to learn to share the power they come into her classroom with.

For one school year, I collected ethnographic and discourse data in Ms. Melanie’s second grade two-way bilingual immersion classroom. I entered the classroom with questions about the role of status and power in language choice and participation patterns in a two-way immersion setting that was, as many are, divided fairly dramatically along race, class, and language lines.

As two-way immersion bilingual programs are popping up in more and more places, it is important to explore the theoretical and practical implications of including English-speaking children in bilingual classrooms, which traditionally in the United States have included, almost exclusively, speakers of minority languages (most often Spanish). Many two-way immersion bilingual programs are relatively divided in their populations. With half their students coming from a Latino immigrant, and largely working-class, background and the other half middle-class English-speaking and mainly White students, these programs work to bridge the race, class, and language differences between their two populations. Of course, this line is never perfectly clear; working-class and poor English speakers of many races and ethnicities, as well as middle-class Chicano bilingual and Spanish-speaking immigrant children, enter these programs as well. And there are plenty of schools in which the English-dominant students are also Hispanic, or where students are all bilingual and language dominance is difficult to determine (Hornberger, 2005; Pérez, 2004). However, it is difficult to ignore in some schools the disparity in class and race between English- and Spanish-speaking students.

These two populations come to two-way immersion programs for very different reasons and with different hopes and expectations. For middle-class English-speaking children, two-way programs offer an enrichment opportunity: a chance to learn a foreign language in the early grades of elementary school, something quite rare and special for English speakers in a U.S. context. For working-class Latino children, two-way programs often offer stronger academic programs and more primary language support than their neighborhood schools. They offer a chance for children to maintain and develop pride in their heritage language and culture while still learning English, which is critical to their survival in the United States. The stakes are higher for Spanish-speaking children, but unlike the traditional U.S. transitional bilingual program, two-way programs do not exist solely to serve them: These programs also serve English speakers. This brings up an important debate which is raging below the
surface in U.S. bilingual education research and practice. What roles do English-dominant middle-class children play in bilingual classrooms?

There are some who would argue that English-speaking students, particularly those middle-class children who have a tendency to dominate conversations and lean on their language minority classmates to choose English, do not belong in bilingual classrooms. Often placed there by their enthusiastic and highly educated parents, these children, it is argued, can impede the process of creating a safe space for bilingual students to assert themselves and claim academically oriented identities. They take resources and seats that would otherwise go to Spanish-dominant or bilingual children; they take teacher time and bend the classroom’s goals and language toward their needs (Delgado-Larocco, 1998; Valdés, 1997). It is certainly well-documented that integrating classrooms and schools by race, class, or language is not an easy proposition, and that the benefits to be gleaned from such integration can be negated when processes of internal segregation, such as tracking, come into play (Oakes, 2005).

On the other hand, there is a strong argument in favor of integrating our bilingual classrooms by race, class, culture, and language. By including English-speaking children, and by transforming a remedial transitional bilingual classroom into an enrichment-oriented two-way program, we can enhance the overall resources in the school and in the classroom. These children’s parents can help educators advocate for their programs to keep them thriving in today’s challenging political environment. The children themselves can provide strong English models to Spanish-speaking students, and by their lacking in Spanish skills (the language required for success in the classroom), they can reinforce to Spanish-speaking students the value of their own Spanish language competencies. This elevation in status for Spanish and for Spanish-speaking children could tip the scales for them and result in improved academic performance and bilingual/biliterate competency for all of the children. Finally, by bringing children together in a deliberate integration and expecting them to learn from one another, advocates argue, we are helping them all build their cross-cultural competency and empathy, important lessons in our increasingly diverse society. Among two-way students of both English- and Spanish-speaking backgrounds, researchers cite higher test scores (Christian, Lindholm, Montone, & Carranza, 1997; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Pérez, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002), higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001), and more positive attitudes toward other cultures and languages (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Lindholm-Leary, 2001) when compared with children involved in other types of school programs. There is a great deal of potential in shifting the language/power imbalance in the classroom.
This article explores this debate and attempts to shed light on the question of whether and in what capacity middle-class English-speaking children should be a part of bilingual programs in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is a great deal of variety in the growing number of two-way immersion (TWI) bilingual programs in the United States, the one common denominator among all successful programs is their orientation toward language learning and minority languages: they view themselves as additive, resource-oriented programs (Ruiz, 1984). They share the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy for all participating students, high academic achievement for all, and an attempt to bridge language and cultural gaps to produce children with cross-cultural competencies (Christian et al., 1997; Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In order to achieve these goals, they integrate speakers of both the majority language (English) and the minority language (in this case, Spanish) in the classroom for most if not all instruction. They use both majority and minority languages for content instruction across grade levels, and are intentional regarding how much of each language is used with children. The two most popular TWI models at present are the 90:10, or minority-language-dominant, model, in which kindergarten instruction is in the minority language 90% of the time and in English 10% of the time with English instruction gradually expanded each year until it reaches 50% by fourth or fifth grade; and the 50:50, or balanced, model, in which instruction is half in English and half in the minority language from the beginning.

It is easy to see why proponents are so enthusiastic about the possibilities of TWI; this type of program has worked well to keep middle-class children in public school settings for the unique opportunity of language immersion, while offering a superior language-oriented enrichment opportunity to the too-often underserved and fast-growing populations of language minority, or English language learner, students. TWI has very few enemies, having gleaned the approval of even the most die-hard opponents of bilingual education in the United States (Glenn, 1990; Porter, 1990).

