ABSTRACT

Caregivers' Choice Against: A Case Study of Caregivers' Denial of Language Services in
Central Texas

Barbara R. Page, Ed.D.

Mentor: Bradley Carpenter, Ph.D.

The focus of this study was to describe the prevalent issue affecting English

language learners in Central Texas ISD (CTXISD) due to the denial of bilingual language

services by caregivers, and to make sense of these parent denials. CTXISD is located in

Texas and serves more than 8,000 students on 10 campuses. English language learners

compose 3.3% of that population, at 271 students. Out of those 271 students, bilingual

language denials primarily take place in the elementary and intermediate settings. During

the 2018–2019 school year, there were 56 bilingual language denials in CTXISD which

has an effect on the acquisition of the English language as well as academic readiness as

measured by the State of Texas. The purpose of this study was to determine why

caregivers are denying transitional bilingual services for their emergent bilingual

children. A qualitative single case study with caregiver and administrator interviews were

the means used to obtain caregivers' perspectives and experiences of the factors that led

them to deny these services. Data analysis resulted in emergent themes from Weick's

sensemaking theory: extracted cues, social environments, retrospective, and identity

construction. The findings in this research could provide leaders across the nation with information on how to increase parent recruitment/enrollment for their language programs.

Caregivers' Choice Against: A Case Study of Caregivers' Denial of Language Services in
Central Texas

by

Barbara Page, B.S., M.S.Ed.

A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Educational Leadership

_____

Jeffrey Petersen, Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Doctor of Education

Approved by the Dissertation Committee

_____

Bradley W. Carpenter, Ph.D., Chairperson

_____

John E. Wilson, Ph.D.

_____

Jessica Padron Meehan, Ed.D.

_____

David E. DeMatthews, Ph.D.

_____

George E. Kazanas, Ed.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
August 2021

_____

J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support from so many individuals. First, I would like to thank my dissertation Chair, Dr. Bradley Carpenter for your encouragement and assistance in completing this study. Dr. John Wilson, thank you for your belief in me throughout this entire Baylor program and for the mentorship you have provided. You took a chance on a classroom teacher to take part in an executive leadership program and I only pray that I met your expectation. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Jessica Meehan and Dr. David DeMatthews- thank you for believing in this study and agreeing to be part of my committee. Additional gratitude is extended to all the participants of this study, which made this research possible. I would be thoughtless not to thank Dr. Karen Rue and Dr. George Kazanas. These two individuals influenced my academic and professional endeavors, and I am thankful to have leadership of your caliber to follow. I am a better educator having learned, observed, and served under you. To my Baylor buddies- thank you for the friendship, for the support, and for the love; I am honored to have been a part of this program alongside you all.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my family, friends, and colleagues. Everyone who ever sent me an encouraging word, nudged me along, and believed in me; I have been blessed by you and it has never gone unnoticed. You have all played a part in my success and I am forever beholden to you. Para mi querida mama y abuela, gracias por creer en mi, incluso en los momentos navegando un país ajeno, pero

siempre enfatizando la importancia del sueño americano y de la educación. Las quiero con toda el alma. ¡Si se puede, y si se pudo! To Mickey and Donna, for blessing me from day one with an extended family unlike any other; your belief in me has made all the difference in the world, and I hope I have made you proud. To Danny for always being my confidant and twin soul, thank you for your endless support of me, always. And to my brother, Carlos, for always taking a keen interest in what I was doing, always supporting, and encouraging me, and for allowing me the opportunity to strive to set an example as your little sister. I love all of you with all my heart and am so proud to share in this process with you. I could never have accomplished this without the endless encouragement.

Most importantly, I would like to express the deepest level of gratitude to my amazing husband and children. While this has certainly been a very difficult, challenging, and strenuous ride on our family, I believe it has strengthened our bond. Thank you, Sophia and Samuel, for being so very loving and for providing me the chance to show you first-hand the importance of education. I hope that by you being old enough to remember this process, you realize the importance and meaning of hard work, sacrifice, and unrelenting love. I could not be any prouder to be your mom. And more than anything, thank you Bret. You, more than anyone, truly know and understand how challenging a process this has been. Through it all, you continued to be the best husband, father, and friend, sacrificing more than anyone to help me achieve this goal. Thank you for being the most remarkable husband in your unwavering belief in me. Now that I am finally finished as a Baylor Bear, it is time to write our future, and the sky is the limit. I love you!

I would like to honor my father, who taught me to lead a courageous life, stand for what I believe in, and be unapologetically me. My only regret is that you are not here to see that your sacrifice and 90-mile journey were not in vain. Siempre extrañándote, siempre recordándote, y siempre en mi corazón. Hasta que nos encontremos otra vez.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Bret:
I will forever look for the right words to express my gratitude for your support, your confidence, and your belief in me. This study, this degree: it's as much as yours as it is mine. I love and thank you more than I can say.

To my amazing kids, Sophia and Samuel:
Being your mother has been the greatest joy of my life, and I was only able to get through this process because of how much you two inspire me. You both are my greatest accomplishment! Always remember, you can achieve ANYTHING you set your mind to. Fight viciously for what you believe in, stand up for what's right, and remember when you feel like giving up, TRY JUST ONE MORE TIME. That is when dreams come true. I love you both, always and forever.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

The demographics of the education system are quickly shifting, demonstrating a

significant increase in the number of English language learner (ELL) students enrolled in

public schools. In 2016, data indicated 21.6% of the U.S. population spoke a language

other than English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In Texas, public schools serve 1,110,990

ELL students (Texas Education Agency, 2020). There are a variety of K-12 language

education program models designed to cultivate the linguistic and cultural resources of

emergent bilinguals. As families complete the home language survey in their home

school district, students are identified as ELL students when their parents sign and agree

to participate in bilingual programs, such as English as a Second Language (ESL), dual

language, or transitional bilingual. With the vast number of choices, parents may receive

mixed messages about bilingualism's importance and value. For example, Title VII of the

Improving American Schools Act and the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA), calling for enrichment models of bilingual education,

specifically promoting dual-language programs with demonstrated success in the

promotion of proficiency in two languages (Ovando et al., 2006). The enrichment models

were advertised as successful models in contrast to ESL and transitional bilingual due to

their research-based success of English acquisition.

The history surrounding bilingual education has been continuously changing with

different legislation. For instance, Proposition 227 in California in the year 1998 and

Proposition 203 in Arizona in the year 2000 barred the use of native language instruction without special waivers (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). This continuous change in legislation was magnified when the Office of Bilingual Education in the U.S. Department of Education was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition (NCLB, 2002). Though this era of English-only language policy has been evolving, the instruction of ELL students continues to be monitored and tracked in districts across the United States. All emergent bilinguals are measured against federal policies for academic achievement, though only ELLs are subject to federal accountability policies for gains toward English language proficiency and growth. Because there are unique learning models for ELLs, families of emergent bilinguals have the right to know and understand the differences in the language models available to them as well as the academic and social consequences of denying services.

Background of the Problem

Language learning at school, or language education, plays a critical role in the academic achievement of emergent bilinguals because these students are developing language proficiency in a target language while at the same time learning academic grade-level content (Bailey, 2007; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Echevarria et al., 2008; Gee, 2007; Gibbons, 2009; Gottlieb et al., 2009; Mohan, 1986; Zwiers, 2008). To fully understand how emergent bilinguals are progressing in school, one must consider their academic achievement and language development. Emergent bilinguals have been referred to as a national resource because of their diverse linguistic and cultural resources that are considered assets within a global economy (Duncan & Gil, 2014; Hakuta, 2011). Therefore, administrators and researchers are attempting to find the most appropriate and

effective methods for educating these students. As a result, various options have been explored, from full mainstream immersion to two-way dual language programs.

