

Effective Instruction and Two ESL Classrooms: A Micro-Ethnographical Research Study

Kathlyn Diaz-Spires
University of Arizona

Mia Carta¹ moved to Tucson from Central America with her husband and four children five years ago. As a political refugee, Mia and her husband were required by the U.S. government to attend four months of English as second language (ESL) instruction to prepare for employment. Unfortunately, Mia was unable to complete the ESL class because of scheduling conflicts. Mia's husband, Jose, completed the four month ESL class and found a job at a local fast food restaurant making minimum wage.

Three months later, Jose and Mia realized one income was not enough, so Mia took a job as a maid in a nearby hotel. Unable to speak English, Mia performed her duties by relying on her Spanish-speaking co-workers for instructions. Many months later, Mia inquired from one of her co-workers about English classes for non-native speakers. Her co-worker told her about free ESL classes sponsored by the Tucson Reading Program (TRP) in her neighborhood. Mia was excited about the opportunity to learn English; however, she felt reluctant to engage in class activities because of her limited educational experience from her home country. As required for enrollment, Mia took the "Basic English Skills Test" (BEST) and was assessed in the lower beginning level. In addition, it appeared that her native language literacy skills were also low because of her limited education.

After the initial assessment, Mia attended her first ESL class at Alexander Middle School and was surprised to discover that all of the adult students were Spanish-speakers. The ESL instructor, who did not speak Spanish, presented all the course materials in English. The class environment was warm and friendly, and the instructor asked students to share personal information as a warm-up activity. After this activity, the teacher wrote sentences on the whiteboard, asking each student to read out-loud. When the instructor pointed to Mia indicating her turn to read, she slowly pronounced each letter according to her limited knowledge of the Spanish alphabet. The instructor quickly corrected each error and asked Mia to repeat the correct answer using complete sentences. Mia's anxiety increased after each attempt to pronounce the words, and she became ashamed because she did not understand the course reading activity content.

At the completion of the semester, Mia took the required "BEST" test and failed after several attempts. Frustrated and discouraged, Mia's desire to learn Eng-

lish soon faded and her self-esteem dwindled. Convinced that she would never succeed, Mia dropped out of the program.

Introduction

This vignette describes a fictional story and a fictional character, Mia Carta, a Spanish-speaking immigrant living in Tucson. Although fiction, this representation illustrates the struggles of many Spanish-speaking adult immigrants who want to learn English and are unable to. Mia's story describes her motivation to learn English and struggles of learning English in a monolingual context. Additionally, this vignette explores how low proficient Spanish-speaking adults may need additional linguistic support in their native language in order to acquire a second language. Current literature has limited information about effective teaching methods for this population. There is much theoretical discussion on second language (L2) acquisition; however, L2 research does not sufficiently address the diverse needs of low-proficiency adult Spanish-speaking immigrants.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how monolingual instruction most commonly used in U. S. ESL education, is insufficient for the needs of diverse ESL learners. To correct this problem the combination of dual language, immersion and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) approaches should be incorporated into an effective ESL curriculum.

This paper will include a research study that identifies two ESL classes I analyzed this semester. One class was taught using dual language techniques and the other English only contexts. This micro-ethnographic research project examines the instructional methodology and adult learning contexts using three theoretical frameworks.

First, I will illustrate major literacy issues Spanish-speaking adult immigrants face in the United States. Second, I will discuss the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's ZPD research, dual language, and immersion programs. Also I will describe the setting and participants of the study concluding with a discussion and recommendations for teaching methods and suggestions for future research.

Illustration of the Problem

Becoming proficient in English is critical for Spanish-speaking adult immigrants living in the United States. Having English literacy skills enables adults to find better paying jobs, improve healthcare conditions and participate in civic and social activities. The 2005 U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the United States foreign-born population tripled from the 1970's to 2005 with an estimate of 35.8 million people speaking languages other than English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). With over half of the immigrant population Spanish-speaking, many of these adults have low level formal education and limited literacy skills in their native language. These limited English

Proficiency (LEP) adults make up twenty-two percent of the country's low-wage workers and forty-four percent of all workers with less than a high school education (Narasaki & Lee, 2007, p. 74).

Consequently, there is an increased demand for adult education programs that prepare immigrants for English acquisition skills. Government funding for these programs has decreased resulting in long waiting lists and overcrowded classrooms. A recent report from the "Adult Literacy Education in Immigrant Communities" states Phoenix the state's largest English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provider has a waiting list more

than one thousand people and up to eighteen months for English classes (Narasaki & Lee, 2007).