The growing body of research on TWI programs increasingly reinforces their powerful impact on students and communities. TWI programs appear to demonstrate consistent success at helping language-minority children to learn English and succeed academically in school (Cazabon, Lambert, & Nicoladis, 1999; Christian et al., 1997; de Jong, 2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Quintanar-Sarellana, 2004; Smith & Arnott-Hopffer, 1998). TWI programs appear to afford higher achievement test scores for these children in both English and their primary language...
than either transitional bilingual education or an English-only approach (Alanis, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). These programs also appear to successfully offer English-speaking students an opportunity to learn a foreign language without any damage to their English language development or progress in school (Christian, 1994; Christian et al., 1997; Freeman, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Potowski, 2004). There is still a need for further exploration into the question of the impact TWI has on the cultural competence of students, and in a related issue on the equity of schooling opportunities for students in TWI classrooms. Ethnographic studies by Fitts (2006) and Freeman (1998, 2000) suggest that some of these programs may help to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, at least within the school culture. Much depends, it seems, on the teachers as program implementers (Freeman, 1998; Pérez, 2004; Takahashi-Breines, 2002). This study contributes to our understanding of how these programs, particularly the teachers within them, can work to promote equity in diverse settings.

In trying to meet the needs of both language-minority and English-speaking students in one program, there is an ever-present risk that English and English-speaking students will emerge in a position of power. For example, when teachers modify their Spanish so that English-speaking students can comprehend content, they may be watering down the language for Spanish-speaking students, or undermining Spanish speakers’ own varieties of Spanish (Delgado-Larocco, 1998; McCollum, 1999). This same modification is unlikely to occur during English time—despite Spanish speakers’ equivalent need to understand content—because parents of middle-class English-speaking children would not tolerate it. Yet, even if teachers were to modify their English to accommodate language learners, English-dominant speakers would have so much access to other English input that their primary language is never under threat. Minority-language speakers are indeed at risk of losing their primary language in U.S. schools’ predominantly subtractive educational programs, often even before they leave primary school (Fillmore, 1991).

Further, views in U.S. society toward English-speaking middle-class children learning a foreign language differ dramatically from mainstream views toward immigrant children learning English. A Spanish-speaking child must learn English; it is expected, and any failing is considered a problem. For an English-speaking child, the learning of a foreign

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1 Although English-speaking students learn more of the minority language in TWI programs than in any other known model of foreign language instruction in U.S. public schools, they still generally graduate from TWI programs less proficient at the minority language than minority-language speakers are at English. This is most likely due to the dominance of English in their community; their only access to input in the minority language is often the classroom, and the implicit message they pick up in the larger context is that English “counts” more than Spanish.
language (even one, like Spanish, that is rapidly becoming a second national language) is viewed as an option or enrichment, and any level of success is highly valued and applauded. Children are aware of this difference, and it impacts their positioning in the classroom (Fitts, 2006; Potowski, 2004).

Finally, there is some evidence that middle-class English-speaking children will dominate classroom discourse and thereby inadvertently rob Latino and other minority students of teacher time and attention (Valdés, 1997; Delgado-Larocco, 1998). Critics warn that these complex issues of power need to be examined more thoroughly in two-way settings: That is the goal of this study.

THEORETICAL FRAME: DISCOURSES AND ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES

The classroom under study is nestled within, and produces, a rich fabric of discourses, or broadly interpreted sets of communicative practices that convey or maintain values, dependent on context and positioning (Bourdieu, 1991). Proposition 227 is a 1998 voter initiative that requires English-only instruction for all children in California public schools. At this school, as in all public school bilingual programs in California since the passage of Proposition 227, there is the constant need to maintain one’s program in the face of English-only statewide policy. Thus, Spanish-speaking parents annually sign waivers to keep their children in this program, forcing each of them to take an active stand with the program in the name of bilingualism; this brings with it a set of discourses that are supremely present at the school, even if throughout most of the year they are hardly mentioned.

At the same time, discourses inhabit the day-to-day operations of the classroom. Within the classroom talk, standard and academic registers of English and Spanish are present in science, mathematics, or literacy instruction. There are the informal registers in Spanish, in English, and every once in a while in African American Vernacular English, all of which are carried by certain class members as part of their “identity kit” (Gee, 1996, p. 127), because these registers carry with them cultural understandings and communicate a certain set of values or belongings within specific communities. Within all of these different contexts defining the same space, different discourses are used. These overlapping discourses, or what Russian linguist M. K. Bakhtin would term heteroglossia, can be heard in the talk of class members, and in the talk about class members by the adults who surround them (Bakhtin, 1998). This analysis is an attempt to parse the heteroglossic nature of the discourse in one TWI classroom.
In this classroom context, does the English code hold inherently higher status, and therefore does it dominate whenever it is used? Do native speakers of English therefore maintain a higher status by virtue of the power of their native tongue? If so, how does this higher status show up in the conversational dynamics of the classroom? Do the program’s (and the teacher’s) attempts to elevate the status of Spanish influence the ways English-speaking students contribute to the classroom, and the ways these students take in their Spanish-speaking classmates’ contributions?

In her ethnographic discourse analysis of a two-way immersion program, Freeman (1998) develops the concept of alternative educational discourses. She argues that the teachers she studied developed alternative ways of talking about and to language-minority children, which communicated an alternative set of values and opened up a space for these children to construct academic-oriented identities for themselves. At the same time, alternative educational discourses offer middle-class English-speaking children new norms for interacting that do not silence classmates whose linguistic repertoire differs. The teacher and students in this classroom too appear to grapple with alternative discourses.