In attempts to discover how to best implement language learning programs for emergent bilinguals, different program models have been explored, particularly because bilingual students are seen as assets in the nation's schools. According to Thomas and Collier (2012), the full mainstream immersion program model has minimal educational benefits for ELL students students struggle as a result of insufficient and slowly acquired second language proficiency. In response to this struggle, students become frustrated with the lack of progress, which can cause them to be at-risk later, with academic gaps that may increase their probability of dropping out of school. Dual language programs are supported by research as being highly effective and leading to better outcomes for students (Thomas & Collier, 2012). Two-way dual language programs have been identified as the most effective approach to educate students who lack proficiency in English (Thomas & Collier, 2012) based on the use of students' native language to build upon the second language acquisition.

It is important that school district leaders carefully select the language program model they implement because the number of students who lack proficiency in English upon elementary school entrance has significantly increased in all U.S. states. In addition to this increase, ineffective program models result in academic gaps in language arts. The number of students who lack English proficiency upon elementary school entrance has significantly increased in all U.S. states (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Each year, ELL students fall further and further behind academically than their English-only counterparts (Welner & Carter, 2013). Research findings are consistent over the past 30 years in

showing the main cause of limited achievement can be attributed to limitations in students' ability to read, write, understand, and speak in English. Students lacking proficiency in English need to be given opportunities to develop vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and fluency in English in order to read (Cummins, 1984). Collier and Thomas (2017) stated reaching full proficiency in the first language by the age of 10–11 is the most significant predictor of full proficiency in the second language. These students should be provided with opportunities to join language development programs that use their native language to aid in second language acquisition to master both spoken and academic language.

Statement of the Problem

The U.S. Constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, country of origin, or spoken language. Each citizen should be equally protected and thus have appropriate access to education (U.S. Const., amend. XIV, § 1). As a result of constitutional law, every student should be provided an equitable educational opportunity. With the increase in the number of limited English students entering the United States, this requirement has become more challenging. Emergent bilingual students are often perceived through a deficit lens and marked as "different" and "other" (McKinney, 2017) based on their categorizations as "at-risk," "limited English proficient (LEP)," and "English language learners (ELL)."

Differences in language programs are based on different ideologies surrounding language and learning. These ideologies, which may or may not promote viewing students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) as resources for learning (Ruiz, 1984), can significantly influence emergent bilinguals' access to education. Transitional

bilingual education provides instruction in students' native language for 1 to 2 years in early-exit programs and 3 to 4 years in late-exit programs (Thomas & Collier, 2012). Transitional bilingual education is often considered subtractive, as the focus is solely on the acquisition of the dominant language at the expense of students' home language (Valenzuela, 1999). Dual language programs involve integrating language into content instruction (Howard et al., 2018). This model is considered additive because it adds a second language to students' already existing linguistic repertoire and continues development and maintenance of the first language (Cummins, 1998). For the most part, students in these programs are able to develop a multicultural identity in which more than English forms of communication are valued.

What counts as legitimate knowledge and language in the classroom varies across classrooms, bilingual programs, districts, and other entities (Paris & Alim, 2014). The individual and institutional beliefs about language determine the ways in which individuals and groups are denied, or granted, recognition (Lippi-Green, 2012). Because practices surrounding language and education often vary within the different language program models, such as in dual language and transitional bilingual settings, it is essential to learn about how language ideologies exist within these contexts and how they are interpreted by school district leaders, students, and parents. The ways language policies are interpreted and understood may play a significant role in parents' sensemaking and how they arrive at a decision to deny or approve these services for their children.

Saucedo (1997) stated parents are the backbone of successful bilingual education programs as they are important stakeholders based on their knowledge of the social,

academic, and linguistic needs of their children. Qualitative methodologies have allowed for an in-depth exploration of parental attitudes, but because of limited sample sizes and an absence of statistical analyses, the findings are difficult to generalize to a larger population of parents (Farruggio, 2010; M. Lee et al., 2015; López, 2013; Rodríguez, 2015; Worthy & Rodríguez-Galindo, 2006). Existing quantitative studies have included measuring parents' support for bilingualism and bilingual education (Craig, 1996; S. K. Lee, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Ramos, 2007; Saucedo, 1997) and have primarily centered on investigations of the viewpoints of Latinx parents with children currently enrolled in bilingual education. Studying Latinx parents' viewpoints is important in determining parents' understanding of bilingual education programs and how it influenced their decision making into selecting or de-selecting these services for their children at the time of enrollment. ELL students in particular benefit from a commitment to strong parental involvement that occurs when school leaders make an effort to reach out to parents regardless of language barriers (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Sosa, 1997; Tinkler, 2002). Tinkler (2002) suggested personalized communication from school can be the first step toward promoting relationships between home and school. Bower and Griffin (2011) found communication with ELL parents to be of great importance, given that school leaders often view a lack of family-initiated communication as a lack of involvement rather than an act of deference, as may be true with Latino families. The current study was intended to contribute to the literature regarding how parents arrive at a decision to deny services for their emergent bilingual children, perhaps based upon how they perceive communications from the district regarding language programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the sensemaking of parents who have chosen against transitional bilingual program services for their children enrolled in Central Texas Independent School District (ISD)[1]. Though federal and state policies may be difficult for parents[2] to comprehend, school district or campus leaders are responsible for explaining the benefits of a bilingual program and what de-selection means in an academic setting. My hopes for this study were to (a) understand the viewpoints of parents who have to negotiate district-level language policies for their children; (b) help leaders within Central Texas ISD better understand the communication processes connected with bilingual education and the sensemaking and perspectives of bilingual caregivers; and (c) provide leaders at the designated bilingual campus in Central Texas ISD with parent perspectives regarding district programs, particularly with bilingual families in mind. The intent was for leaders of Central Texas ISD to act on the findings of this study to provide services that better meet the needs of parents based on their input. In addition to improving services for bilingual families, this study should contribute to the assessment of the quality of bilingual programs being offered to ensure bilingual families are empowered with adequate information to make the most informed decision.

---

[1] Central Texas Independent School District is a pseudonym used to protect the identities of the school district employees and families who participated in this study.

[2] ESSA policies were written to recognize "parent and family engagement" (ESSA, 2015). This small shift in language expanded the definition of those considered to be supervising adults by including surrogate parents as "caregivers."

Research Questions

The questions guiding this case study were designed to examine parents'
perceptions of the language model provided within the district as well as the reasoning
that led parents to deny those services. In addition, I wanted to understand whether there
are cultural, political, or social related issues tied to the decision of parents involved with
bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD to de-select such services. This study
was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do district personnel perceive the effectiveness of communications
   between districts and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual
   educational offerings?

2. How do caregivers perceive the effectiveness of communications between the
   district and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational
   offerings?

3. How do parents make sense of their choice to deny bilingual language
   programs in Central Texas ISD?

The study was framed using the sensemaking theory (Weick et al., 2005) as an
analytic framework when examining the interviews of parents and district bilingual
administrators and coordinators from Central Texas ISD. I worked with a select group of
caregivers purposefully sampled to explore the research questions. I also worked with a
select group of campus and district administrators to make sense of how parents' de-
selection affected the home–school relationship and how they believed the school district
can meet the needs of these families effectively in the future.

Theoretical Framework

After a student meets the criteria to be labeled an ELL student in their home district, the parents must sign consent for the child to be enrolled in the language services provided. Some parents choose to deny any bilingual program offered by the school district. Parents have this right; however, when parents deny a child's classification as an ELL student, they are denying all bilingual ESL programs offered by the state. Similarly, parents can accept the ELL classification but de-select the language services available. With the academic achievement gaps ELL students are experiencing currently, examining the thought processes of parents who de-select services is critical. The sensemaking theory was the theoretical lens I used to examine the processes used by these parents.

