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Two dual language preschool teachers' critical consciousness of their roles as language policy makers

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how two dual language preschool teachers demonstrated critical consciousness in their dual language education (DLE) classroom in Arizona. DLE has historically been grounded in equity for language minoritized students and promises to support students' bilingualism, biliteracy, sociocultural competence, and academic achievement. However, inequities within DLE have been a social justice concern hindering DLE's goals. Arguing the role of teachers' critical consciousness in addressing inequities in DLE, we used Spolky's language policy theory to understand teachers' language policies in their classroom. In this ethnographic study, data was collected through interviews, participant observation, and recording classroom instruction. Utilizing the constant-comparative method, we identified two themes—critical reflection and action—exhibiting the teachers' critical consciousness as language policymakers in their classrooms. The teachers reflected on the DLE's value for students and the power hierarchies among English and Spanish and the speakers of those languages. Their actions were toward promoting bilingualism, challenging English hegemony, and creating an inclusive and social justice-oriented learning community. Our study contributes to preschool DLE literature by documenting the teachers' challenges regarding how larger oppressive beliefs related to language and race influenced students' language use and the teachers' actions to dismantle such challenges.

Introduction

Dual language education¹ (DLE) promises to foster students' bilingualism and biliteracy, sociocultural competence, and academic achievement. Researchers have also documented the sociocultural, economic, and cognitive benefits evident in the development of DLE programs in the US (e.g., Flores & García, 2017). However, inequities exist within DLE programs, such as the historical dominance of English and deficit construction of race and ethnicity, hindering language minoritized students' opportunities to learn and reach DLE goals (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). Concurring with Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, and Heiman (2019), we argue that fostering the critical consciousness of teachers helps to address inequities in DLE and society at large. Critical consciousness is particularly fundamental for teachers, who act as local policymakers in their classrooms (McCarty, 2011), making daily decisions about language practices and shaping students' language ideologies and practices.

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Children construct multiple social identities and the associated power dynamics in the early years and understand who is (not) valued in a context (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). They can develop their beliefs and feelings about their home languages and English and their power relations in preschool years (Fillmore, 2000). Thus, in this study, we focus on two preschool teachers' critical consciousness as local policymakers. We investigate those teachers' reflections on the struggles in their DLE preschool classroom related to power imbalances based on race and language differences and English hegemony, and how they act to change these realities. Drawing on this, the following research questions guided us, "How do preschool teachers demonstrate critical consciousness in their DLE classroom?"

Inequities in DLE

Researchers argue that DLE programs have moved away from their original purposes, which were grounded in social justice to improve educational opportunities for immigrant or linguistically marginalized communities (Flores, 2016). Cervantes-Soon et al.'s (2017) comprehensive literature review discussed the inequities apparent in DLE in three areas: "(1) the larger socio-political context, including economic and ideological forces, state and school policies, and community participation; (2) TWI² (two-way-immersion) teachers' orientations, preparation, and backgrounds; and (3) TWI classroom contexts, including pedagogy, language trends, and students' identities and relations" (p. 404).

The intersection of race, class and power with neoliberal discourses shape the larger sociopolitical context of DLE, creating inequities among students (e.g., Bernstein, Katznelson, Amezcua, Mohamed, & Alvarado, 2020; Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Flores & García, 2017). Commodifying language to attain economic benefit has led to White-middle class English-speaking families' increased interest in DLE for their children (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Flores & García, 2017; Palmer et al., 2019), leading to the gentrification of DLE (Valdez, Freire, & Delevan, 2016). Thus, the original equity-oriented intentions of DLE to support language minoritized students' bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism, academic outcomes, and cultural pride (Flores & García, 2017; Valdés, 2018) are in jeopardy. Neoliberal discourses frame DLE as *enrichment* for White-middle class English-speaking families' *profit* (e.g., Duchêne & Heller, 2013; Henderson, 2019) and is perpetuated in media (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2020). This shift from *pride* to *profit* or from *equity/social justice* to *instrumentalism/neoliberalism* discourses of DLE restrict language minoritized students' access to DLE and generate exclusionary questioning of *who belongs in DLE* (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2020; Duchêne & Heller, 2013; Flores & García, 2017; Henderson, 2019). Moreover, monolingual accountability systems, generated by the neoliberal motives in education, impede the achievement of bilingualism and biliteracy goals (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017).

Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) also identified DLE inequities related to "teachers' orientations, preparation, and backgrounds" (p. 404). Bilingual teacher shortage, teacher misguided perceptions of bilingualism, or ill-prepared teachers are several factors contributing to inequities in DLE. DLE classrooms are mostly led by monolingual English-speaking teachers, who may lack understanding of students' culture, leading to the domination of English, restricting students from using their full-linguistic repertoire (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017) and relying on Spanish-English bilingual paraprofessionals to lead Spanish instruction (Bernstein et al., 2018). Bernstein et al. (2018) found such pairing of teachers and paraprofessionals generated several issues such as power imbalance between languages and paraprofessionals' questioning of their Spanish proficiency for teaching.

Lastly, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) discussed inequities in DLE "classroom contexts, including pedagogy, language trends, and students' identities and relations" (p. 404). In particular, they described a) *the hegemony of English* as evident in various ways (e.g., focusing on English more than the minority language), b) the existence of a *strict language separation policy* leading to *language purism* and *monoglossic views of bilingualism* (p. 413), c) the unintended consequences

of *language brokering*, such as overburdening language brokers and supporting asymmetrical power relations, and d) the *integration of diverse students* as challenging which leads to inequities among students.

DLE preschool literature review

We examined peer-reviewed studies conducted in DLE preschool settings to understand teachers' and young students' language ideologies and practices. Studies on teachers' and students' language practices focused on dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging to challenge strict language separation practices in DLE. Students' translanguaging practices were examined within sociodramatic play activities, providing a space for them to use their cultural and linguistic repertoires (Arreguín-Anderson, Salinas-Gonzalez, & Alanis, 2018; Bengochea, Sembiente, & Gort, 2018). Within play, students enacted translanguaging, created opportunities for problem solving and creativity, to regulate other students' actions (Arreguín-Anderson et al., 2018; Bengochea et al., 2018). Students also engaged in flexible translanguaging practices for social and communicative purposes, specifically to address their peers' language choices, also contributing to their identity construction (e.g., bilingual children) (Alamillo, Yun, & Bennett, 2017; Bengochea et al., 2018). Translanguaging provided students opportunities to discuss critical and sensitive topics, such as immigration, empowered students' voices, and led teachers to reconceptualize students' identities as competent bilinguals (Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Palmer, Mateus, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014).