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES: THE STUDY

This study was a single-case study. Case studies provide a descriptive look at a single bounded system—a child, a classroom, a school—in the interests of deepening our understanding of that system (McKay, 2006). In this case, I studied a classroom with the goal of learning more about the conversational power dynamics there. I hoped that this would serve as an instrumental case study, to provide insight into the issue of diversity in two-way settings (Stake, 2005). I am not making any efforts to compare this case to others; I contend, like Stake (2005), that such an effort would run cross-purposes with the effort to deeply understand my case. There is much to be learned from a single case in terms of intricacies of interaction, despite the lack of generalizability across different settings. In order to ensure validity in this single-case study, I drew on a number of data sources and types for triangulation; I collected data for an entire school year (i.e., prolonged engagement); I engaged in member-checking; I attempted to be as transparent as possible in reporting my data and analysis; and I will proceed to describe this particular classroom in detail.

The study was conducted during the 2002–2003 school year in a second-grade two-way immersion classroom, at Medgar Evers Elementary (a pseudonym, as all names henceforth will be). This K–5 elementary school in the San Francisco Bay area had a diverse student body, racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically. With 30% of its students African
American, 38% Hispanic or Latino, and 28% White, the school had 56% of its student body on free or reduced lunch\(^2\) and 33% designated English language learners (California Department of Education, 2003).

The school contained a strand of TWI classrooms, with one TWI classroom at each grade level. This strand followed the 90:10, or minority-language dominant, model. In addition to its TWI program, Medgar Evers boasted an environmental science magnet program. Children left the classroom for weekly visits to the science laboratory and biweekly garden and cooking lessons. There was also a librarian and a physical education coach. All of these specialists spoke English only, and although some support staff spoke Spanish, all of the other classroom teachers outside the six TWI classrooms spoke English only. This meant that the common language on school grounds was English. Despite the presence of the two-way program, English tended to dominate most spaces at Medgar Evers, and this meant that percentages of English/Spanish instruction were not quite accurately matching the 90:10 model. There was often more English in students’ curriculum than the model would dictate (see Palmer, 2007, for more analysis of this issue).

This study centered on the second-grade two-way classroom. According to the model, the children were supposed to receive approximately 70% of their instruction in Spanish and 30% in English. In reality, because of specialists, English took over more of their schedule, perhaps as much as 50%. Although 50% English and 50% Spanish instruction may give the appearance of a balanced program, we must remember that outside of the classroom, the children are exposed to a great deal more English than Spanish; their world is English dominant. This is the rationale for the minority-language-dominant (90:10) model.

This sample was a self-contained classroom of 20 children. A little under half of the students received free/reduced lunch. Eight children spoke only English at home, nine spoke mainly Spanish at home, and three came from bilingual households. Their classroom teacher, Ms. Melanie Carlson, was a native English speaker whose Spanish was very strong, but who had a detectable accent. She was in her sixth year of teaching. She generally provided content instruction in Spanish, although she also accompanied the children to some of their special classes, such as the science laboratory and the library, during which time she spoke to the children in English. The year of this study, because Ms. Melanie took Fridays off in order to work on her Master’s degree, the children received English instruction on Fridays from an English-dominant teacher with 5 years of experience, Ms. Emma.

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\(^2\) Eligibility for free/reduced lunch is a commonly used indicator of socioeconomic status. Families apply for the service based on income level.
This classroom, like many two-way classrooms, was diverse along many dimensions. There were Spanish native speakers and English native speakers. There were immigrant Latinos, Mexican Americans, White students, an African American student, and a few biracial students. Students’ families were both wealthy and poor, and their parents’ levels of formal education varied from no formal schooling to postgraduate study. And, of course, there were boys and girls. This rich mix is what makes these classrooms such fascinating laboratories for the possibilities and challenges of diversity. Each of these identity markers impacts children’s engagement in their classroom community in different ways. A biracial child, a girl, an English-speaker—children enact their identities, and have different aspects of their selves imposed on them, in every interaction throughout their lives as they engage in different “figured worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 41).

For the purposes of this analysis, I chose to look specifically at the dimension of class, which I have operationalized as the level of formal education of children’s parents. My choice was based on the fact that class emerged as a particularly salient identity marker within the context of this TWI classroom, and because the literature points to similar populations in many TWI programs throughout the United States. In general, it is difficult in U.S. society to define class, and this is especially true when involving immigrant communities; neither income level nor current job/profession may accurately reflect this construct within immigrant communities, as immigrants frequently suffer decreased status after migrating. Because parents’ ability to navigate school systems and to assist children in school-related tasks has been shown to correlate with parents’ own education levels (regardless of country in which the education occurred), I chose this to operationalize class. Among the members of this second-grade classroom, there were a few middle-class Spanish-speaking or bilingual children, but all three of the Spanish-speaking focal students’ parents had had very little formal schooling in Mexico, whereas the English-speaking parents nearly all reported college degrees or graduate school education.