The distinct theory of sensemaking captures the process and evolution of people making sense out of contradictions in their lives when the state of what is perceived to be is different from the state of what is expected to be, or there is no obvious way to engage in the world (Weick et al., 2005). This moment of incongruence is described as gaps in reality (Dervin, 1983), identifying a problem (Zhang, 2010; Zhang et al., 2008), a growing sense of doubt (Klein, 2006), and problematic situations (Weick, 1995). Dervin (Dervin, 1983, 1991, 1994, 2003, 2010; Dervin & Frenette, 2001) developed a theory and methodology known as sensemaking, whereas Weick (1995) focused on theory and conceptual views of sensemaking. Sensemaking has been conceptualized to have three components of individual cognition, situated cognition, and the role of representation (Spillane et al., 2002). Parents' understanding or misunderstanding of the services offered may influence their likelihood of selecting or de-selecting enrollment for their children.

Significance of this Study

In light of school choice and all the information parents receive regarding special programs, education has become an open enrollment industry. Parent choice in terms of schools or programs affects school enrollment, which then affects school funding per average daily attendance (ADA) laws (Texas Education Agency, 2017). However, with so much at stake for school funding and the academic achievement gaps ELL students face, studies about parental sensemaking in bilingual education are scarce. Being that the first step in schools serving bilingual families is the approval of parents, more information is needed on the thought processes of parents when making these selections or de-selections. Implications acquired from this examination can add information in the field of bilingual education by providing researchers and practitioners data to build upon existing systems that can better serve bilingual families. An additional implication of this study is the advancement of organizational systems by repairing and creating positive school-to-home relationships and appropriately empowering families to make informed decisions on program enrollment.

Through increased understanding of the sensemaking process used by parents, practicing campus and district coordinators can understand the sensemaking of parents of de-selection, thus decreasing the number of students who may experience further academic gaps by delaying bilingual instruction. This study's positive social change implications are significant, which include facilitating bilingual families through an often complicated school system, which will ultimately promote academic engagement, parental involvement, economic advancement, and a decline in achievement gaps. In addition to the societal implications, this study can assist school districts across the nation

with strengthening their bilingual programs by focusing on additive rather than subtractive programs.

Limitations of the Study

This study included certain limitations that stemmed from the biases I brought to the study. I began my career in education as an elementary bilingual teacher in Corpus Christi, Texas, in a dual language class where I provided English language content to my students in mathematics and science/social studies, and provided Spanish content in language arts and science/social studies (the content areas were alternated depending on the week). I later became a bilingual elementary teacher in El Paso and Waco, Texas, and have seen the benefits of language programs as well as how difficult school systems are to navigate for parents of ELL students. The difficulty in the experiences I have witnessed comes from my background as an ELL student with minority language parents. My parents' decisions for my language instruction often relied on acculturating to what the majority of other minority language parents decided for their children.

There were also delimitations of this study in terms of its design. This case study was bound to one school district and limited to parents of elementary-aged students who have de-selected language programs. According to Yin (2015), a common concern about case study research is an inability to generalize the results. Initially, I set the parameters of the study to request participation from caregivers who denied language services in Central Texas ISD during the 2018–2019 school year. After not receiving any responses to the request for participation, I expanded the parameters to denials of language services in any year, which increased the possible participant pool to 63. Of the 63 possible participants, only three families decided to participate after receiving the recruitment

11

letters. Though the quantity of participants resulted in a small number, I also collected data from campus and district administrators to add to the breadth of the research.

Another limitation of the study was the inability to interview classroom teachers as the program is currently not implemented in its intended form. Due to the low enrollment in the bilingual program, there is only one grade-level section that is a bilingual classroom: the pre-kindergarten classroom. That pre-kindergarten bilingual teacher is new to the district this year. The bilingual teachers who previously taught in the program as it was intended are no longer employed with the district. This study was designed to help the Central Texas ISD bilingual program leaders develop improvements in their department and inform leaders of school districts across the nation who may be facing the same issue of low enrollment due to the de-selection of services.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following key terms and definitions are necessary:

De-selection: A term specific to this study, de-selection refers to the choice of a parent of a child who qualified for transitional bilingual or ESL program services to not select the services.

English language learner (ELL): A student who is determined to be an ELL according to the criteria set by the Texas Education Agency and the U.S. Department of Education.

Home Language Survey: The State of Texas requires that the Home Language Survey be completed for each student who enrolls in a Texas public school for the first time (Texas Administration Code, 2020). The survey used in Central Texas ISD in

accordance with the guidelines from the Texas Education Agency and the U.S.

Department of Education consists of two questions:

1. What language is spoken in the child's home **most of the time?**

2. What language does the child speak **most of the time?**

Limited English proficient (LEP): A student who is determined to be non-proficient in English, based on the Home Language Survey, is considered an LEP student.

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters that are connected through the lens of the sensemaking theoretical framework as detailed in this chapter. Chapter One served to introduce the purpose of this study. I presented the research questions, definitions of key terms used within this study, limitations, and significance of this research. Chapter Two is divided into four sections to address the history of bilingual education at the federal and state levels, the different program models, academic achievement gaps affecting ELLs, and the possible implications as to why parents de-select language programs. Chapter Three includes a detailed description of the methods I used to collect and analyze data in this qualitative case study using sensemaking theory approaches. This chapter also contains details of the method used for selecting members to participate in this study. In Chapter Four, I explain the findings and results of the study based on the participant interview responses and analysis of those responses. The chapter contains the findings and themes by responses examined through the lens of Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory. Chapter Five includes the implications and discussions of the results. Thereafter, I

present recommendations to effect change in school districts enduring the same

phenomenon of language service denials.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

This literature review provides the background for the study surrounding the ELL

programs and policies affecting bilingual families in Central Texas ISD. This chapter

covers literature related to the differences in language programs provided to ELLs, state

and federal policies created to close achievement gaps, and how language programs have

been used as intervention programs for second language acquisition. The language

programs examined include bilingual early- and late-exit programs, dual language

programs, and ESL push-in/pullout programs. Among the different language program

models, this chapter highlights parental perceptions of bilingual education and the

decision to accept or deny such services for their children. I have divided the research on

ELLs and bilingual education into five main sections: (a) English language learners, (b)

bilingual education, (c) ESL program practices, (d) parents and bilingual education, and

(e) theoretical framework: sensemaking theory. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of

sensemaking theory, as this was the theoretical framework I used to understand why

parents might de-select language programs for their children.

In the first portion of the literature review, I define how students are categorized

as ELLs by the U.S. Department of Education and the demographics they represent in the

State of Texas. Academic achievement gaps for Hispanics, especially for those who enter

school not speaking or comprehending English, emerge at the beginning of kindergarten

15

and solidify in Grades 3–8, resulting in significantly lower rates of high school graduation and college attendance (Garcia & Jensen, 2007). This section of the literature review is used to explain how those academic achievement gaps are shown in accountability measures and test scores. To complete this section, I summarize the history of federal and state policies in the United States, from early immigration to current practices. In the second section of the literature review, I explain bilingual education policies, such as the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA), the impact of *Lau v. Nichols* on bilingual education, and the 1988 reauthorization of the BEA. The 1968 BEA was the foundation for creating bilingual language programs, and is explained in depth in this section. The third section covers ESL practices in schools as well as the issues ELL students face, such as feelings of acculturation and assimilation. In the fourth section, I examine the process of parental denials of bilingual education programs by discussing families' perceptions of assimilation to the cultural majority of their community (Tsianguebeni, 2017), feelings of school trust or mistrust (Crespo-Jimenez, 2011), and perceptions of the program model quality (Bodenstab, 2012; Mendoza, 2014; Munoz, 2017). In the final section of the literature review I introduce sensemaking theory and examine the work of leading researchers to explain the role sensemaking plays in decision making.