Locally, the Tucson provides over thirteen English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) learning center locations and one-on-one tutoring. ELAA, a part of the "ProLiteracy America" organization, supports basic literacy for English native speakers and non-native speakers of English (Narasaki & Lee, 2007).

Presently, adult literacy education programs have limited funding sources. Additionally, the majority of ESL volunteers who teach ESL classes are monolingual and have limited training or no training on how to teach diverse learners (Proliteracy Worldwide, 2006). Adult educational programs for second language learners will need additional financial support, trained staff on multiple teaching techniques, and socio-cultural approaches to promote adult learning through interactions.

Theoretical Framework

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky's ZPD approach to language learning through interaction is the key concept in socio-cultural theory. He claims that interaction not only enables language learning, but is the foundation of acquisition (Saville-Troike, M. 2006). According to Vygotsky's approach to language acquisition, learning begins with the simple act of mental activity that develops into a "higher order" which becomes more complex in cognitive functioning (Saville-Troike, 2006). In other words, an individual's current mental condition attains a higher mental capacity with assistance. This interpersonal interaction is accomplished when the expert or teacher collaborates with the learner and helps with performance. This mediation is called the ZPD (Saville-Troike, M. 2006).

ZPD occurs when the learner is assisted by a more knowledgeable peer or teacher. This collaborative interaction occurs through scaffolding, is a form of guidance the expert gives to the learner to perform a specific task (Saville-Troike, 2006). An example of ZPD through scaffolding described in Luis Moll's (1992) micro-ethnographic research study titled "The Social Construction of Lessons in Two Languages." His socio-cultural research describes ZPD in the context of children's behavior in the classrooms observed. The children in this study attended English and Spanish reading classes in a bilingual program south of San Diego. The study reveals that the children performed differently in the English class compared to the Spanish class (p.361). Moll claims that the children performed appropriate behaviors to complete tasks under the guidance and instruction of the teacher. Therefore, a child carries out this interaction in his or her own mind and performs the activity prescribed by the learning experience he or she had with the teacher (p.341). Moll's research focused on the teacher's way of organizing course materials to move students from lower to higher levels in reading (1992, p.343).

The results of Moll's study identify distinct differences of focus in instruction and teacher-student interaction in English and Spanish classrooms. Furthermore, the analysis provides an interpretive example of ZPD through the teacher influence on instructional input which dictates students' learning development and performance outcomes (Moll, 1992).

Researchers Gonzales and Arnot-Hopffer acknowledge ZPD interaction theory through outside negative influences that impact language development. Their research suggest another element of ZPD as it relates to outside influences. In this study, the children also

participate in a bilingual, Spanish/English program; however, they are negatively influenced by media and public discourse. Gonzales and Arnot-Hopffer claim that Arizona's Proposition 203 made a significant impact on learning language and classroom practice. From their analysis, the children in the study were brought into a volatile and contentious array of viewpoints due to the political climate (p.220). They argue that the children and teachers' relationships were negatively impacted by public opinions and guidelines that restricted growth and language development (pp. 238-239). The children in this study demonstrated a heightened awareness of language ideologies from the public that impeded upon their language identity as Spanish-speakers and discouraged further development of dual language competency (Gonzales & Arnot-Hopffer, 2003).

Scaffolding within the ZPD is one way to help learners in language development (Saville-Troike, 2006). Teachers that involve learners and create meaningful interaction activities foster language acquisition (Harklau, 1994). However, lack of comprehensive input within ZPD can produce opposite results. Linda Harklau's research study of ESL versus mainstream classes compares ESL high school students and the instructional methods of two environments, their behaviors and language proficiency of these students (Harklau, 1994). Harklau discusses the interactional influence between an ESL and mainstream classes (p. 260). The ESL instructor creates opportunities for students to interact participating in classroom activities, but the mainstream instructors construct interaction differently (p.261).

According to Harklau, the ESL classroom provided learner-centered linguistic activities that met the needs of the language minority students. The ESL instructor provided

explicit feedback that was beneficial to these learners. The teacher corrected the student when they made grammatical errors, used incorrect use of articles, prepositions, verb tenses and misspelled words (Harklau, 1994). Additionally, this approach provided instructional worksheets and tests that helped students form sentences, preparing them for self expression in their writing (Harklau, 1994).