As a former TWI classroom teacher, I was acutely aware of the impact that the dominance of English in U.S. society can have on the dynamics of linguistically diverse classrooms. The teacher I found to study, Ms. Melanie, appeared to be very successful in counterbalancing English dominance. Unlike my own fourth graders, her students generally used Spanish when expected—both native English and native Spanish speakers alike, both with the teacher and among themselves. Granted second graders are different from fourth graders, but this still indicated to me that she had achieved some degree of linguistic equity in ways that I had not. I came to her classroom with questions about how, and in what ways, she truly achieved this.
Data Collection

In order to understand the power dynamics among English- and Spanish-speaking students in this dual immersion setting, I use a form of discourse analysis that draws on ethnography while still examining closely the talk among class members. Called in various contexts “ethnographic discourse analysis” (Freeman, 1998, p. 19), “sociolinguistic ethnography” (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001, p. 12) or “culturally contexted conversation analysis” (Moerman, 1988, p. 5), the main idea behind this methodology is the fusion of ethnographic observation and interview with close discourse analysis. Each informs the other; although much can be learned about the larger context from close examination of a small snippet of conversation (Schegloff, 1991), at the same time the small snippet of conversation is only well understood when seen within the larger context and culture.

I audio-recorded two to three sessions per week of the children during October, December, and parts of February for a total of 22 sessions. I videotaped an average of twice per week during March and April for a total of 11 sessions. I captured a variety of interactive settings in both Spanish and English: whole-group instruction led by the teacher, small-group work with an adult, cooperative group work and pair work, independent work time, and play time. In addition, I served as a classroom volunteer once per week throughout the school year, helping the teachers with small groups of children or in whatever capacity they needed. I took detailed ethnographic field notes of all of my times in the classroom, both observations and volunteering.

Although I considered the whole class my unit of analysis, during data collection I chose six focal students to serve as my windows into the dynamics of the classroom, three English speakers and three Spanish speakers, and usually focused my notes and recorders on them as they interacted with peers. In other places I have closely analyzed the positioning and roles of Spanish-speaking students in this setting (e.g., Palmer, 2008), but for the purposes of this analysis I was mainly interested in the data from the English-speaking students. Two of the English-speaking focal students were middle-class students as determined during interviews with parents by the parents’ levels of education: both parents of both students had advanced graduate degrees. One was a White male (James) and one a biracial African American/White female (Nancy). The third English-speaking focal child, Aaron, was a Black male whose single parent had a high-school education. I therefore did not draw much on data centered on him for this analysis, although he does appear. In addition, there was one White English-speaking girl in the class (Rose) and three other White English-speaking boys (Jonathan, Daniel, and Nick). Although they were not focal students, I had a lot of data that
included them, as they were often paired with or chose to work/play with focal students. I chose to draw on their experiences as well in order to better understand the role and positioning of English-speaking middle-class students in this two-way classroom. Both Jonathan’s and Daniel’s mothers volunteered regularly in the classroom, and I confirmed through informal interviews (recorded in field notes) that their families fit my category of middle class. Nick’s parents, by his report, were both doctoral students at a local university. I have no confirmation beyond my own suspicions of middle-class status for Rose.

In the spring, I conducted and audiotape recorded open-ended interviews with eight staff members and the parents of my six focal students in the second-grade two-way classroom. I pursued questions about the sense of equity the two-way program does or does not create on the school site and in the classrooms, allowing participants to direct the themes and direction of the conversations as much as possible. These interviews provided me with some insiders’ perspectives from different points of view at the school, and lent strength to my observation and discourse data.

Because I was a frequent volunteer in the classroom, my own positionality is relevant to this analysis and may have had an impact on classroom dynamics. I am a White, middle-class American woman. English is my first language; I became Spanish bilingual as an adult, and spent several years as a dual-language teacher in a similar school to Medgar Evers. Prior to conducting research at Medgar Evers, I had been a part time member of the staff.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis for this project cycled between a traditional ethnographic approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and a microanalysis of discourse that followed methods used by conversation analysis (Schegloff, 1991), sociolinguistics (Erickson, 2004, in press), and critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2005; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Immediately following my visits to the classroom, I would sit down with the audio or video tape of a session and elaborate on my handwritten field notes, producing as thick of a description of the classroom and class members’ engagement as I could (Geertz, 1973). While I listened and typed field notes, I would also flag in my notes moments in which I noticed metalinguistic talk, code switching, or some indication of either cooperation or conflict between or among focal students and other class members.

Once all data collection was complete, I conducted a full thematic analysis of all field notes and related data, which led me to flag a few additional segments. I transcribed the flagged segments in greater detail, and began to work on close discourse analysis. This cycle repeated numerous
times, as I would then return to my field notes and interview data to check the validity of findings in the discourse data, and come back to the discourse segments with more perspective drawn from the context and larger themes. I shared my thoughts along the way, along with drafts of my findings, with the classroom teachers. They were able to confirm for me that my depiction of the classroom, although at times surprising to them, was accurate and incisive.

The positive impacts of the presence of English speakers in this TWI classroom are not surprising; they are all the aspects that advocates tout when publicizing TWI programs. All students, not just primary bilingual ones, can serve as cultural and linguistic brokers to newcomers. The presence of English-dominant students constructs an additive bilingual environment that values both languages. Placing English-dominant children in the position of learning language from their Spanish-dominant peers disrupts the status quo in American classrooms in which middle-class English speakers are more often in the role of *helpers* whereas working class Spanish speakers are *helped*. At the same time, English-dominant students serve as native models of English speech. The positive impact of economic and racial integration is well documented in the literature (Orfield, 1981; Schofield, 1995; St. John, 1981) and was evident in this classroom.

In the following data, these positive aspects are clear. However, an issue with the TWI literature is that it pays little attention to the other side of the integration equation: There are also undeniable negative impacts of having middle-class, English-speaking students present in bilingual settings. Unless we pay attention to these impacts and learn to effectively mitigate them, they may well negate all the positives.