English Language Learners

Over the last 3 decades, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of immigrants in the United States who are not only racially, ethnically, and linguistically different, but who differ in age on arrival, social and economic backgrounds, and reasons for immigrating (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). Although Spanish speakers were the

population with the largest increase in 2010, Vietnamese speakers are now increasing rapidly, with gains of over 500% (Shin & Kominski, 2010). According to Shin and Kominski (2010), notably significant is the growing role of language diversity among these most recent immigrants and the language diversity of the country. From 2014–2018, the U.S. Census Bureau reported approximately 12.5% of the U.S. population over the age of 5 years spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). In Texas, the U.S. Census Bureau (2020) 35.5% of the population spoke a language other than English at home. The U.S. Census Bureau documented the existence of positive correlations between English-speaking ability and education, employment status, poverty status, disability status, and health insurance coverage. These positive correlations reinforce the importance and significance for school districts to educate emergent bilinguals which, in turn, will prove to be a societal benefit.

English Language Learners: A Governmental Description

The demographics of public schools across the United States have been altered drastically by the large influx of immigrant students (Buysse et al., 2010; Casas & Ryan, 2010; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Ryan et al., 2010). In light of the increase in the number of emergent bilingual students in the United States, it is important to note the precise definition of how a student is identified as an ELL. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), an ELL student is defined as an individual who, for any of the reasons listed below, has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to be denied the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in the larger U.S. society. Such an individual (a) was not born in the United States or has a native language other

than English, (b) comes from environments where a language other than English is dominant, or (c) is an American Indian or Alaska Native and comes from backgrounds where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The percentage of ELL students in public schools was higher in Fall 2017, at approximately five million students, than in Fall 2000, at around 3.8 million students (Institute of Education Science, 2020). In general, a higher percentage of public-school students in lower grades than of those in upper grades were ELL students in Fall 2017.

For the purposes of this study, an English learner is defined by the Texas Administrative Code (2019) as,

> a student who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the primary language. The terms "English language learner" and "English learner" are used interchangeably and are synonymous with limited English proficient (LEP) student, as used in Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 29, Subchapter B. (p. 1)

According to the Texas Education Agency (2020), in order for a student to meet eligibility to be in a bilingual or ESL program, they must meet the following criteria: (a) indicate a language other than English on the Home Language Survey, (b) test below the set scores on the test administered for the student's grade level, (c) be recommended by a language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) for placement in the program, and (d) have a signed parental approval letter placed in the ELL student's bilingual or ESL permanent record (Texas Education Agency, 2020). After a student meets all the above criteria and is labeled an ELL student, they will have to be reviewed by the school's LPAC at the end of the school year (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The LPAC, with parental approval, will designate the initial instructional placement and classify the level of English proficiency according to the annual state mandated assessment for ELLs from

K-12th grade; the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) designates the level of academic achievement and recommends the student's exit of the program (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Texas English Language Learner Demographics

With over one million ELL students enrolled in 2019, Texas is home to the second largest number of ELL students in the United States (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2018), as these students made up nearly 15.7% of the student population in the state as of 2015. According to the Office of English Language Acquisition (2018) within the U.S. Department of Education, 138 local education agencies (LEAs) out of a total of 1,151 had a higher percentage of ELLs than the state average. ELL students are now enrolled in almost half of all public schools nationwide. That number is an estimated 45,283 public schools of the approximately 91,000 schools in the United States (Zehler et al., 2003). Between the decade of 1997–1998 and 2008–2009, the number of ELL students increased by 51% whereas the general population of students only increased by 7% (Samson & Collins, 2012). With nearly 6.3 million ELL students in classrooms today, the current projections are for children from racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds to make up 48% of the total enrollment in public educational settings by 2020, for one out of every four students to be identified as an ELL student by 2025, and for an estimated one out of every seven U.S. residents to be foreign born (Banks & Banks, 2007; Berenyi, 2008; Kihuen, 2009).

A student who meets all four criteria mentioned above qualifies to be an ELL student in Texas; however, parents must sign consent for their child to be enrolled in an ELL bilingual program. Some parents choose to deny any bilingual program offered by

the school district. Parents have this right; yet, when parents deny a child's classification as an ELL student, they are denying all bilingual ESL programs offered by the state. For example, according to the Texas Education Agency (2020), if a student is a parent denial for any bilingual education services, the student is ineligible to generate bilingual/ESL average daily attendance (ADA) funds in the summer and forfeits attending any bilingual summer school program, even if they are in need of summer school.

Central Texas ISD is located in Texas and serves just over 8,000 students in 10 campuses that include six elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. ELLs compose 3.3% of the student population, at 271 students, according to Central Texas ISD Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) data for the 2018–2019 school year. Of those 271 students, a prevailing issue is the number of bilingual language denials taking place in the elementary and intermediate settings. During the 2018–2019 school year, there were 56 bilingual language denials in Central Texas ISD (C. Jerkins, personal communication, 2019), possibly affecting these students' acquisition of the English language.

Academic Achievement Gaps Facing English Language Learners

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) mandated that by the year 2014, all students, regardless of race or ethnic origin, would be proficient in reading and mathematics. With the increase in ELLs in recent years, leaders of K-12 institutions need to ensure the success of these students as much as that of native English speakers. According to enrollment trends reported by the Texas Education Agency, the number of students identified as ELLs increased by 254,618 (31.8%) between 2008–2009 and 2018–2019. In the 2018–2019 school year, 19.4% of students were identified as ELLs

compared to 16.9% in 2008–2009 (Texas Education Agency, 2019). As a result of the increase in the enrollment numbers for ELL students in public schools, the diversity of English language proficiency among ELLs has increased in mainstream classrooms (Pimentel, 2011) because it can take 5 to 7 years for ELLs to become proficient in English to succeed academically (Alonso, 2013; Umansky & Reardon, 2015).

Achievement gaps between students proficient in English and their ELL counterparts have always existed in the United States (Gibson, 2016). According to Good et al. (2010), the underachievement of Hispanic ELL students is a problem that has caught the attention of educational leaders, policymakers, teachers, parents, and taxpayers alike. The increase in ELL student enrollment created a sense of urgency to adjust instructional course, but also spotlighted the issue of lower academic achievement as shown in standardized tests. The underachievement of ELLs as compared to their native English-speaking peers can be seen in the academic achievement data on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) or the *Nation's Report Card*. In the 2011 report, 12% of ELLs scored "at or above proficiency" in math compared to their non-ELL peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Slavin et al., 2010). In 2017, there was still an obvious setback with ELL students in terms of academic achievement in the State of Texas, as only 71.5% of ELLs were graduating, as opposed to the total state graduates of 88.3% (Sanchez, 2017). In response, interventions have been put into place to address the academic gaps for ELLs, such as ESL, bilingual, and dual language models, which are further explained in a later section.

Reading is the foundational, necessary skill to achieve academically in school and to succeed in future life careers (Becker et al., 2014). Every academic subject involves

reading; therefore, reading, specifically reading comprehension, is important for all students, including ELL students (Becker et al., 2014). Singh (2013) explained disadvantages occur for ELL students in third grade because of state imposed reading assessments mandated by NCLB. These ELL students perform lower than non-ELL students on state mandated exams. Singh (2013) stated early performance in reading is a crucial factor for future academic achievement in higher grade levels in schools. According to Becker et al. (2014), "Young children are still rapidly developing in their language and cognitive skills, which are critical to reading comprehension, whereas older children's (graders') language and cognitive skills are more advanced" (p. 91), which is precisely why an early literacy program and an effective early bilingual program are important for the literacy of young ELL students.