Teachers also enacted translanguaging through code-switching, bilingual recasting, and translation to support students' learning and manage students' behavior and activities (Gort & Pontier, 2013; Palmer et al., 2014; Pontier & Gort, 2016). Teachers used translanguaging practices regardless of DLE setting structure – one teacher/one language or language-by-the-time-of-day. For instance, in one language/one teacher classrooms, teachers used “tandem talk” which refers to maintaining the use of monolingual speech of the target language as a collaborative bilingual practice for a variety of goals, such as to contextualize information, to build connections between home and school activities, to support biliteracy and bilingualism (Gort & Pontier, 2013; Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Pontier & Gort, 2016). Their translanguaging practices included code-switching, language brokering, bilingual recasting, translation, modeling the bilingual practice, and paying attention to children's metalinguistic knowledge and interests (e.g., Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Pontier & Gort, 2016).

Focused on language ideologies, Pimentel (2011) revealed how the broader social construction of race and language ideologies, specifically related to Latinx, Spanish-speaking students' academic abilities, leaked into different DLE programs. Pimentel documented a bilingual student's educational trajectory from being positioned as *at-risk* in a preschool remedial DLE program where Spanish was deemed as a deficiency, to being perceived as *gifted*, who could be a language model to White English-speaking students, in the enrichment-oriented DLE kindergarten program where Spanish was seen as a commodity. On the other hand, at the classroom level, teachers articulated and embodied language ideologies did not align (Zuniga, Henderson, & Palmer, 2018; Bernstein, 2018). For instance, Zuniga et al. (2018) revealed, although teachers expressed a “language as purism” ideology, they allowed “non-standard” language practices in their enactment of classroom language policies. Similarly, Bernstein et al. (2018) showed that teachers could not enact their pro-multilingual ideologies due to having practical concerns, such as their own perceived Spanish language proficiency and district priorities.

DLE programs vary across the nation based on state regulations and contextual factors (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). Due to this variability, there are limited number of studies conducted in DLE preschool programs. Most of the studies focused on children's language practices and teachers' language ideologies and use. We did not locate any studies examining teachers' critical consciousness about equity challenges at the DLE preschool level. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap through an ethnographic method, utilizing the language policy and the critical consciousness framework.

Theoretical frameworks

Language policy

We used Spolsky's (2004) language policy theory with a sociocultural lens (Rogoff, 2003), to understand the relationship between teachers' language policies within their sociocultural and historical context. Sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 2003) examines the practices and activities of teachers within cultural-historical spaces (e.g., classrooms) where teachers enact, interpret, create, or use language policies. Spolsky's (2004) language policy theory consists of three interrelated components "a) *language practices* (e.g., student learning how and when to speak), b) *language beliefs or ideologies*, c) *efforts to modify or influence* that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management" (p. 5) leading "to benefits for some and loss of privilege, status, and rights for others" (Wiley & Lukes, 1996, p. 104). Language policies exist as both *de jure* as mandated laws, revealing power relations through status planning and *de facto* "where it has not been made explicit or established by authority" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 8). Language policy is "processual, dynamic, and in motion" (McCarty, 2011, p. 2) occurring at multiple and intersecting layers of contexts – like an onion – always in relation with power and interpreted and enacted anew by social actors (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 199). It means that there are multiple policymakers – teachers, families, and students – negotiating how languages should be used in a social context (Spolsky, 2004).

Language ideologies are a speech community's shared beliefs about appropriate use and forms of language determining its value and prestige (Spolsky, 2004), embedded within cultural practices (Rogoff, 2003; Woolard, 1998). Kroskrity (2004) defines language ideologies as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (p. 498) and they "represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" (p. 501). Decisions about the forms of certain linguistic varieties are socially constructed and connected to economic and political interests, which engender and perpetuate injustices faced by some linguistic communities. Language ideologies also take part in "the creation and representation of various social and cultural identities" (Kroskrity, 2009, p. 501), are not neutral, highly tied to power, identity, and "the very notions of the person and social group" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3; McCarty, 2011).

Critical consciousness

To respond to the inequities within DLE and larger systems, Palmer et al. (2019) proposed a fourth goal of DLE – critical consciousness – as a foundation to support the other three goals – "academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and sociocultural competence" (p. 1). Critical consciousness is one's ability to read the world (Freire, 1970), potentially leading to praxis – "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, p. 51). Critical consciousness is one's awareness and reflections of his or her oppressive, dehumanizing realities, and an individual's intentional actions to transform such conditions (Freire, 1970; Jemal, 2017). Critical reflection requires an examination of "the relationships between personal contexts and the wider social forces of structural oppression (e.g., social, economic and political environments) that restrict access to opportunity and resources, and thus, sustain inequity and perpetuate injustice that limit[s] well-being and human agency" (Jemal, 2017, p. 6). Action refers to both intentional individual (e.g., sharing advice) and collective (e.g., protesting) engagement toward transforming oppressive realities (Freire, 1970, Jemal, 2017). Critical reflection and action are cyclical – without action, reflection is limited to verbalism; without reflection, the action is limited to activism (Freire, 1970).

Palmer et al. (2019) explained that through critical consciousness, individuals "reflectively discern the differences in power and privilege rooted in social relationships that structure inequalities and shape the material conditions of our lives" and recognize their "role in these dynamics" (p. 3). In DLE, critical consciousness allows questioning "the discourses, macro-level inequities, and power relations that shape TWI [two-way immersion] practice, pedagogy, and policies (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017, p. 419). Babino and Stewart (2018), for instance, conceptualized critical consciousness as

DLE teachers' awareness of the tensions resulting from unequal power dynamics between the contradictions of DLE's goals and English hegemony, high-stake testing, and strict language separation policy, and their respective actions. Freire (2020) employed sociopolitical consciousness for transformational DLE, in which students develop skills to "recognize, understand and critique current inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476) within schools and society. Freire argued teachers should incorporate transformative and social action elements into their lesson plans. For example, in his study, a teacher read a book – *Hablemos del Racismo* (Let's Talk About Racism), written by Angela Grunsell, – to have a dialogue about racism with the students and later guided students to have actions against discrimination. Similarly, the fifth-grade teacher in Heiman's (2021) study aimed to raise students' critical consciousness by discussing the gentrification process impacting their communities.