In contrast, most mainstream classes did not provide explicit feedback on grammar, with the exception of English classes. However, the constructive feedback given to students focused more on the presumed patterns of errors non-native speaker frequently made (Harklau, 1994). Harklau argues that when the mainstream teachers provided correction on linguistic structures, no explanation was given and the written notes on the student's paper did not tell ESL students what specific areas needed improvement (1994, p.251).

Harklau's analysis suggests that ESL learners need essential forms of language instruction which may foster a higher order of second language competency. Her results imply that extended interaction opportunities with explicit feedback are vital components in second language acquisition (p.260). Furthermore, the study reveals that mainstream curriculum does not always prepare language minority students in the development of second language proficiency necessary to succeed in academic environments (p. 267). According to Harklau, mainstream instruction must respond to these learners with more collaborative strategies that strengthen the understanding of diverse methods of learning (1994, p.267).

Immersion Instruction

Integrated approaches to second language acquisition represent various interpre-

tations of what methods are most effective for second language proficiency. Bilingual or dual language programs may consist of combined language instruction: one in the native language and the other in the target language (McGroarty, 2001). More familiar immersion programs modeled in Canada expose the learners to the target language sequentially in their academic development. Other immersion environments, such as those described in Collier and Thomas' study in the eastern United States, suggest that second language learners who are taught in an English-only context without the aid of explicit instruction in their native language struggled with acquisition. These two studies illustrate children's language development in a monolingual context.

According to Swain's (1998) research of a French immersion program located in Canada, many of the students began learning in a French-only context up until the third grade (p.65). Between the third and eighth grades, these students received some instruction in English, their native language. The student participants in this study were eighth graders who took several academic subjects in French (Swain, 1998). The overall second language learning was communicative and experiential in a content-based format. Over two decades of French immersion research suggest that these immersion students were able to comprehend, listen and read at proficient levels; however, they did so in substandard composition of words and grammar (1998, pp.79-80).

The results of the study identify "gaps" in the students' interlanguage production (Swain, 1998). Interlanguage in this context describes the output of what the students want to say and their actual language ability (Swain, 1998). Swain observed that 79% of the student's output was enhanced with collaboration and peer

feedback. The students tested their linguistic skills, focusing on vocabulary, morphology, syntactic structures and co-constructed knowledge (Swain, 1998). He suggests that the students' collaborative work promoted output and improved aspects of the target language proficiency (Swain, 1998). However, collaboration in and of itself, is not a sufficient method because students who gave the incorrect responses also collaborated for answers. These results suggest that accurate pedagogical contexts and correct modeling may enhance and promote learning the target language (Swain, 1998).

In contrast to Canada's immersion program with some native language support, Collier and Thomas' research illustrates second language learners of English in a monolingual context (p.27). The majority of these participants were more diverse than the Canadian students representing seventy-five different first language backgrounds. Categorized as "advantaged" immigrants because of their social status in their home countries, these students were classified as at or above grade level in native language, yet they needed ESL classes that were at beginning levels (p.28). These students had a maximum of three years of ESL support and spent the remaining instruction in mainstream classrooms.

Collier and Thomas' research results claim that non-native speakers (NNS) graduates who have been in the U. S. four to seven years performed noticeably lower than NNS arrival at eight to eleven years of age. The lower ranked students did not reach the 50th percentile during the course of the research study and the researchers projected that these students would take seven to ten years to reach standardized levels (p.28). Additionally, Collier and Thomas note that NNS students

who received a minimum of two years of first language instruction in their own countries measurably excelled over ELL students who received little to no first language education (p.34).

Collier and Thomas' contrastive analysis reveal an additional variable influencing students' performance. Cognitive complexity and increased increments of knowledge requirements at each grade level demanded additional learning from secondary ESL students (p.34). According to their research, other studies suggest immigrant students who study English at the ages of eight to twelve years are faster at acquiring English at proficient levels. Collier and Thomas argue that ESL students who receive three to four years of formal education in their first language most often reach the 50th percentile on tests (1989, pp. 28-34).

Dual language Instruction

Adult educational programs for ESL that support bi-literacy development create learner-centered environments (Narasaki & Lee, 2007). A large scale research study conducted by Larry Condelli and Heide Spruck Wrigley, titled *What Works*, compiled data from thirty-eight ESL classes in seven states offering effective teaching strategies that help ESL adults with English literacy and verbal skills. The study proposes that instructional methods that implement a variety of modalities and promote peer collaboration in the classroom betrayed faster growth in English skills. Furthermore, the study claims the teachers that use the learner's native language to clarify and explain lessons and activities displayed improvements and growth in reading and comprehension (Narasaki & Lee, 2007). This study claims that limited use of a native language in the context of ESL classrooms reduces learner confusion and creates opportunities for critical thinking skills

(Narasaki & Lee, 2007).