Federal Policies for English Language Learners

The BEA of 1968 is often credited as being the first piece of federal legislation to address the needs of ELL students (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). However, it was actually the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that set the precedent for bilingual students' rights. Court interpretations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin were extended to ELL students as part of the desegregation and equal access to schooling mandated in subsequent landmark court cases such as *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981; Osorio-O'Dea, 2001).

In 2001, under President George W. Bush, Title VII of the ESEA was nullified and renamed Title III of the ESEA, during the NCLB era. This change was significant because the focus was now on achieving measurable outcomes for ELL students, and

schools were to be held accountable if they failed to show academic progress in student performance and acquisition of the English language (Crawford, 2002). This change was evident with the act's renaming: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. The English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act requires individual states to provide ELL students with research-based programs "that the state agencies believe to be the most effective for teaching English (Elementary Secondary Education Act, Title III, Part A). Texas is one of four states in the United States requiring bilingual education, along with Illinois, New Jersey, and New York (Rossell, 2009; Zehr, 2007).

State Policies for English Language Learners

In 1973, during the 63rd legislature, the Texas Bilingual Education and Training Act S.B. 121 required all school districts with 20 or more ELL students in the same grade and within the same language classification to provide a bilingual education program. This Act superseded HB103, the first bilingual education bill passed by the 61st legislature in Texas that recognized the specialized needs of ELLs and allowed school districts to provide bilingual education, overturning the state's previous English-only stance. Bilingual and ESL educational programs are listed in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) under Title 19, Part II, Chapter 89, subchapter BB and are the agency rules regarding bilingual education mandates and special language programs, including the identification, placement, and exiting of ELLs into bilingual or special language programs; duties of the LPAC; hiring and licensing of bilingual teachers; parent notification; exemptions; and all other provisions outlined in TEC Chapter 29 (Texas Administrative Code, 2018).

Schools must offer bilingual education to elementary grade students as well as bilingual education, ESL, or another method of transitional language instruction at the post-elementary level through eighth grade. Students at the high school level must be provided instruction in ESL (Texas Education Code [TEC], Chapter 29, section 29.053 [d]). A variety of program models were put in place by the federal and state government in order to provide ELLs an opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in the larger U.S. society.

Bilingual Education

To fully understand the language policies that affect ELLs and their families, it is important to provide a brief background of reform policies in the United States. This review highlights the creation of the BEA of 1968, which was the original federal legislation that documented and addressed the needs of limited English-speaking ability students (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). The next significant language policy came in 1974 in the form of the Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). As a result of that decision, the 1968 BEA was reauthorized in 1988 to allocate more funding for bilingual programs, but increasingly emphasized English-language programs (Edwards, 2004). This reauthorization offered leaders of school systems the opportunity to seek bilingual education alternatives, aiming to develop English proficiency at the earliest opportunity. In this section, those bilingual program models are explained in depth.

Bilingual Education Policies

The BEA of 1968 is noted as the first official federal recognition of the needs of students with limited English-speaking ability (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). Since its implementation, the BEA has undergone four amendments to reflect the changing landscape of the need for schools to support ELLs. For starters, the definition of students was initially written as limited English-speaking ability (LESA), and then changed to limited English proficiency (LEP), to ELLs, and now to English learners (ELs).

1968 Bilingual Education Act. The BEA marked a new outlook and the first commitment to address the needs of children with limited language skills (Mavrogordato, 2012). As such, federal funds were authorized to aid in the development of special programs for language-minority students (Del Valle, 2009). The BEA had two purposes: to encourage states to recognize the special needs of ELLs and to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies (Mavrogordato, 2012). In addition to the aforementioned purposes, the BEA provided for limited ability instruction designed to assist ELLs while using their first language to achieve English acquisition (Hosch, 1984). Despite the BEA being established to provide equal educational opportunities for ELLs, it was a crime to use a language other than English for instruction in Texas until 1973 (Crawford, 1989).

Lau v. Nichols. One important court case that has been impactful in bilingual education is *Lau v.* Nichols (1974), based on the Civil Rights of 1964. In 1971, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) was integrated, yet leaders decided not to provide 1,800 non-English-speaking students of Chinese ancestry a way to improve their English proficiency even though their public-school classes were full English immersion.

Lau, along with other students, filed a class action suit against SFUSD on the premise that seclusion from language program models violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment (i.e., that all persons born in the United States were citizens and were to be given the full and equal benefit of all laws; Kelly, 2019). The Court of Appeals decided these students were not receiving an equal educational opportunity because they did not understand the language of instruction and the school leaders were not doing anything to assist them (Baker, 1996). As a result, the government issued the "Lau Remedies," which specified pedagogical directives, including that the children's home language be used for instruction in primary schools (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010).

This reauthorization did not promote bilingualism, it only used it as a means to acquire the English language and it did not support maintaining the native language as enrichment to the curriculum (Wiese & Garcia, 1998). The reauthorizations reflected strong antipathy to the use of federal resources to conserve minority languages and cultures, claiming federal funds should English language acquisition and assimilation into the mainstream (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Although the Lau Remedies were designed to help school district leaders develop programs to meet the educational needs of ELLs, they failed to create a standard method of determining success in those programs funded under the reauthorizations. The main reason for the shortcoming was the absence of consistent research-based information concerning effective instructional delivery methods for language-minority students (Treffner, 2003). Additionally, the emphasis placed by experts on the use of the native language and English as a means of instruction was challenging to implement as a result of a lack of economic means, absence of trained personnel, and the concern that bilingual programs promoted school

segregation (Moran, 1998). Though the Lau Remedies had their shortcomings, they did provide the first semblance of accountability in terms of programs and funding. School leaders had to demonstrate their programs were effective for language-minority students or they would lose federal funding (Ovando, 2003).

1988 Bilingual Education Act. With the diversity of LEP students in districts around the nation, the BEA was reauthorized in 1988 to provide guidance on educating this population. Then Secretary of Education, William Bennett, called this a pluralistic approach, thus allowing school district leaders to provide the instructional program that would best serve their LEP student populations (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). With this flexibility, states must determine and meet the needs of the LEP student population they are serving, while also determining the language program model needed (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). The BEA marked a new outlook and the first commitment to address the needs of children with limited language skills (Mavrogordato, 2012). ELL students are those whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may cause them to fail to meet a proficient level of achievement on state assessments, to achieve success in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or to have the opportunity to participate fully in society (NCLB, 2002). As such, federal funds were authorized to aid in the development of special programs for language-minority students (Del Valle , 2009).

The BEA was reauthorized in 1974, 1978, 1984, 1988, 1994, and 2001, each time with additions designed to improve instruction for ELL students. In 2002, the BEA was substituted by Title III of NCLB. Title III continued the funding for bilingual education but referred to this education as "Language Instruction for the LEP." An increasing

number of children are learning one language at home and attempting to transition

through preschool and grade school programs that require them to adopt a different

language at school (Schecter et al., 1996).

Bilingual Education Practices

The enactment of bilingual education policies allowed for state and local control

over determining the best program models and instructional interventions to provide

equitable education opportunities to ELLs. Despite research (Collier, 1995; Ramirez et

al., 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997) that showed certain programs and practices

encourage the development of literacy and academic learning in the native language,

bilingual programs continue to be vastly different with respect to the use and

development of literacy in the native language, ranging from total absence to benign

neglect to active involvement (Hornberger, 1994). Because no one program can fit the

needs of all ELL students, a variety of program models can be used. Such programs

include dual language or two-way immersion, early-exit or late-exit, transitional bilingual

education, and early-transitional bilingual education (Linquanti, 1999). The ESL program

model is explained in addition to the bilingual programs.