The major negative impact of English-speaking, middle-class students appears to be their tendency to assert a symbolic dominance (Bourdieu, 1991) on the classroom community, to claim power as native English speakers despite the programmatic emphasis on Spanish in the TWI program. This is evident in the differences in student conversation patterns between English instruction time and Spanish instruction time, and in English-dominant students’ tendency to become what Erickson (2004) terms “turn sharks” (p. 54)—to dominate conversations and monopolize student turns regardless of the language of instruction.

To see the differences in student conversation patterns between English and Spanish instruction, we can look at students’ patterns of use for the nonsanctioned language throughout the day. Originating from the French immersion model for language learning, most two-way classrooms attempt to impose a monolingual norm by asking students to use one language at a time. They explicitly separate languages by times of day, by days of the week, or by teachers. This is a controversial aspect of the two-way program model. Recently, critics have argued that it violates
the natural flow between two languages that characterizes bilinguals and that it limits children’s language development unnecessarily by disallowing them to draw on both their languages for learning (Hornberger, 2005; Reyes, 2001).

Ms. Melanie, who taught the children during their Spanish time, adhered to the monolingual expectation in her classroom, and even had an incentive system (without any serious rewards or consequences, just a public visual reminder) to help encourage students to remember to use the language of instruction. Ms. Emma, the children’s Friday English teacher, did not begin using Ms. Melanie’s incentive system until the second half of the school year, stating that she did not feel that all of the children were ready to function entirely in English before then. Overall, she was more accepting of students’ using Spanish in her class, although she frequently reminded children to “try in English.” Other teachers (all of whom instructed in English) made no explicit efforts to keep children in English, but by virtue of their own monolingualism and their inattention to their students’ linguistic diversity, they unwittingly imposed a monolingual English norm on the children.

Despite the monolingual expectation, children in this classroom continued to draw on the nonsanctioned language throughout their school day. However, this did not occur in a balanced way. There was a great deal more language shifting during Spanish instruction than during English instruction. In other words, even though Ms. Melanie was more explicit about her Spanish-only rule in the classroom than were the other (English-medium) teachers, children were far more likely to use English during her Spanish time than they were to use Spanish during any of their English times. Furthermore, English-speaking children were observed to use English with all of their classmates during Spanish time, including Spanish-dominant children. By contrast, although Spanish-speaking children were observed using some Spanish during English times, it was almost entirely with other Spanish-speaking children, and more covert or hidden. English-speaking children seemed to assume universal comprehension of their language, and did not concern themselves with the few children who might not understand them completely, whereas Spanish-speaking children did not appear to make such an assumption. Because of this, Spanish-dominant children had (or took) more opportunities to practice their second language than English-dominant children, and presumably were likely, therefore, to acquire more language. The imbalance in language learning between Spanish- and English-dominant children has been documented elsewhere in research on TWI programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This imbalance is one manifestation of the symbolic dominance of English in this classroom setting; it appears that the structure of the TWI classroom, including the imposition of a monolingual norm, does not by itself balance the
“linguistic market” nor open opportunity for language learning in a balanced way (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37).

Another manifestation of the symbolic dominance of English in this classroom was an explicit spurning of Spanish that several of the English-dominant children engaged in. Jonathan, the child described in the opening of this article, corrected both students and teachers if they used a Spanish pronunciation of his name. Ms. Melanie recounted to me that his mother had come to talk with her because he was extremely negative about “having to” learn Spanish, and she wondered whether she should give in and move him into the English-medium class next door. Ms. Emma struggled with the group of strong English-dominant boys over issues of respect toward their Spanish-speaking classmates on Fridays when everyone was expected to work and learn in English. One artifact I collected in my field notes (March 14, 2003) was a note Ms. Emma wrote to Ms. Melanie describing the difficulty she had one morning with Nick, Jonathan, and Daniel. Ms. Emma stated

This morning was actually quite difficult—we had to stop centers and have a class meeting about inappropriate behavior. Red group especially was badly misbehaving— Jonathan and Daniel and Nick all had time-outs. I have a feeling that so much of it has to do with English/Spanish power dynamic.

For example, during one whole-group lesson on English grammar, Daniel interrupted a Spanish-speaking classmate’s response to the teacher to ask, “Can I draw now?” implying that he had not only completed the work but felt it was not worth his time to pay attention to class discussion (see Palmer, 2008, for closer analysis of this incident and Ms. Emma’s struggles with English-speaking students). Was it mere laziness and primary-school power struggles, or could it be that despite efforts made programmatically to emphasize a multilingual and open-minded norm, some children were drawing on larger anti-immigrant and anti-Spanish discourses in California to assert their own power?

There are many examples of middle-class English speakers dominating classroom discussions—or trying to—during both Spanish time and English time. The example with which this article opened, in which the garden teacher sanctioned Jonathan to speak twice when she really wanted to get the class outside to the garden, provides one form of domination of the discussion, in which the teacher colludes with the children, apparently unaware that she is giving the floor more to some children than others.

Another example of such unaware collusion occurred with the science teacher, a mainstream teacher with many years’ experience who had focused for the past 5 years on delivering the school’s magnet science program to all students. In an informal interview, she expressed her view
that the English speakers in TWI classes seemed so relieved when they get to science, because it was “finally their time to speak.” She felt almost sorry for them spending so much of their time in class frustrated because they could not express themselves so easily, and she was glad she could offer them this time to freely participate in English. In the same conversation, the science teacher expressed her concern that she did not successfully reach the English language learners (i.e., Spanish speakers) in the two-way classes because those English speakers are so expressive. In my observations of science class, I would have to agree with the science teacher’s assessment. I too observed English-speaking children to express relief on moving into English-sanctioned spaces. Although having had the privilege of observing the same children during Spanish class, I would assert that English speakers were not nearly as silenced by the Spanish-only rule in Ms. Melanie’s class as their Spanish-speaking classmates were silenced by the implicit English-only rule in science class. English speakers may have had to work harder during Spanish time, but they were still participating—sometimes even in English—whereas Spanish speakers often demonstrated very low participation in English-medium classes.