Palmer et al. (2019) proposed that critical consciousness can be enacted through continuously *interrogating power* (e.g., English hegemony), *historicizing schools* (e.g., deconstructing dominant voices in narrating histories), *critical listening* (e.g., being a coconspirator), and *engaging with discomfort* (e.g., discomfort during a dialogue about difficult topics) through engaging in humanizing pedagogies for socially just DLE. We argue that critical consciousness can shape the way policies are constructed at multiple levels of the system, and inclusivity and social justice-oriented DLE spaces can be ensured as teachers become critically conscious language policymakers in their classrooms. Using language policy through a sociocultural lens, we examined how preschool teachers demonstrated critical consciousness in their DLE classrooms and how critical consciousness manifested itself in classroom practices.

Method

Setting: Arizona

In 2000, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, requiring public schools to teach the academic content in English only to English learners³ (EL). Due to this policy, ELs were placed in Structured English Immersion (SEI) classrooms and received four hours of SEI instruction daily. Students remained in SEI classrooms until they proved their English proficiency on the state language assessment, limiting access to K-12 DLE. DLE was only possible through one of several written parental waiver options, such as if children demonstrated knowledge of English, were ten years and older, or had a special individual need. This study was conducted during the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters. Following the data collection period, the state revised SEI models to identify DLE programs as a part of SEI, making them more accessible for ELs starting in the Fall of 2020 (Arizona Department of Education, 2020). While these language policies indirectly impacted preschool, they may have influenced families' and teachers' language policies and the selection of language program options.

Setting: The district, school, and the classroom

This ethnographic study took place in an urban public, elementary school district serving approximately 3000 culturally, linguistically, ability diverse students, representing over 40 countries and 30 languages. The student population was reported as Hispanic (67%), Black (11%), White (10%), Native American (8%), and Asian (2%). Free/reduced lunch ranged from 85% to 92%, and approximately 11% of the district's student population was identified as "English Learners." The district, a beacon for DLE, has offered Spanish-English DLE programming for more than 20 years and expanded DLE to pre-schools to better support students through the goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism as well as school readiness in kindergarten and beyond. Persisting through historical moments of resistance toward multilingualism in the state context through restrictive language policies, expanding DLE to preschool was an explicit district vision.

The school served more than 600 diverse students, 92% of whom were eligible for free/reduced lunch. The school had a DLE preschool classroom and a “developmental preschool” classroom that served students with disabilities. The DLE preschool program had been implemented for two years before the study with the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy in English and Spanish, academic achievement, and fostering positive cross-cultural understanding and relationships. Low-income families were able to enroll their children in the DLE preschool classroom for free, and students from diverse language backgrounds other than Spanish and English were also accepted to the DLE preschool. The school planned to open a DLE kindergarten classroom for the upcoming year to increase access and the continuation of DLE.

The classroom followed a 50/50 Spanish-English DLE model by alternating the language of the day: Mondays and Thursdays were Spanish days, Tuesday and Fridays were English days, and Wednesdays rotated the language of instruction each week. An English monolingual lead teacher was paired with a Spanish-English bilingual teacher assistant who led instruction on Spanish days.

Researcher positionality

Being cognizant of researchers’ positionalities influencing the research process is crucial (Banks, 2005). Thus, we, as coauthors, constantly reflected on our multiple identities, informing our meaning-making process of the data. The first author is a primarily Turkish-speaking nondisabled ciswoman, speaks English as a second language, and has been living in the US for ten years. Her positionality, specifically living in a context different from her cultural background, speaking English as a second language, and facing immigration challenges, allowed her to better understand the participants’ histories regarding the psychological and material consequences of dealing with anti-immigrant and restrictive language policies and practices daily. She knew the participants for two years before this study as they were part of a larger professional development (PD) project aimed to integrate drama strategies into DLE literacy settings. Having shared experiences with the participants (e.g., immigration) and her familiarity with the program helped to build rapport, which allowed them to share their stories openly.

The second author is a Latinx, Spanish-English bilingual, nondisabled, ciswoman born and raised in the US, a child of an immigrant mother and ancestors. She was a bilingual teacher in Arizona for over 16 years, which made her aware of the district’s history and DLE implementation over the years. She did not know the participants, personally, but related to the families and participants in multiple ways (e.g., Spanish spoken as a first language). She did not participate in data collection process but translated and analyzed this study’s data with the first author.

Participants

One English lead teacher, Brooke, and one teacher assistant, Spanish lead teacher, Araceli, and their 20 preschool students, participated in this study. Brooke, a White woman in her twenties, had been teaching for about four years, held a bachelor’s in elementary education and endorsements in SEI and middle school science, and had been in a master’s program in Early Childhood Education without any formal training in DLE. As an English speaker, she took a Spanish class in high school and positioned herself as a learner of Spanish in her DLE preschool class while interacting with the families, children, and Araceli. Brooke felt that she had been learning how to support DLE learners with and without disabilities on the job, by drawing from SEI strategies – picture cards or shorter phrases.

Araceli, the Spanish lead teacher, in her late fifties, described herself as a Latina immigrant from Mexico, wife of a White American man, and a mother. As a native Spanish speaker, after a year of living in the US, she had gone to *Chicanos Por La Causa* to learn English for six months and met her husband, a monolingual English speaker, who influenced her English proficiency. She held a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Mexico and started teaching as a teacher assistant in the “developmental preschool” of this school, where she worked with students with disabilities. Although

she did not have any formal teacher training, she explained her excitement and efforts for learning teaching strategies from the current PD program, from Brooke, and the school's training. Considering herself as a learner of teaching, being the Spanish instructor, leading half of the week, was a new experience for her.

Twenty culturally-, linguistically-, and ability-diverse four-and-five-year-old students participated with parental consent. Five students were female, and fifteen were male. Their race and ethnicities were reported, except for three students, as White ($n = 1$), Hispanic or Latino ($n = 12$), and Asian ($n = 4$). Languages spoken by the students were English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, and Nepali, with varying proficiencies. One student with autism and one student with developmental delays in speech and physical domains were receiving special education services. The information on student demographics was collected in the Fall of 2018.