Transitional bilingual/early-exit. Transitional/early-exit is the most common

federally subsidized program in the United States (Baker, 2006; Ovando et al., 2006).

The transitional bilingual/early-exit program model serves ELLs in English and another

language to be successful in English-only instruction no earlier than 2 years, nor later

than 5 years after the student enrolls in school. Under TEC 29.061 (b)(1), instruction in

this program is delivered by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education for

the assigned grade level and content area. The transitional program initially uses the

28

child's native language as a foundation from which to transition them to an English-speaking learning environment (Rhodes et al., 2005). Brisk (2006) named three types of transitional bilingual education programs: the 90/10 and 50/50 models previously identified by Thomas and Collier (2002) and the early-exit transitional bilingual education model identified in the "Ramirez Report" (Ramirez et al., 1991). Advocates of bilingual education contend that though transitional bilingual education is more favorable than other forms of subtractive language programs, it is not as effective as additive programs in meeting the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy, and does not promote positive attitudes toward the heritage language or native language maintenance as important program goals (Brisk, 2006).

Transitional bilingual/late-exit. Late-exit bilingual programs provide students with native language support for at least 3 years, with many programs lasting 5 to 7 years, or at least through the elementary school years (Ovando et al., 2006). The late-exit program model does not differ in its goal from the early-exit model. The difference in program models lies in when students are able to reclassify to an English-only instructional model and be successful. The late-exit model prepares to reclassify students no earlier than 6 years, nor later than 7 years after enrolling in school. Under TEC 29.061 (b)(2), instruction in this program will be delivered by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education for the assigned grade level and content area. The purpose of bilingual education programs is to teach students English as quickly as possible. Once students have learned English, usually within a certain time period, they are then transitioned into English-only classes (Rivera, 2002). Bilingual education advocates support late-exit programs over other language programs because the prolonged exposure

29

to native language is socially, psychologically, and academically beneficial to an ELL student. The term "late exit" is preferred over the model's previous name, "language maintenance," because of the politics involved with funding. However, the term "maintenance" lost favor when controversy arose regarding the use of federal funds for native language maintenance, which opponents felt was not the proper role of the federal government (Ovando et al., 2006).

Dual language immersion/one-way. Dual language immersion programs surfaced as a result of immigrant groups wanting to maintain their native language in schools while learning the English language. In dual language, including one-way developmental, one language group is schooled in two languages (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Torres-Guzman, 2002). The dual language immersion/one-way program model serves students identified as ELLs in English and another language to attain full proficiency in both languages. Under this program model, the goal of student reclassification is to reclassify no earlier than 6 years, but no later than 7 years after the student enrolls in school. This program model provides instruction in literacy and academic content in the students' primary language and English, with at least half of the instruction being delivered in the students' primary language for the duration of the program. The use of the native language is not a resource for English acquisition but rather for the acquisition of both languages. Under TEC 29.061, instruction in this model may be delivered either by a teacher certified in bilingual education or by a different teacher certified in ESL.

Dual language immersion/two-way. The most common form of dual language education is the two-way immersion model, which originated in Canada (Lara-Alecio et al., 2004). Dual language immersion programs surfaced in response to immigrant groups

wanting to maintain their native language while learning English. According to Varghese and Park (2010), "Dual-language has surfaced as a prominent alternative for those groups who wish to use immigrant students' heritage language in schooling" (p. 73). Two-way bilingual immersion programs can be used as an enrichment tool for both minority and majority language speakers because they have been shown to increase majority language students' academic performance (Marian et al., 2013).

The dual language immersion/two-way program model differs from the one-way model in that students identified as ELLs are integrated with English proficient students and are served in both English and another language. The goal of this program is to reclassify ELLs to be successful in English-only instruction no earlier than 6 years but later than 7 years after the student enrolls in school. This model provides instruction in literacy and academic content in both English and another language, with at least half of the instruction delivered in the non-English language. As in the one-way program model, under TEC 29.061, instruction must be delivered either by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education or by a different teacher certified in ESL. In contrast to one-way immersion, two-way immersion uses two languages for instruction and two groups of students—native English speakers and language-minority students from a single language background (Howard & Christian, 2002). The students are guided through a highly structured content-based language learning program, giving students of both languages the opportunity to acquire language through interactions with their peers (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Linton, 2004). The programs provide the same academic content and address the same standards as other educational programs and provide instruction in the two languages over an extended period of time, from kindergarten

through at least fifth grade. Instruction is in the partner language at least 50% of the time (Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

Advocates of bilingual education believe the practice of offering instruction in two languages gives equal status to both the minority and majority language and allows minority language speakers to serve as models for their native language speaking classmates (Crawford, 2004). The long period of time before a student takes hold of a second language has raised concerns and criticisms related to dual language programs. Most researchers cite a minimum of 3 to 5 years for basic oral proficiency, with complete bilingualism and acquirement of academic language skills occurring closer to 7 or 8 years into the program (Hakuta et al., 2000; Torres-Guzman, 2002).

English as a Second Language Program Practices

There are several program models under the ESL umbrella. Within these models, instruction may occur in the mainstream classroom, in a small group, or in a pullout setting to help students acquire the language (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). These programs include a variety of strategies to facilitate the acquisition of English while providing support for students during this transitional process (Rhodes et al., 2005). This section will outline the differences between two ESL program models and how they differ from one another. With an understanding of the language program models aimed at students acquiring their non-native language, this review will also explain the process of acculturation and assimilation ELL students experience. In the United States, there is intense societal pressure on minority groups to conform to speaking English only. Due to this pressure, second- and third-generation immigrants have generally lost their language entirely (Collier, 1995). According to Brisk (2005), cultural considerations are essential

in implementing sound curricula, choosing materials, integrating with and disciplining students, and understanding different ways to demonstrate knowledge. Others may fear that any cultural or linguistic supports provided to ELL students in school will impede the ELL students' progress with assimilation (Wiese & Garcia, 1998).

ESL/Content-Based Program Model

Though bilingual education advocates typically do not regard ESL as an adequate means of educating ELLs, there is a general acceptance of ESL programs that use content-based or sheltered English approaches, as these teaching approaches incorporate a variety of methods proven to be effective in developing English language skills while simultaneously covering academic content material (Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Theoharis and O'Toole (2011) conducted case studies of two urban elementary schools and the principals involved in school reform that resulted in inclusive ELL services. The first principal led her school to adopt a dual certification approach, where the staff engaged in professional development around ELLs (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). They combined federal, state, and local resources to eliminate pullout ELL programs and reduce class sizes so elementary teachers would take sole responsibility for building community and instructing ELLs and all students. In their research, Theoharis and O'Toole found when teachers changed from implementing pullout programming to push-in inclusive programming, teachers felt they gained efficacy and ownership of all ELLs. In addition to the benefit of inclusiveness, they felt they could make the instruction comprehensible and accessible to all ELLs and at the same time maintain the rigor, relevance, and authenticity of the state content standards for ELL (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). The second principal led his school to adopt a co-

teaching approach where teams of general education and ESL teachers planned

instruction and co-taught all students (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). They also eliminated

pullout ELL services and focused on community building, professional development, and

collaboration (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Theoharis and O'Toole found student

achievement at both schools improved, and in particular the achievement of ELL students

significantly improved, as did the connection with ELL families. In support of the

benefits provided by push-in ESL programs, results of a study in Georgia showed this

ESL model helped the students learn content while acquiring English language

proficiency (Wlazlinski, 2014).