Although concerned, the science teacher was too busy with her already overwhelming job of teaching hands-on science lessons to every class in the school each week and helping students meet grade-level standards in science. She did not have the space in her professional framework, nor in her schedule, to work on the issue of reaching the English language learners in two-way classes (or in non–two-way classes, for that matter); she viewed this as the job of their classroom teachers. She had done what she could; she pointed to the (quite substantial) efforts she had made to turn science into a hands-on activity and to build in vocabulary development, (i.e., curricular modifications for sheltering the language of instruction). Yet, as will be evident in the following analysis and as she admitted, this was not enough to counter the dominance of English and allow adequate spaces for Spanish-speaking children to learn in her classroom.

The following clip of conversation occurred during a whole-class review of material students explored on air pressure, learning to distinguish between open- and closed-air systems. The teacher is holding a closed system in front of the group that consists of a plastic narrow-neck bottle with a tube and plunger attached to the top. There is no way for the air to escape the bottle, but with the plunger the teacher is applying pressure to the air inside. Students, having tried this process themselves the previous week, may remember that eventually the plunger and tube will pop noisily off the bottle. The teacher is eliciting from the students why this occurs. Among the students whose voices are heard are James, a White middle-class English-dominant speaker; Nancy, a biracial (Black/White) middle-class English-dominant speaker; Aaron, a Black working-
class English-dominant speaker; and Oswaldo, Eric, Juan, and Laura, who are all Latino working-class Spanish-dominant speakers.

Prior to this, for the first 3 minutes of teacher-directed lesson, only two children’s voices have been heard, both middle-class English-dominant students (Nancy and James). As this segment begins, the teacher appears to be making an explicit effort to involve students who are frequently quiet during science discussions. She calls on Aaron, then directs Oswaldo to answer her question:

T: Closed air means no air can get in and no air can get out. Right? It’s closed. Just like closing the door to the room. Nobody can get in, nobody can get out, you lock those doors. You close the room, I closed this system. Um Aaron.

Aaron: Huh?

T: Can I push this?

Aaron: yes.

T: Sure I can. Right. So I push it, what’s happening to the air?

S’s: [it stays

Aaron: [(raises hand)

T: Yes. (looking at Oswaldo)

Oswaldo: Um it stays XX in

Although she calls on Aaron, she does not offer him much of an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the conversation; she seems to ask his permission to push on the plunger; he quickly answers yes, but he loses the floor for the follow-up question, and Oswaldo gets the opportunity to give her the answer she seeks. She answers him with an enthusiastic revoicing of his response, and carries it further:

T: It’s staying in! Now I’m going to, I’m gonna push this again, ok, I want to get it to actually XXX, so I’m gonna push it again. So it’s closed, I squeeze it here, push it here what’s happening to the air.

Nancy: [Aw it’s gonna go—

Eric: [It gonna go XX

T: Sh sh (waving at Eric and Nancy to silence them, points at Oswaldo)

(6 sec. pause)

T: L-look at it. Look at it. What’s happening to the air. Couple of different things.

Oswaldo: It’s getting out?

The teacher silences two children who are about to interrupt in order to be sure Oswaldo has a chance to continue participating, but her work to reserve the floor for him falls flat, as he does not know what she is trying to get him to say. Unfortunately, Oswaldo (who often displays keen observation and

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3 Transcript conventions: two brackets [ lined up vertically indicate simultaneous action or talk; XX indicates audio was inaudible; (6) indicates 6 seconds pause; CAPital LETters indicate EMPHasis; (action/gestures are described within parentheses).
quick response in Ms. Melanie’s classroom) has come across as not knowing in this dialogue with the teacher. She corrects him and opens the floor to others as she repeats the question:

T: Oh no! The air’s NOT getting out! Watch it again. Watch it again. The air’s taking up this space, right? I’m gonna push this, now what’s happening to the air.
James: (leaning his head to the side; speaks softly into his hands) It’s getting squooshed.
Laura: Oh! (raises hand) (several other students’ hands go up)
Nancy: There’s pressure on the air and it’s pushing it.
T: What’s happening to the air. Go like this. (moves arms as if to squish air)
Eric: [(hand raised, imitates T’s gesture)
Juan: [(Imitates T’s gesture)
T: It’s squishing it! It is! It’s squishing that air and squishing the air. Air is made up of little molecules. This has something in it. This is not empty space. It’s something that is IN VISIBLE. Do you know that word?

In this final segment, both Laura and Juan (among others) make attempts to participate; they are engaged in the discussion and want to contribute. But it is Nancy’s and James’ voices that get heard. They have the correct answer; they also both speak without being directly called on by the teacher. After Nancy answers, the teacher works to engage all students in a kinesthetic arm motion to better understand Nancy’s response. Despite the teacher’s clear efforts to involve different students, the students who shine in this discussion are Nancy and James.