Collier and Thomas' imply from their study and other research suggesting that successful long term academic performance of ESL children occur in school programs that focus on the continuation of "cognitive-academic" development in both first and second languages (p.35). They argue that the bilingual maintenance and two-way bilingual immersion programs should include strong "cognitive-academic" learning approaches which develop NNS students with no loss of time in comprehension in course content at secondary levels (p.35). These researchers claim that ESL students retain or excel in grade level standardized tests over ESL students taught in monolingual learning environments (1989, p.35).

Krashen (1984) as cited by Snow (2001), states that "second language acquisition occurs when the learner receives comprehensible input, not when the learner is memorizing vocabulary or completing grammar exercises; the focus is on the subject matter and not on the form or on what is being said rather than how" (Snow, 2001). Snow's theoretic framework for dual language instruction comes from the context of content-based instruction as the medium to language acquisition (Snow, 2001). She notes that support of instruction develops literacy in the first language while enhancing understanding of the target language. Strategies that effectively motivate second language learning through L1 literacy development provide opportunities for sequentially progress in both languages (Snow, 2001).

Snow compares dual language instruction to content-based models that promote themes in presenting content in order to expose learners to coherent and meaningful education (Snow, 2001). She argues that teaching language through thematic or content focus ap-

proaches is not so much a method as a reorientation to instruction that meets the students' needs (Snow, 2001).

Overall, the theoretical literature highlights connections between teacher-student interactions, and second language instructional methodology. These theories can aid the curriculum design for teaching ESL adult students. In the rest of the paper, I am going to examine two classes that use these theories in the design and implementation of instruction to see if this kind of instruction is theoretically more appropriate for adult ESL learners. The discussion will highlight how monolingual instruction most commonly used in U. S. ESL education, is insufficient for the needs of diverse ESL learners. To correct this problem the combination of dual language, immersion and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) approaches should be incorporated into an effective ESL curriculum.

Research Procedures

The Setting:

This pilot study took place in two adult ESL classrooms located in southern Arizona. The classrooms were taught by volunteer English Language Adult Acquisition (ELAA) tutors certified by the state of Arizona through Tucson's Reading Program (TRP) (a pseudonym). The program offers assistance with English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA, formerly ESOL), Basic Literacy Skills (ABE), Pre-GED (preparation for the high school equivalency test), and citizenship. The ELAA tutors receive eighteen hours of training which follows the guidelines of the Arizona Adult Education ESOL Standards. TRP is an affiliate of ProLiteracy America, the largest organization of adult literacy programs globally, and receives funding from the state (ProLit-

eracy Worldwide, 2006). Their base mission is to support adult learners and aid them with reading and writing skills that will better their lives both economically and socially.

Two classrooms were involved in the study: one English-only located at the Clark School (a pseudonym) site and Richards School (a pseudonym) dual language, English-Spanish instruction. Clark school conducts two 2-hour weekly morning classes, and Richards offers classes in the evening for the same duration.

Participants of the Study

Most volunteers at both schools are native English speakers and vary in their social economic backgrounds. The students that attend ESL classes are adult immigrants from several countries; however, the majority are Spanish-speakers from Latin America.

The participants of the study at Clark school are all female: both the instructors and the students. At Richards, the instructors are two females, with the majority of the students female and only two males. At both locations, the number of students varied from ten to fourteen students. These students were evaluated into beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of English proficiency.

The adult learners in both classrooms were taught using the communicative approach to second language teaching. The instructors used thematic context to guide the learning and discussions in the class. Similar emphasis on language instruction was given in each class with the distinction of one class taught in English only and the other in English-Spanish.

The teachers were European American native English speakers, and the students were of predominately Mexican and other Latino heritage.

Data collection and analysis

The central focus of this research was to compare and contrast the interactions among the students, the teachers and the instructional methods used. I observed each classroom, taking field notes for twelve hours, and spent four additional hours interviewing students and teachers. Prior to the audio-recorded interviews, I provided written questionnaires in Spanish and English for the participants. After each recorded session, I summarized the responses. Field notes and summaries were analyzed for elements that showed patterns and themes. Responses from the interview summaries were categorized, re-examined and prioritized. After prioritizing these themes, I identified common trends and threads that directed the focus of the research.