The content-based program model targets English language development through

content instruction in English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social

studies. This program is designed for ELLs to obtain full proficiency in English through

the use of instruction that is linguistically and culturally responsive. Under TEC

29.061(c), instruction is to be delivered by a teacher appropriately certified in ESL. In a

pullout ESL program, instruction focuses on developing the student's English language

skills; they leave the classroom for this instruction for only a few classroom periods a day

(Rhodes et al., 2005).

ESL/Pullout Program

Researchers have reported ELLs gained a better understanding of the English

language when they participate in a pullout program than when they participate in other

types of ELL programming (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). The City University of New York

(CUNY) sent researchers and assistants to failing schools in NYC. During the study, they

found that when ESL teachers in a pullout program incorporated culturally responsive

teaching techniques (e.g., using the first language to support unknown concepts), ELLs'
proficiency scores increased on norm-referenced language assessments such as the World
Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) or the Comprehensive English
Language Learning Assessment (CELLA; Carroll & Bailey, 2016; García & Sánchez,
2015; Pawan & Seralathan, 2015).

The pullout program model targets English language development through
English language arts and reading. This program's goal is for ELL students to obtain full
proficiency in English through the use of academic content that is also linguistically and
culturally responsive in English language arts and reading (TEC, Chapter 20). Under
TEC 20.061 (c), instruction is to be delivered through an appropriately certified ESL
teacher. This instruction will be provided in a pullout or inclusionary model.

Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) program models have been
used in public schools since the establishment of the BEA, in both its initial and current
forms. These program models have served as academic and linguistic interventions to
provide the support students need at different levels of their language acquisition
journeys. Though these services result in proper exiting of the bilingual program models
for students to perform successfully in English-only classrooms, there are complications
associated with denials of these language services.

Acculturation

Acculturation is defined as a process through which a person or group from one
culture seeks to adopt another culture's practices and values while retaining their own
distinct culture (Cole, 2019). This process is most commonly discussed regarding a
minority culture adopting elements of the majority culture, as is typical with immigrant

groups that are culturally or ethnically distinct from the majority in the place to which they have immigrated (Cole, 2019). Acculturation occurs when ELLs willingly maintain their native language and enthusiastically embrace the target language and culture to the extent that they become fluent in both the mother tongue and the target language (Schumann, 1986; Unganer, 2014). In the process of acculturation, ELLs select some essential aspects of the target culture that are compatible with their culture (J. M. Kim et al., 2015). Scholars have found acculturation can have some health benefits and enhance the self-esteem of ELLs within the second language acquisition process (Guinn et al., 2011).

Y. M. Kim (2013) examined Mexican American children's acculturative experiences through the various lenses of Latino and Mexican American history, sociopolitical contexts, theories, and quantitative analyses. The specific aims of the study were to identify acculturation patterns, to investigate whether any particular acculturation pattern affected educational achievement, and to examine the impact of acculturation facets and education policy on educational achievement (Y. M. Kim, 2013). Y. M. Kim compared two groups of third- to fifth-grade students of Mexican descent in Texas and Arizona. There were 295 students in this study ranging from 9–11 years old, and 70% of the sample was born in Mexico and 30% was born in the United States. The findings of this study indicated educational policy was associated with the children's acculturation pattern and psychological well-being, which, in turn, influenced their educational competence (Y. M. Kim, 2013). The Mexican American children who received bilingual education and who maintained Mexican cultural traits fared well educationally and psychologically because they could develop constant acculturation patterns that were

congruent with their surroundings (Y. M. Kim, 2013). These findings support that bilingual education appeared to create a positive educational trajectory for segregated Mexican American children because the bilingual education pedagogy matched the children's home and school environments (Y. M. Kim, 2013).

The onset of World War I inspired a spirit of assimilation, Americanization, and fear of languages and cultures other than mainstream English that would endure through the Civil Rights movement (Ovando et al., 2006). In Tsianguebeni's (2017) study regarding the issues of ambivalence between acculturation and assimilation in transitional programs for ELLs, acquiring a new language entailed undergoing a new process of acculturation. Tsianguebeni cited Schumann's model of acculturation to explain how people from different cultures enthusiastically adopt the language and customs of the target group without giving up their mother tongue and culture (Tsianguebeni, 2017). Schumann (1986) advocated for the use of both the mother tongue and the target language as the ultimate way to meet the prospect of second language acquisition that can eventually lead into bilingualism and is more beneficial for second language learners than assimilation.

Results of Tsianguebeni's (2017) qualitative phenomenological study corroborated Schumann's theory of acculturation model that implies a positive attitude on behalf of the learners and mutual collaboration with people of the target language to acquire the language will lead to academic success. The factors that prevented ELLs from developing literacy skills in English and academic achievement success in U.S. public schools were explored in Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) district located in Indiana. Participants included ESL teachers and mainstream classroom

teachers working with ELLs in the selected EVSC schools. In this study, the researcher analyzed the lived experiences of professionals involved in this research to assess their perceptions of the language deficit discourse and the academic failure of ELLs in U.S. public schools. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers and selected mainstream classroom teachers to collect data. The findings showed some mainstream classroom teachers lacked the appropriate training to meet the educational needs of ELLs (Tsianguebeni, 2017).

In an ethnographic study of Spanish speakers' motivation and responses to opt for either an English-only or a dual English-Spanish educational program, Wright (2017) surveyed families on how they arrived at their language program decision. The researcher explored parents' perceptions of the purpose, advantages, and disadvantages of learning in school in English-only or in a dual English-Spanish program through focus group and individual interviews. Seven Spanish-speaking parents living in Southern California who had children enrolled in a school that offered the academic program taught in an English-only format or in a dual immersion English-Spanish program were interviewed and asked about their experiences with English, their feelings about English and Spanish, their ideas on the importance of each language, their reasoning behind their choice of language in academic influence, and their perception of their child's language preference as well as their reactions (Wright, 2017).

The overarching theme in terms of language acculturation came from the understanding and need of families to learn English because they know the access it provides for their kids, and the importance of belonging to their new environment (Wright, 2017). However, the desire to preserve Spanish as the mother tongue is a

concern to remain part of the Hispanic community. Without doubt, they all understood the importance of English language acquisition, but the internal dilemma of possibly leaving their mother tongue behind was ever present. Wright (2017) noted the participants' responses clearly showed how they were pushed beyond their comfort zone: from deciding to leave behind their friends with whom they shared their first language, to making a drastic change in their radio, television, and music preference, as well as going to the extreme of being hyperaware of the entire process of communication (e.g., message, words, body language, and tone). The major findings Wright discovered in the study indicated participants' perceptions of language were a key to access groups and power structures, the underlying dilemma of how language reveals the tension between acculturation and language preservation, parents' perceptions of attitudes toward different languages, contradictions between parents' expressed attitudes and their language behavior, the assumptions parents make reasoning that English must be mastered and Spanish will be learned organically, the advantages of school bilingualism versus organic bilingualism, the awareness parents have of their native language and how it is transforming, and the dominance of English pushing the shift from Spanish to English and increasing language loss.

Acculturation can be seen throughout different aspects of society, but particularly with the mentioned studies of ELL families. The idea that English proficiency, at the earliest rate, is the most effective way to fit in with the new culture is seen throughout the existing research, but also, in the rate at which school and district leaders are pushing mainstream English classes as soon as possible. With the push for mainstream English,

this language acculturation is evident from parents and school systems, even when it is a rejection of their own culture.