Data collection

Interviews

Following one-and-a-half-month of participant observation in Fall 2018, the first author conducted one interview with each teacher and a group interview at the end of Spring 2019. Each interview took approximately one to one and a half hours. The first interview focused on a) teachers' backgrounds in teaching and language (e.g., When did you start to learn Spanish or English?), b) teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of DLE (e.g., "How do children perceive using English and Spanish in your classroom?"), c) teachers' practices of promoting inclusive education and diversity (e.g., "What strategies do you use to make your classroom as inclusive as possible for your children?").

The second was a group interview, in which teachers participated together, aimed to capture an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives, experiences, and practices of the overall themes – DLE and inclusive education, allowing elaborations of the first interview. The first author observed teachers working collaboratively in their DLE classroom with shared responsibility, holding equal power. Thus, conducting a group interview allowed participants to build upon each other's comments and/or expand on their classroom practices. Some questions were, "What factors (if any) are important in students' success in becoming/staying bilingual? And What factors hinder or limit their success?" Some of the questions aimed to discern some of the events documented during participant observations. For instance, some questions focused on capturing how the teachers used the multicultural materials (i.e., books, toys, photos) documented in participant observation (e.g., You have put these photos of diverse children all over the world, including children with differing abilities and cultures. What was the purpose of putting these photos? How did students react? How do these photos influence children's understandings of individual differences?).

Up to 5-minute, unstructured conversations, influenced by a Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017), were recorded with 14 students. The Mosaic Approach provides a framework for listening to young children: multi-method approach (recognizing different voices of children, i.e., verbal and non-verbal), participatory (considering children as experts and agents in their lives), reflexive (considering listening as an active process, including interpretation of the listeners), adaptable, focused on children's lived experiences, and embedded into practice (Clark, 2017). To decrease possible power dynamics between adults and children, we aimed to gather children's perspectives in a conversational format in a space where they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts (Clark, 2017). Thus, during the free-choice playtime, Araceli and the first author participated in children's play and had a conversation about what they were doing. Araceli asked the children in Spanish and English whether they like speaking Spanish, with whom they speak Spanish, along with probing questions, such as tell me more and why. Children's perspectives contribute to the triangulation of the data to support our findings related to what teachers shared about the way children perceived each language.

The teacher interviews were conducted in English in an after-school setting; however, the first author told Araceli that she could use Spanish at any time to explain her opinions and specific events happening in the classroom. Therefore, Araceli used some Spanish during the interview. The second author translated the Spanish data.

Participant observations

Approximately 949 minutes of classroom activities (i.e., English = 531 and Spanish = 418) were recorded using a flip cam with a tripod during Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters. As a participant-observer, the first author sat outside of the circle during large group activities to record and interacted with children and teachers during choice time. She also wrote critical moments and observations as fieldnotes and collected artifacts, such as photos of the classroom materials. Critical moments referred to tensions (e.g., resisting something, disagreements) and positive moments tied to inclusive education and social justice. For example, in one of the Spanish days, Felipe showed resistance toward an activity saying, “I don’t want a canasta” three times, meaning he did not want to participate in the laundry basket chant, which was noted for further exploration.

Data analysis

Utilizing the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we, as coauthors, conducted inductive systematic coding processes to find emergent categories and themes across the transcripts as an iterative and recursive cycle of discovery (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Initially, each author read, coded, and wrote analytical memos of each transcript individually using Microsoft word. Then, we discussed our initial reactions, clarified misunderstandings, and solved disagreements. We transferred our initial codes to NVIVO 12 software for organization purposes and engaged in three cycles of coding to seek patterns and themes across the transcripts. The first cycle of coding consisted of various code types, such as descriptive (e.g., “DLE benefits” and “César Chávez”), in-vivo (e.g., “valuing Spanish is a new thing”), and process-coding (e.g., “losing Spanish”), to reflect deeply on the meaning of each transcript (Saldaña, 2013). Utilizing pattern and axial coding, second, we focused on finding the relationships between various codes by recoding and merging similar codes (Saldaña, 2013). Through in-depth discussions, we reorganized the codes to finalize the emerging themes and find theoretical connections between categories. After that, we watched the videos to understand teachers’ language practices that aligned or contrasted with the themes we developed from the interview data for triangulation. To illustrate, we reviewed Spanish instructional time to examine the participants’ language practices in which students responded in English to the Spanish talk of the teacher; this was rarely the case in English times. We identified two themes – critical reflection and action – demonstrating teachers’ critical consciousness as language policymakers in their DLE preschool classroom.

Findings

Critical reflection

Awareness of DLE’s value

Teachers recognized DLE’s value for students’ social, emotional, and language development and well-being, and for promoting diversity and inclusiveness. Teachers reflected on the interconnectedness of the social and emotional aspects of learning with language development. Using Spanish supported predominantly Spanish speakers’ confidence, motivation, and adjustment to schooling, leading to their English language development. For example, Araceli shared Spanish’s critical role for Jose, a Spanish-speaking student with a speech delay.

I think for Jose, dual language is really good for him because if there'll be only English, he'll be completely lost ... he feels more secure when I speak Spanish ... Ms. Brooke, she always calls [him] Jose [ho-ZAY; English pronunciation]. I call [him] Jose [ho-se; Spanish pronunciation] because the phonetic is different [laughs] ... He told his mom, "Mommy, I like more Ms. Araceli because she calls me Jose [ho-se]." [Interview data].

In this excerpt, Araceli conceptualized DLE's value for students and demonstrated that even the correct pronunciation of names based on students' home language mattered for young students.

Teachers observed English-speaking students' growing interest in Spanish and development in the Spanish language, which were evident in students' questions to Araceli regarding how to say certain things in Spanish and their growing receptive Spanish language skills. Moreover, Araceli thought that DLE allowed students to acknowledge linguistic diversity in the classroom and society. She said: "they are only four years old and can see different [languages]. Brooke speaks English, I speak Spanish, they can see different words. Ji-hoon, he is from South Korea and speaks Korean. He's learning English, and he's learning Spanish."