During English instruction, therefore (i.e., usually instruction with teachers beyond Ms. Melanie), English-speaking students tended to end up with more turns of talk and more opportunities for interaction than Spanish-speaking students. Certainly this was at least partly due to the fact that the language of instruction was their dominant language, but I would assert that it was also due to the symbolic dominance of English in this school/community context and the fact that the teachers were not making any effort to counter this dominance.

Evidence of the influence of the symbolic dominance of English lies in the fact that talk during Spanish time was much more balanced—in other words, Spanish speakers did not dominate Spanish time in the same way that English speakers dominated English time. Of course, Ms. Melanie’s awareness of the language/power imbalance influenced the dynamics of talk during her instruction. Yet, even with this highly aware teacher, the classroom is a continually contested space. Although it may be difficult to determine, given Ms. Melanie’s influence, whether Spanish speakers might otherwise have dominated the talk in the Spanish classroom, we could perhaps expect to find evidence of her encouraging Spanish-speaking students to conform to more equitable norms during Spanish
instruction. On the contrary, there is far more evidence in Ms. Melanie’s instruction of her efforts to prevent English-speaking students from dominating talk during Spanish instruction. Students do appear to continue to try to dominate talk, but it is more often English-speaking students rather than Spanish-speaking students who Ms. Melanie corrects. We do not necessarily see children winning the floor quite so often under her direction as under the direction of other (English-medium) teachers. But if we look closely at their exchanges with the teacher, and at the teacher’s management of their movement and engagement throughout the classroom, we can see her continually working to prevent their dominance.

Ms. Melanie has no qualms about directly addressing the dominance issue with English-speaking students. She holds palms up to them, reluctantly interrupting her instruction to intone, “No interrumpas.” She immediately issues consequences when she catches them behaving disrespectfully or spurning Spanish in her classroom. She prioritizes keeping all students academically challenged and, therefore, too busy to be disrespectful. She respectfully addresses all students in deliberately equal turns. She maintains strict discipline and a high degree of structure because, in her words,

I think that in that unstructured environment then the white kids dominate … Because if … the teacher isn’t consistent about not interrupting for example, it’s the white kids who interrupt or most of the time. Or the boys who will interrupt and dominate. And so I think structure also facilitates equity … Whereas if you’re just like, “Oh speak your mind,” well the same people are always going to speak their mind and the kids who are not so feeling empowered in the environment never will. But the structure I think creates more equity.

Thus, Melanie sees her efforts to maintain structure as contributing to the creation of an equitable learning environment, as it asserts a norm on students for their participation; without such a norm, she believes that the White English-speaking middle class children would dominate the discourse.

The other teachers I observed working with this class tended to manage their classrooms more loosely than Ms. Melanie, for example, letting children choose activities and not strictly managing their participation in discussion with an intention to ensure equity among all children. Of course, the other teachers also all worked with the children in English; Ms. Melanie was the only teacher who used Spanish with the children. This physical containment of Spanish to the classroom and to one teacher, and the contrasting abundance of adult (monolingual) models for English, was one of the structural elements of this particular TWI program that intrinsically appeared to support the dominance of
English (see Palmer, 2008 for a further analysis of the school-wide context).

It is difficult to find open-ended discussions like that described in the data from Ms. Melanie’s classroom. She tended to avoid them in order to avoid the very pitfalls she witnessed in the science teacher’s classroom. She more often ran structured whole-group discussions in which, for example, each child took a turn sharing in a circle, or small-group discussions in which she was careful to orchestrate the participation of all the children (see Palmer, 2008, for a close analysis of the careful management of one small-group literature discussion in Ms. Melanie’s classroom). She also tended to revisit curricular material in more than one format, allowing for multiple opportunities for students to engage with, interact around, and respond to it. The following segment of interaction is a moment when Ms. Melanie stepped in to check on one group of three children during group work. Children were working in groups listing the common characteristics of different sets of photos of vertebrates; this table currently had birds. At the teacher’s command every 5 minutes or so, the groups traded photo sets, and for each new set of photos, a different child held the pen for their group record of their ideas. This lesson followed a series of experiences, including the generation of a K/W/L (“What we know, what we want to know, what we learned”) chart, a read-aloud of a teacher-created nonfiction text, a pair-share (in which children talk with a partner while sitting together on the rug), and a sharing circle (in which each child takes a turn to share with the whole class), all on the topic of vertebrates. Children were given many opportunities to hear, see, and talk about the vocabulary and concepts that they were now asked to produce in their groups. When Ms. Melanie approached the group, the middle-class English speaker, Daniel, was holding the pen. A very strong student and known for his sometimes arrogant attitude during English class, Daniel had already had to ask the other two children, Maria and Oswaldo, both working-class Spanish-dominant students, for help to come up with the word for “feathers” (plumas) in order to record his idea. As the teacher approaches, she stood above the group, and was clearly just stopping in for a brief update on their progress and comprehension. She asked:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: ¿Qué tienen en común estos? What do these have In common?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria: Que e - (flaps arms) ¿Ellos tienen dos alas? That uh They have two wings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: dos alas, ok, ¿qué más? Two wings, ok, what else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: ¿No más? ¿Solo esto? Oh plumas dijiste! Uh hehe Yo pensaba que dijiste ‘no mas.’ Plumas. Ok, ¿qué más? No more? Just that? Oh feathers, you said! He he I thought you said “no more.” Feathers. Ok, what else?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having already had a few minutes to compile their ideas, all of the students were well able to contribute to responding to Ms. Melanie’s question, and each offered something new. Daniel proudly offered the word that he assumed was the centerpiece of the lesson, that these animals were vertebrates, which Ms. Melanie accepted along with all the other responses. She acknowledged them all equally and graciously. Then, she asked them a follow-up question, pushing the students to remember the larger category for this animal group, which Oswaldo did immediately:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oswaldo: aves</th>
<th>Birds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria: Hhhuh (raising hand, bringing it back down)</td>
<td>Birds, did you write that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Aves, ¿escribieron eso?</td>
<td>Ok, that’s something else that you can write, right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswaldo: (shakes head, looks at card)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Ok, es otra cosa que pueden escribir, ¿verdad?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel: (begins writing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria: (with hand on mouth) Aves. (stands up again)</td>
<td>Birds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maria, who also immediately remembered the animal group name *aves*, but by raising her hand lost the chance to offer the answer, in the end took the opportunity to demonstrate her knowledge by dictating the word to Daniel as he was recording. Of course, no interaction is perfect, and during this interaction was left a bit out in the cold (she was also physically positioned a little outside the action, as Oswaldo held the bird photos and Daniel held the recording sheet). But because of the structure of the lesson, Maria held the pen for at least one set of photos before the end, and after the group-work experience she had a chance to write an individual essay about the five classes of animals that are vertebrates. In other words, there was enough instruction and redundancy in place that she, along with all the other children, had many opportunities to learn, and subsequently to shine as a knower. Daniel, too, had these
opportunities, but unlike what appeared to occur with the science teacher, he was not given the opportunity to hijack the learning of his classmates. On the contrary, he was learning from them.