In order to ensure accuracy of the interviews in Spanish, I requested assistance from a colleague who is a native Spanish-speaker to assist in translation. Findings were then organized into key topics for the discussion section of this paper.

Discussion/Conclusion and Recommendations

Common Themes

The teacher and students interviews from both Clark and Richard schools had many common themes. Students and teachers valued promoting positive relationships and community in the classroom. Additionally, both groups stressed the importance of English lessons being applicable to real life situations. For example, the majority of the students want to learn English in order to help children with homework, communicate with their children's teachers, and converse with medical staff at the hospital. Other responses included learning English for better job opportunities, improv-

ing health care conditions and participating in community activities. The student participants from Clark and Richards schools agreed that learning English is critical for Spanish-speaking adult immigrants living in the United States and that bilingual instruction in learning English is beneficial.

The instructors valued teaching English in real life contexts and organized learning activities to meet student's needs. At the beginning of the semester both the Richards and Clark instructors were required by TRP, to administer the states "BEST" standards test to all students. This test assessed the students' English proficiency and categorized them into beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. After this initial assessment the teachers asked students individually about their goals for taking English and what topics interested them. Results from both assessments were integrated into main themes and designed for classroom activities. In both classrooms the lessons included conversational exercises on how to share personal information, how to read newspaper ads, and how to make a grocery list.

The instructors described their roles as ELAA volunteers as being very different from ESL instructors at Pima Community College (PCC). ESL teachers at PCC teach English in formal academic settings with the same students attending class regularly and using structured curriculum. Students from Clark and Richards attended irregularly and many are low proficiency in their native language. One of the instructors described an experience of a student not knowing how to write the Spanish word for "near." The student was told in Spanish the definition of "near" and the student wrote down the word incorrectly. Teacher participants from Clark and Richards expressed how difficult it is to teach students from many

levels and if they had one curriculum or textbook that addressed this variation, it would be very useful. These teachers agreed that much of their planning time is spent on copying lessons from multiple sources and it would be easier if one all-encompassing workbook or textbook was available for their students. Although preparing lessons is challenging, these volunteers were very motivated to continue teaching ESL adults and wanted to help them grow in many areas of their lives.

Contrastive Trends

Clark School teachers taught all women students who had children attending public school while they learned English. The classroom table and chairs were set up in a U-shape format with a table for instructors at the front of the room. Students generally arrived on time and had notebooks and pencils ready at the beginning of class. The students varied in English proficiency from lower to higher levels of fluency. Lessons were taught in English and the students talked among themselves in Spanish. When asked to respond to oral activities, the most fluent English speakers answered the questions while others listened and wrote down the words in their notebooks.

Richards School teachers taught male and female students. The tables were scattered around the room with one table up front for the instructor. Also, there were students' children sitting at one table in the back of the classroom. In addition, the teacher was often interrupted by several students arriving late. The instructor utilized her bilingual skills during the entire class time by first giving instructions in English and then translating key words into Spanish. Many of the students engaged in classroom discussions used both their English and Spanish skills. Those who appeared

more fluent in English assisted less proficient students with oral pronunciation and written activities.

Limitations

This qualitative micro-ethnographical study examines two ESL classrooms taught by ELAA volunteer instructors. I collected a total of sixteen hours of data using field notes and audio-taped interviews from the students and their instructors. However, what limits this study is lack of additional data from all students which would have provided more in-depth analysis to account for other variables. The study was limited to a total of five female interviewees that volunteered to participate. Additionally, the data was retrieved from more highly proficient English speakers, yet over half of the student population was of low English proficiency.

In order to adequately represent the voices of this population, more interviews over a longer period of time would have increased the validity of the study. A more descriptive ethnographic report over a longer period of time could have adequately represented significant behaviors and motivations necessary for effective instruction of ESL Spanish-speaking adult immigrants.

Recommendations

This research examined two ESL classrooms with different instructional approaches to English teaching. By comparing and contrasting the two ESL learning environments through observations and interviews, patterns and common trends emerged. In general, I observed instructors and students collaborated to develop a thematic focus in the English lessons such as how to read over-the-counter medicines or how to compare apartment rental

prices in the newspaper. With the aid of the “BEST” English placement test and personal informal assessments, the ELAA instructors were able to identify the goals and needs of their students.