Interrogating power: Language ideologies and status in relation to race

Teachers reflected on the power hierarchies among English and Spanish and the speakers of those languages. One enduring challenge for the teachers was some of the Latinx students' Spanish language ideologies, as reflected in Araceli's words, "He [Felipe] told me yesterday [that], 'I don't like to speak Spanish.'" Our conversation with the students confirmed Araceli's words because five students out of 14 said "no" to the question, "Do you like to speak Spanish?" either verbally or by shrugging their shoulders, three said "yes," and the remaining students did not respond to the question. Thus, teachers interrogated possible reasons shaping children's notions and feelings of speaking Spanish and English; perceived it related to the deficit construction of difference, family's language policies, peers, raciolinguistics, and English hegemony in society at large. Araceli shared:

Felipe's mom and dad, they speak only Spanish at home but he's like I don't know how to describe it. He feels like embarrassed to talk in Spanish. He maybe feels like his friends, they will make fun of him. [Interview data]

Here, it is noticeable that classrooms do not exist in a vacuum and oppressive sociocultural historical beliefs and practices – monolingualism and English hegemony – about the Spanish language and the ways speakers of Spanish have been perceived by the society leak into classroom space, influencing students. For teachers, students considered speaking Spanish as different from the norm – speaking English – resulting in embarrassment and the subject of mockery. Thus, language differences, deemed as a deficit, were constructed in relation to the norm of speaking English.

Teachers viewed families' language policies as shaping their children's language ideologies. When Araceli asked Timothy if he liked to speak Spanish, he answered, "No," and added, "my mom speaks Spanish." When asked why not, he shrugged and then said "no." Regarding Timothy's situation, the teachers discussed:

Araceli: I asked [Timothy's] a mom today, I said, "Do you guys decide to enroll him in [DLE] kindergarten?" She said, "No, because he needs to learn English first."

Brooke: But he already knows English.

Araceli: I know. It's the husband, not the mom.

Brooke: Yes, it's the husband. The mom is Hispanic, and she speaks Spanish, and the father is African American. He doesn't speak Spanish and he's very, very against the kids learning Spanish. [Group interview data]

According to teachers, the family believed that DLE hindered English language development leading to their unsupportiveness of DLE, which could be related to monoglossic views of language, treating monolingualism as the norm (Flores & Schissel, 2014). Thus, the teachers criticized the family's language policy for influencing their child's resistance to speak Spanish.

Araceli listened to students' conversations and acknowledged the influence of family dynamics concerning their Spanish usage. For instance, Miguel told Araceli that he did not like to speak Spanish. Felipe, who was playing with Legos close to them, inserted himself into the conversation and asked Miguel whether he spoke Spanish with his siblings.

Miguel: Nah-ah, Felipe, my brother and sister don't speak español, he just speak[s] English.

Araceli: Pero [sister's name] habla español conmigo. [But [sister's name] speaks Spanish with me]

Miguel: [Moves his head from side to side showing disagreement.] [Child conversation]

Listening to Miguel's experiences about his language use opened space for Araceli to learn the complexity of his home language use, telling me after the conversation that "even though he speaks Spanish, his siblings don't speak it with him." This example also stressed the sociocultural nature of the classroom interactions, students mutually influencing one another, adding, or changing the culture of the classroom or as individuals (Rogoff, 2003).

Teachers also recognized families' strong desires for their children to learn Spanish. Brooke: We have families too who grew up speaking only Spanish . . . and they had other kids that don't want to have anything to do with the Spanish language, and then when they bring their kids to this classroom because they want them to learn it. Then, also, we have a family that's in this class and where it's our third student of the family. Their oldest brother doesn't speak any Spanish and mom only speaks Spanish and she says, she can't even talk to her son . . . She doesn't know what he's saying. Then the two sisters who were in this class, she said they still speak Spanish, and they value the language more. Now, their brother, who didn't want to speak any Spanish, is speaking more Spanish too so I think it [DLE] teaches children that language is really important. [Interview data]

Teachers acknowledged the importance of sustaining the home language for families to prevent inter-generational language loss and communication barriers. Considering AZ's restrictive language policies, teachers believed in DLE's power to challenge English hegemony and valorize Spanish. Through DLE, they observed that children who valued Spanish positively influenced their families' language policies with increasing Spanish language use and helped build strong relationships between families.

Peers were also perceived to influence young students' language ideologies and practices.

Araceli: Yes, but if he [Felipe] sees everybody speaks English, he wants to speak English. Sam, he's the only White boy that we have in the classroom . . . He tries to [speak Spanish] . . . because his dad speaks Spanish, but he learned Spanish in college. He's White, he's not Hispanic. Sam, he said, "Yes, my dad says that word. My dad said *muy rápido* . . ." Now, Sam, he tries to say some words in Spanish. When Felipe sees other friends talking in Spanish, he's listening, and he tries to repeat. [Interview data]

For teachers, English was the dominant language spoken by almost all children in their classroom, affecting some Latinx students' Spanish language beliefs and use as they became aware of what was valued by their peers. To explain peer influences on language use, Araceli exemplified Sam as the only White student trying to speak Spanish based on his dad's valuing and attempting to speak Spanish, which motivated Felipe to speak Spanish. By providing a White student's example, Araceli might have implicitly connected language ideologies with race and power. Yet, she stated explicitly the unjust relationship between language and race.

Araceli: When they do drama, they see she's [teaching artist] White and speaks Spanish. And they want to try to speak Spanish because they see somebody White speaking Spanish. If I am brown and I speak Spanish is not a big deal, but if they see somebody White speaking Spanish is like, "It's not too bad to speak Spanish." [Interview data]

Araceli's critical reflections on whiteness and power exemplified Flores (2016) description of hegemonic whiteness, which "is inherently imperialist in that it is simply understood as the way people are or should be" (p. 15), and unveiled young students' understanding of power associated with whiteness. For her, while brown people's speaking Spanish were taken for granted and could be understood as *folk multilingualism* while racializing its users (Valdez et al., 2016), White people's speaking Spanish

was deemed as positive and ideal and could be perceived as *elite multilingualism* without racializing its acquirers (Valdez et al., 2016). Thus, she observed that White Spanish speakers had more power in influencing young students' Spanish language ideologies.

Araceli further explained the unjust power dynamics between race and language shaping Latinx people's language choices.

They [Latinx] want to speak English because they want to show them [White people], "I can speak English, not Spanish." They [students] are too little, but they are so smart. I feel like we need to make more like, "If you speak many languages, [it] is better."

Araceli reflected on how the English hegemony and whiteness embedded in the broader sociocultural-historical context, such as AZ's restrictive language policies, led Spanish speakers to the need to demonstrate their English abilities to White English-speaking listeners. For her, young children could understand such power dynamics leading to English monolingualism as part of their socialization, which should be challenged toward multilingualism.