I will not argue that richly structured, multilayered instruction like this always occurred in Ms. Melanie’s classroom, nor perhaps was it always desirable; but Ms. Melanie would work toward it in the same way she worked toward having her students improve their reading levels and sit quietly in assemblies. Among her explicit goals for instruction were to offer children multiple and equitable opportunities for talking and showing what they know, and to prevent English-speaking children from dominating the talk and learning even during Spanish time. One of her tools, although not the most effective, was her attempt to enforce a Spanish-only norm on the classroom. Others included rich instruction, high expectations for all students both academically and behaviorally, highly structured classroom management, and occasional direct intervention in interactions. Under her tutelage, at least on a good day, all of her students learned how to learn with others in a diverse community.

CONCLUSION

Whether they were with a teacher who was aware of the power of linguistic exchanges or not, these middle-class English-speaking students appeared to vie for the floor, to push for attention, and to assert their status as English speakers, or as middle-class children. At times, they dominated the discourse and drew the teacher’s attention away from other students; they made themselves and their needs difficult to ignore. They appeared to play a role in encouraging the use of more English both in and out of the classroom (see also McCollum, 1999; Potowski, 2004). Whether this was due to their status as English speakers or due to their class identities is impossible to disentangle within the context of this single-case study, but their impact was undeniable. Other studies, and my own classroom teaching experience, support the general increase of English use and status in TWI programs as children increase in grade level (Freeman, 2000; Potowski, 2004). Research also documents the fact that in general Spanish speakers learn more English than English speakers learn Spanish in these programs (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). It is difficult to determine which influences which: Do children use more English because they are more comfortable in English, or are they more comfortable in English because, due to the dominance of English in society and in their context, they have a tendency to use it more and to give it more importance? Either way, the presence of English speakers in the classroom tends to make more visible the symbolic dominance of English in general.
During English-medium instruction, largely because the teachers do not exhibit awareness of the conversational inequities or skill in managing diversity, this appears to negatively impact the opportunities for engagement with class material for their Spanish-dominant classmates. Unfortunately, this is no different from any other American school setting in which English learning children share the classroom with English speakers. To a great extent this dynamic may help to explain the tremendous underachievement of bilingual children in U.S. schools. During Spanish instruction, however, in large part because their teacher is aware of the imbalance and works to correct it, English-speaking children appear to be more likely to contribute positively to learning in the classroom than to detract.

It appears that if a teacher is aware and proactive in confronting English dominance head-on and teaching children to interact appropriately in diverse multilingual multicultural academic settings, this can help tip the balance toward more positive and less negative impacts. Teachers must be consciously aware of the role that power can play in classroom talk. Even as they work to develop the bilingual competencies of all their students, they must remember to scaffold their language appropriately throughout the day. During English instruction, this means never ignoring the needs of Spanish-speaking students and actively enforcing equitable linguistic exchanges. During Spanish instruction, this likewise means giving the English speakers the help they require without watering down instruction. It means finding ways to offer Spanish speakers the space and guidance to show their skills as learners and knowers in the classroom. These are not easy feats. But if teachers do not attempt them, bilingual classrooms that include English-dominant students may be at risk of teaching language-minority students that they are second-class citizens whose needs are subordinated to dominant-English speakers. If teachers can achieve them, these same students have the best chance to join their English-speaking peers to become learners and leaders and build a multilingual, multicultural future.

This study, being a single-case study, is not generalizable; that is not its intention. The particular dynamic created with these students and their teachers is unique, and I would undoubtedly have uncovered different dynamics had I been studying in a different setting. However, Ms. Melanie’s excellent teaching did appear to lead to significant changes in the opportunities for linguistic access for her language-minority students, and I believe we can learn from these changes. These findings have powerful implications for teacher preservice and in-service education, particularly for bilingual programs but really for all school programs in which linguistically diverse children come together. There is tremendous potential in helping teachers develop awareness of the impact of power on classroom language dynamics. Immigrant language-minority students
are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools and are impacting classrooms throughout the country. It is of utmost importance that our teachers develop the competencies to effectively teach bilingual children (Garcia, 2001).

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