In addition to the “BEST” and informal assessments, a Spanish literacy model should be implemented such as Gonzalez and Arnot-Hopffer’s study of a dual language program in southern Arizona (2003). Their research summarizes a dual language strategy that met the linguistic challenges of Spanish-speaking children learning English as a second language. Teachers from this elementary school created a school-wide literacy initiative called “Exito Bilingüe” (p.219). According to Gonzalez and Arnot-Hopffer, the teachers developed an interactive Spanish literacy program to better meet the needs of all Spanish-speaking students at all levels of Spanish (p.219). These researchers propose that “Exito Bilingüe’s” curriculum integrates Vygotsky’s socio-cultural ZPD theory of language acquisition by providing interaction with the teachers or experts and fostering dual language competency in support of first and second language linguistic development (2003, p.219). Spanish literacy curriculum is also needed for many adult students at Clark and Richards schools. This added support would strengthen native linguistic skills and assist with second language transfer.

McGroarty’s example in the literature defines dual language instruction as a very useful method that supports the students’ first as well as second language abilities (McGroarty, 2001). She states that linguistic development does not come through simple exposure to a second language and is not enough for language acquisition. Therefore, she claims that well organized and attentive sequencing of language input is vital to support proficiency in

each language (McGroarty, 2001). Integrated approaches to language development such as dual language instruction provide linguistic support for low proficient language learners.

In contrast, I observed another pattern that involved instructional differences between Clark and Richards schools. As previously mentioned, dual language instruction at Richards seemed to support low proficient language learners over Clark’s English only contexts. However, dual language approaches alone may not respond to the needs of intermediate to advanced language learners. Lessons should have elements of dual language for one portion of the class, and have comprehensive English immersion practice in the other section of class.

Snow’s (2001) study on immersion education suggests that the Canadian model of language immersion has demonstrated scholastic improvements for children enrolled in this program (p. 305). She describes the total immersion model, where the majority of students received content courses in their second language. She also adds that children in total immersion programs tend to perform at above grade levels and at the completion of their elementary education they become competent bilinguals (Snow, 2001). So, this type of model is needed to promote second language development for Spanish-speaking adult immigrants in the ESL classroom.

Snow further emphasizes that language learners need to expand opportunities to practice their second language skills in order to achieve communicative competence (p. 304). In other words, ESL learners that are exposed to relevant meaningful context are likely to develop second language fluency.

In the case of the participants in my study, immersion approaches in incremental

levels of language development should be implemented. Immersion methods will provide more complex exposure for conversational and comprehension activities that will ultimately increase the students’ English language competency.

Furthermore, there is supported evidence from the literature that suggests that integrated approaches that include immersion, dual language and meaningful interaction with instructors would better respond to diverse ESL adult learners. Grouping adult students into similar skill levels for certain language activities in the classroom should increase their development of language acquisition. In addition, students that are low to intermediate levels would benefit from dual language instruction. The combination of these three theoretical approaches in the ESL classroom will promote more meaningful context for Spanish-speaking adult immigrants to learn and develop English proficiency.

More research is needed to fully respond to the needs of adult Spanish-speaking immigrants in the ESL classroom, research that identifies strengths and weaknesses of current programs such as those mentioned in this study, may foster improvements in teaching strategies that better respond to diverse learners acquiring a second language.

Endnotes

1 Mia is a fictional character and so her story too.

References:

- Collier, V & Thomas, W. (1989). How quickly can immigrants become proficient in school English? *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 5, 26-39.
- Gonzalez, N. & Arnot-Hopffer, E. (2003). Voices of the children: Language and literacy ideologies in a dual language immersion program. In S. Wortham

- & B. Rymes (Eds.), *Linguistic Anthropology of education* (pp. 213-242). Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Harklau, L. (1994). ESL Versus Mainstream Classes: Contrasting L2 Learning Environment. *Tesol Quarterly*, 28(2), 241-269.
- McGroarty, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Moll, L. et al. (1992). Making contexts: The social construction of lessons in two languages. In C. Saravia-Shore & B. Arivizu (Eds.), *Cross-cultural literacy: Ethnographies of communication in multiethnic classrooms* (pp. 339-366). NY: Garland.
- Narasaki, K., & Lee, I. (2007). Adult Literacy Education In Immigrant Communities: Identifying Policy and Program Priorities for Helping Newcomers Learn English. The Asian American Justice Center. Retrieved April 3, 2007, from www.advancingequality.org.
- ProLiteracy Worldwide. (2006). *The State of Adult Literacy 2006*. Retrieved April 14, 2007.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Snow, M. A. (2001). Content-Based and Immersion Models for Second and Foreign Language Teaching. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 64- 82). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2005). *2005 American Community Survey: Selected Social Characteristics: United States*.