Similarly, Brooke also critiqued media representing the sociocultural context of English monolingualism as perpetuating the status quo, forming students' language ideologies.

They [School] gave us a lot of training, and cultural diversity is really a big push into the classrooms, but a lot of what we see on TV, is dominated by a lot of White people and English language. If you're looking at the baby dolls, everybody wants the White baby doll, whether they're brown or white . . . Maybe kids want to be what they see on TV, and maybe our culture portrays that way as better than what they have for themselves.

Brooke revealed the conflicting values and practices between some schools' efforts to promote diversity and the broader sociocultural practices manifested in the media dominated by White monolingual English speakers. The hegemonic notion of Whiteness and English monolingualism as the norm and the desired identity were observed to be shaping young students' beliefs about race, regardless of their racial background, which may lead to internalized oppression.

Critical action

Creating an inclusive and social justice-oriented learning community

We argue critical consciousness could promote inclusivity and social justice-oriented DLE classrooms through actions that deal with inequities in DLE classrooms and society. Particularly, students whose linguistic identities intersect with other markers of differences, such as race and ability, are disproportionately impacted by unjust and exclusionary educational practices. Therefore, we explored and described teachers' actions toward ensuring an inclusive and social justice-oriented classroom community where all students' diverse backgrounds and identities were recognized. Teachers perceived that creating such communities was a dynamic and ongoing process depending on who the students were in their classroom in a specific year. When asked about the meaning and practices of inclusive education, Brooke explained:

We tried to respect all cultures, all backgrounds, all disabilities . . . No matter what, this classroom will always be inclusive of whoever. A lot of times it's just learning for me. We experience new things every year, different cultures, and learning. Last year we had several Native American families and we had everything going on with the eclipse, and different holidays. It was really a big learning experience. Then we always want to teach children to be kind to whoever, and we're all different, but our uniqueness is what makes us a whole and that we're a community in this classroom. [Interview data]

Brooke showed commitment to inclusivity by positioning herself as a learner of students' diverse backgrounds each year, revealing the dynamic and ongoing nature of inclusive education (Naraian, 2017). Through recognition of student differences, she privileged student integrity, meaning wholeness. She modeled and encouraged students to embrace cultural, linguistic, and ability differences by displaying respect, kindness, sensibility as inclusive actions.

To acknowledge family diversity and support students' understandings of cultural differences, Brooke placed photos of diverse families, including students' family photos, on the classroom wall, and positioned families as resources who should be part of the classroom community as an inclusive practice. To illustrate an example of family engagement, the teachers described their collaboration with a family, relatives of César Chávez, to support students' awareness of justice issues by implementing an activity about César Chávez.

Brooke: He's [César Chávez] a really famous activist. Her [student's name] dad talked to us. On their shirt, it says, "Sí se puede," [Yes, you can] . . . which means we can do it. They [family] talked about what a farmer was, what a farmer did, and how the farmers were not being treated fairly. César Chávez decided he didn't think that was right, so he had all of the workers come together to try to stand up for themselves and for a change . . . He was saying, "How would you feel if Ms. Brooke charged you money to drink out of the water fountain or use the bathroom?" They were like, "That would be so sad." "That's how the workers felt, and they didn't pay them very much money." . . . They did learn what's fair, and they got to learn a social phrase, "Sí se Puede." [Group interview data]

Through this family engagement activity, Brooke demonstrated a culturally responsive practice with a social justice orientation. To promote young students' understanding of justice issues in an age-appropriate manner, she described the family's strategy of associating injustice with unfairness by connecting it to students' own lives and emotions.

Brooke relied on Araceli as a resource to communicate with the Spanish-speaking families and to support their sense of belongingness to the classroom community, which reflected their cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

Brooke: Whenever I talk to families, she is always there as a resource for them to talk to her to tell her some news. She really takes the time to make sure that they feel included and just as aware as all the other parents [English-speaking parents]. [Interview data]

Brooke showed acknowledgment and appreciation for Araceli as a cultural and linguistic broker for the families. Considering Araceli's role as a teacher assistant, not bearing responsibility for the families, showcased Araceli's intentional actions toward the inclusion of Spanish speaking families. In an informal conversation, Araceli also shared that she accepted teaching Spanish classes due to her belief about the importance of maintaining the home language, Spanish, for Latinx children, although it was not part of Araceli's responsibilities and she would not be compensated equally, revealing her commitment and critical action toward DLE. Although this critical action would support students' Spanish language development in the short term, it could also have some unintended consequences by perpetuating the historical power hierarchies between English and Spanish in the eyes of some parents and other stakeholders. Due to various reasons, such as bilingual teacher shortages (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2020), the current system made it acceptable that the lead teacher in a DLE classroom could be a monolingual English-lead teacher and Spanish could be instructed by a TA without appropriate teacher certification and equal compensation. Therefore, it is essential that the teachers' critical actions are acknowledged and supported by larger policies and practices (e.g., allocating funds for equal compensation and supporting teachers to receive bilingual teacher certification).

Like displaying photos representing family diversity on the classroom walls, teachers used other diversity-related materials such as toys representing people with disabilities and photos representing racial and ethnic differences in their DLE classroom. When the purpose of these materials was asked:

Brooke: . . . it's really important these days to teach children that [diversity] . . . If you teach them young that uniqueness and different is good and not something bad, then I think that they'll grow up with that instilled in their heart and not [to] have to learn it as an older.

Individual differences, such as language and ability, have historically been constructed from a deficit perspective (Karsli-Calamak & Kilinc, 2021). Reconstructing the meaning of difference from a positive lens was Brooke's goal through using the diversity-related materials. By saying, "instilled in their heart and not [to] have to learn it as an older," she exhibited her consciousness in the importance and the

critical role of focusing on diversity with young children to authentically develop their understandings of difference as the norm, rather than having them dismantle cultural and linguistic norms later in life. She also engaged with students to help them understand these materials by explaining “in the block center, [there were] some people [toys] who have different disabilities. They [students] weren’t really sure how to play with them . . . I was helping them, “This is how this person would play or move.”” By modeling how to play with toys with disabilities, she demonstrated her acknowledgment of ability differences.

Another critical action by Araceli was surfaced during her interview, organically. The first author mentioned her experience when she observed the students of the DLE preschool classroom shared the playground with students with disabilities in the developmental preschool classroom.

Author 1: When we were in the playground, the developmental preschool’s teacher assistant pushed the wheelchair of a four-year-old child with a physical disability and placed him under the roof of the school building across from the playground where students without physical disabilities were playing. I was worried about whether the child would only look at other children’s playing. Then, his teacher laid out a blanket on the ground, carried the child to have him sit on the blanket, and brought dinosaur toys for him to play with. Soon enough, Ji-hoon, [Korean home language student in DLE preschool classroom], sat on the blanket to play with dinosaurs with him. Within 10 minutes, there were five more children on the blanket playing together. [Interview data]

This practice was not by coincidence. In the interview, Araceli indicated that she was the one who initiated using a blanket to stop the exclusion of a student with a physical disability from children’s play when she was working in this developmental preschool classroom a few years ago.

Araceli: Before, they keep him [a student with a physical disability] in the wheelchair and he was looking only at how everybody played, and I said, “Do you want to play?” He said, “Yes, I want to play.” I asked his teacher, I said, “Do you have like a blanket or something?”

Although Araceli’s above actions were in the past, her agency about stepping in to remove barriers for all children to play together stopped past exclusion and allowed the interaction of current students with and without disabilities in different classrooms.

As the teachers worked toward inclusive education in which all students’ diverse identities were valued, students were also positively constructing racial differences impacting their positive sense of self. For instance, during classroom observations, a child showed the first author a drawing on a small piece of paper and said, with a proud, smiling face, “Ivy, draw me for my birthday. He’s brown like me. He is smiling like me.” We interpreted this moment as positive consequences of teachers’ critical actions toward promoting inclusivity and social justice in their DLE classrooms.

Actions toward challenging English hegemony to promote bilingualism

Teachers attempted to disrupt the hegemonic tendencies evident in some children’s reluctance to use Spanish. To challenge the notion that English is superior to Spanish and promote bilingualism, teachers reiterated to students the importance of Spanish for their families and incorporated translanguaging to the 50/50 model.

To challenge students’ negative perception of Spanish and to have them valorize Spanish, teachers always reminded students about the importance of their home languages. For instance, in a conversation with Felipe, Araceli inquired whether he liked speaking Spanish (he said “Si” [Yes]). Then, she asked if and with whom he communicated in Spanish at home, and which language he used speaking with his relatives in Guatemala.

Araceli: “Entonces es importante que . . . tu familia en Guatemala no habla inglés, verdad?” [So, it’s important that . . . your family in Guatemala doesn’t speak English, right?]

Felipe: [Moves head, yes]

Araceli: “Entonces es importante que hables español para que hables con ellos.” [So it’s important so you speak Spanish with them.] . . . “Cuando hablas por telefono, hablas español o inglés con ellos?” [When you speak on the phone with them, do you speak Spanish or English?]

Felipe: Spanish. [Child conversation data]

Adhering to the 50/50 model was critical for the teachers to support students’ Spanish receptive and expressive language skills, disrupt the unjust hierarchy between English and Spanish, and have children value the Spanish language.

Brooke: It just proved to be too much for me to speak Spanish all the time, and for us to do the 100% [Spanish], but doing 50% for the direct instruction was huge . . . They see Ms. Araceli teaches and then Ms. Brooke teaches. We’re both their teachers. I think they see us at the same level in value. [Group interview data]

Brooke acknowledged her not knowing Spanish as a limitation to using Spanish exclusively in Spanish times, meaning she had to use English during small group work. Moreover, her positioning of Araceli as a teacher manifested her awareness of possible power imbalances between her as being an English monolingual lead teacher and Araceli as a Spanish-speaking teacher assistant. To overcome this power disparity, we observed in the videos that Brooke took a supporting role during Spanish instruction time and did not interrupt the conversation by speaking English. Furthermore, Araceli used almost 100% Spanish during Spanish times, but engaged in translanguaging in a couple of instances, to confirm or clarify a response, such as “Y tú crees que tumbó la casa el wolf?” [And do you think the wolf knocked down the house?]. We interpreted her sticking to Spanish as her being the only adult in the classroom who could model and expose students to Spanish to support their bilingualism and challenge some students’ negative perceptions and feelings toward Spanish. The conversation in Spanish times occurred mostly as a tandem talk that students responded in English to Araceli’s Spanish instruction, yet some students’ translanguaging was also observed, such as “I know another patron [pattern].” Araceli acknowledged and encouraged students’ responses regardless of their language use, indicating their progress in Spanish receptive language. She said “. . . when I am reading the book and I am asking [questions]. They respond in English. They have the idea what my question is in Spanish.”

Critical action toward the continuation of DLE

The teachers were aware of the role of family language policies on children’s language ideologies and practices. Araceli attempted to disrupt English hegemony embedded in some families’ language policies and encouraged families to send their children to a DLE kindergarten classroom to avoid possible language loss by sharing her personal experience with them.

I have two sons, and I speak only my first language español [Spanish]. My husband [is] White, American and he is like, “No español. English, English.” My two boys, now they understand, but they don’t want to talk in español because [of] that . . . when they call my parents in Mexico . . . I said you need to talk to your nana, but their dad . . . He thinks because we are in the US, only English. Spanish is not important. For me, both are important. I put my son as an example to some parents. I said, “You know what? My son, he was really good at español in kindergarten, and then he was up grades and he stopped talking in Spanish.” “I don’t want that to happen to your son. If you want him to speak both, you need to send him to DLE [kindergarten].” [Group interview]

Araceli put herself as an example who was challenged by overcoming English hegemony within her family to demonstrate the critical role of home language for families. For her, the continuation of DLE in kindergarten was critical for children to maintain their home language.

Conclusion

The study findings showed two teachers' critical reflection and action, demonstrating their critical consciousness as language policymakers in their DLE preschool classroom. Through critical reflection, the teachers interrogated power in forming language ideologies in relation to race, which was related to their challenges concerning some Latinx students' negative expressions about Spanish. Language minoritized students' preference of English over Spanish in DLE settings was also denoted in previous studies (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2017; Carranza, 2018; Chaparro, 2019; Palmer, 2009). For instance, Babino and Stewart (2017) showed that Latinx students perceived Spanish as subordinate and English as necessary to be successful. This distressing finding confirms the necessity of fostering educators' critical consciousness to fulfill the equity-oriented promises of DLE goals.

Teachers in this study reflected on the prevalence of English hegemony regarding the deficit construction of race in their DLE preschool classroom and in the sociocultural-historical context in which children participate. Chaparro (2019) theorized this process as raciolinguistic socialization that "reinforce perceptions of language use and ability that are intimately tied to racialization and to class position" (p. 3). Teachers observed that children's perceptions of Spanish became more positive when they saw a White teacher speaking Spanish, revealing young children's awareness of power disparities and their possible internalizations (e.g., Park, 2011). In Chaparro's (2019) study, for instance, a middle-class biracial young boy rejected his identity as being a "Spanish boy" considering racializing discourses in the wider context. This wider sociocultural context, particularly the media's representation of whiteness and the English language as the US's dominant norms were criticized by the participating teachers, shaping children's raciolinguistic socialization (Chaparro, 2019). For the teachers, at the micro level, being different from the norm – English-speaking peers – was more likely to be perceived as a deficit by the students or brought stigma, navigating their language beliefs and practices, also encountered by other teachers (e.g., Chaparro, 2019) and parents (e.g., Surrain, 2018).

Another finding of teachers' reflection showed that the family language policies influenced and were influenced by their children's language beliefs, choice, and use while interacting with the broader issues (e.g., language ideologies, race, and power), which were also noted in previous literature (e.g., Kaveh, 2020; Kaveh & Sandoval, 2020). For teachers, some families' prioritization of English over Spanish led to their children's resistance toward Spanish; whereas children's valorizing Spanish due to being in the DLE preschool classroom was evident in their attempts to speak Spanish at home supported family language practices toward maintaining their home language. In this way, children became language policy agents by communicating messages about the value and utility of languages between schools and homes, referred to as *unspoken dialogs* (Kaveh, 2020). We also found that students' beliefs and feelings toward Spanish were situational and dynamic as, over time, some of them verbalized their liking of Spanish and its importance to their families. Thus, we can also summarize that, with teachers' critical consciousness, DLE settings empower and hold promise toward language minoritized students' confidence in their home language (e.g., Chaparro, 2019).

Participating teachers' critical actions demonstrated their ongoing efforts to work toward securing an inclusive and social justice-oriented DLE classroom community by recognizing students' racial, ethnic, ability, and linguistic differences and fostering family engagement. Creating communities in which differences are recognized while deficit perspectives are dismantled is essential for inclusive education (Karsli-Calamak & Kilinc, 2021; Naraian, 2017). The teachers' notions of inclusive education align with Naraian's (2017) findings as inclusive education is "unpredictable, multidimensional, and unfinished" (p. 6) and necessitates "teachers' openness to be transformed by families' experiential knowledge" (p. 10).

The teachers' critical actions aimed to challenge English hegemony in their DLE classroom by sticking to the Spanish language during Spanish days. Given the English domination in DLE programs documented as a language shift from Spanish to English during Spanish times (Babino & Stewart, 2017; Palmer, 2009), the Spanish teacher spoke Spanish almost 100% during Spanish days with tandem talks between her and the students as a collaborative bilingual practice to protect the minoritized

language and promote bilingualism. Differently, the kindergarten teacher in Hamman-Ortiz's (2020) study regulated students' Spanish language use by requiring them to use Spanish during Spanish instruction, interpreted to resist English hegemony and to protect Spanish in the classroom. The teachers in our study regulated their own language use, rather than students, and believed the importance of sticking to Spanish considering the limitations related to the lead teacher's English monolingualism. They did not argue for strict language separation as translanguaging also occurred in the classroom.

The Spanish teacher aimed to have students make personal connections about the importance of Spanish and shared her narratives of language to families to enroll their children in DLE kindergarten classroom. Teachers in other studies also made personal connections about the importance of Spanish to decrease students' resistance toward Spanish (e.g., Carranza, 2018).

Implications

The study results provide implications for research and educational policy and practice. Evident in teachers' reflections and actions, teachers are critical language policymakers who can work toward the original purposes of DLE programs (Flores & García, 2017). It is important to note that our teacher participants did not have training in DLE, yet they demonstrated critical consciousness as they reflected on their context and displayed respective actions to change the oppressive ideologies. It is noteworthy to consider the lead teacher (English monolingual) and teacher assistant (Spanish-English bilingual) dyad regarding critical consciousness in this study. Teacher assistants are often seen as just helpers without content knowledge (Bernstein et al., 2018); however, their lived experiences, particularly ones coming from language-minorized groups, like Araceli as in this study, can bring their critical insider knowledge to bear on equity issues within DLE and society. School districts could allocate funding for teaching assistants who teach Spanish, like Araceli to have them enroll in local universities to receive bilingual teacher certifications. In addition, future research could examine how some teachers become and act critically conscious to further theorize critical consciousness.

Our findings implicate that researchers and teacher educators must (1) acknowledge current notions and practices of the pre-and in-service teachers they work with in relation to critical consciousness, (2) collaboratively work on setting a goal to develop teachers' critical consciousness further, and (3) foster the development of critical consciousness with cyclical reflection and action. One possibility, researchers can work with teachers to systematically document their practices and engage in a praxis cycle toward securing equity in DLE. Study findings showed that White teachers' bilingual identities hold power in the classroom, influencing students' language ideologies. Hence, it is essential for educators to challenge issues related to whiteness and English monolingualism with educators of color.

We argue that DLE preschool classrooms can be a space to begin counter English hegemony and all the -isms oppressing racialized groups, and support DLE's goals. Schools should collaboratively work with preschool educators and offer opportunities for students to continue their DLE in higher grades.

Limitations

This study has two noteworthy limitations. First, the lead teacher and the teacher assistant were not certified in DLE and the teacher assistant delivering the Spanish instruction was not a certified teacher. Second, language policy in Arizona has recently changed, allowing more flexibility in DLE programs, which could influence teachers' ideologies and practices.

Notes

1. We define dual language education as the equal instructional use of two languages for students coming from diverse linguistic backgrounds with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy, sociocultural competence, academic achievement, and critical consciousness.
2. TWI is defined in Cervantes et al., (2017) study as the equal instructional “integration of two languages and students from two different language backgrounds” (p. 408).
3. English learners, as a term, is used for K-12 students who are not considered English proficient according to Arizona’s English proficiency examination – AZELLA.

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