Assimilation

Assimilation, in this study, is defined as the adoption of the target language and culture entirely in a way that is detrimental to their mother tongue and culture (Unganer, 2014). Since the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of assimilation has been debated in the science of migration but is now accepted as a way to describe the ways immigrants and their offspring change as they come in contact with their host society (Krogstad, 2004). In a publication titled "Bilingual Education: Segmented Assimilation or Selective Acculturation," the different theoretical perspectives of bilingual education in the United States were examined (Mendoza, 2014). The purpose of examining cultural assimilation and segmented assimilation was to help school leaders understand the families' perspective and identify ways to support these families, and increase parental involvement (Mendoza, 2014). Some scholars assert ELLs can achieve acculturation in bilingual programs while warning that unless they enroll in a bilingual program, ELLs are more likely to attend a program that solely focuses on English language proficiency, leading toward assimilation into U.S. culture (Cavazos-Rehg, & Delucia-Waack, 2009). Assimilation can result in mother tongue attrition and eventually impede ELLs' second language acquisition (Unganer, 2014).

Mendoza (2014) described the classical assimilation model as the gradual change into U.S. mainstream that increases with each generation. Mendoza found that segmented assimilation indicates that because of the diversity in the United States, there are various paths immigrants may take to assimilate that will yield different outcomes, some of

which may result in upward or downward mobility. Segmented assimilation developed regarding children in the United States of immigrants who arrived after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which lifted most of the immigrant restrictions from the 1920s (Mendoza, 2014). Segmented assimilation applies to children of immigrants who were born outside of the United States and came to the host country (i.e., the United States) while still children and were raised in the new host country (Mendoza, 2014). These children are referred to as the 1.5 generation (Mendoza, 2014). Because segmented assimilation does not predict a positive or negative outcome, Bondy et al. (2017) stated positive or negative trajectories are predicted by the racial, labor, and socioeconomic characteristics of the host society and the resources the parents have available for the child. The factors that contributed are listed as a co-ethnic community and how racial discrimination may affect life outcomes, opportunities to the labor market, and access to quality education. The resources to which a family has access will influence this upward or downward mobility. Alvear (2015) conducted a quantitative comprehensive comparative study of reading achievement across four major language acquisition programs in U.S. schools: (a) transitional, (b) one-way developmental, (c) two-way bilingual immersion, and (d) English immersion. In addition to studying reading achievement, the researcher contextualized the programs and their outcomes within segmented assimilation theory (Alvear, 2015). Using a longitudinal dataset from a large urban school district in Texas, reading outcomes in an elementary school were examined. Results indicated that although theories of segmented assimilation and additive bilingual assert that full bilingual promotes the highest student outcomes, more limited models of

41

bilinguals in the form of transitional programs led ELL students to positive reading outcomes (Alvear, 2015).

Through the studies mentioned above, assimilation was explained as a way to fall in line with the mainstream American way of life and increased with following generations. Though it is important for newcomers to feel comfortable in their new environments, the resounding issue seems to be their feelings of having to reject their identity, including their language identity, to become successful in their new community. Consequently, this is why Unganer (2014) wrote that assimilation is detrimental to a child's mother tongue and culture.

Parents and Bilingual Education

Parents play an essential role in language acquisition and how their children are educated, making it imperative that school leaders involve parents in schooling. However, to participate, parents need to know how the school system functions (Gonzalez & Maez, 1995). In this section, I analyze parents' feelings of mistrust in their school settings and how these feelings have affected their perceptions of the language program quality. Parents have often failed to initiate their own involvement with their children's schools because they have not felt welcome. Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) described minority parents as being less involved because of social, language, and cultural differences between them and the dominant culture of the school. Salinas and Franquiz (2004) noted migrant parents are at a more significant disadvantage because there are more obstacles to consider in addition to financial barriers, as health-related issues and living conditions must be contemplated. Other parents do not have the content knowledge needed to help their children (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). To overcome the

difficulties of such environments, parents need school or community resources to provide additional information. Latino parents, for example, attribute a lack of communication to not having help in comprehending the policies and procedures of the U.S. educational system (Gonzalez et al., 2013).

Parents' Feelings of Mistrust Toward the School

When used effectively and respectfully, parental involvement creates a positive school climate for all students regardless of their economic and cultural background (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Language has been found to be a barrier to parental involvement, as only 42% of parents who are non-native speakers participate in their children's school activities (Child Trends, 2010). Parents cite that the schools are not a welcoming environment to them and state they have had negative experiences at the school, such as teacher conferences and administrative conferences concerning their child (Dunlap & Alva, 1999). Gonzalez et al. (2013) specified, "Latino parents have described a bi-directional gap in understanding between themselves and school personnel, not having a context for comprehending U.S. educational policies and practices" (para. 4). While attempting to navigate the moving parts to public schooling in a foreign culture, a level of trust needs to be established for the systems in place for bilingual families. At the same time, a previous negative experience, often triggered by simple miscommunication, can prevent minority parents from approaching school personnel to discuss their children's educational problems or involvement options (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995).

In a study titled "Patterns of Latino Parental Involvement in Middle School: Case Studies of Mexican, Dominican, and Puerto Rican Families," Crespo-Jimenez (2011) examined what parents considered as the main role in getting involved in their children's

education. The response to higher involvement was teaching respect and nurturing (Crespo-Jimenez, 2011). Crespo-Jimenez investigated parental involvement patterns among Mexican, Dominican, and Puerto Rican families in an inner-city middle school. The main focus of this study was to document the participants' recollections and experiences, to contribute to the practical and contextual aspects of Latino parental involvement in their children's education, and to demystify the conventional viewing of a monolithic U.S. Latino community (Crespo-Jimenez, 2011). The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Madden, 1988) was used to frame the discussion of this study and a variety of ethnographic techniques were used to collect and describe the data. In interviewing the participants, one crucial understanding that emerged from the findings was the value the participants attributed to the interactions between the school and the community. They believed the school leaders were not doing enough to motivate Latino families in getting involved in their children's education. The findings also showed, although there were some ethnic differences among Mexican, Dominican, and Puerto Rican parents. Parent involvement in their children's education was strongly influenced by their perceptions about parental involvement and a sense of inadequacy working with the U.S. school system, and to a lesser degree by their ethnicity (Crespo-Jimenez, 2011).

In a study using data compiled by the Pew Hispanic Center between August 7 and October 15, 2003, different factors affecting the perceptions of barriers to Latino K-12 students' academic achievement were examined (Becerra, 2012). Becerra (2012) found Latino parents experience the most adversity when trying to develop active relationships or rapport with school staff and becoming involved in school functions. Becerra's study with Latino parents revealed many parents considered their child's classroom to be

44

unwelcoming and unfriendly. Teachers did not create a culturally responsive classroom for parents from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, Latino parents face a multitude of barriers, such as job obligations, that impede their ability to participate in their child's education. Building a culturally sensitive environment that invites parents into the school is the most effective way to decrease the barriers that impede parents from participating in their child's education (Malone, 2015). In building a culturally sensitive environment, school leaders are taking all of these barriers into account, including job obligations, and creating programs and systems where parents feel welcome and can be involved. These programs may be parent nights, parents nights with child care for younger siblings, and translators available to ensure parents understand the program dynamics.

Moreno (2016) conducted a mixed methods study of migrant parents' perceptions and involvement in bilingual education programs in South Texas. The sampling for this study consisted of 18 migrant parents whose children had been enrolled in a bilingual education program between third and sixth grade. Moreno used quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, and four participants were interviewed for the 2015–2016 school year. The findings represented migrant parents' perceptions of involvement in bilingual education programs in a South Texas district. A miscommunication between their child's bilingual education teacher and themselves was prevalent in the findings (Moreno, 2016). Responses from interviewees did not indicate the possibility of a partnership between parents and teachers. Teachers felt parents needed to be present at school whereas parents felt their involvement at home was more important.

S. K. Lee (1999) examined linguistic minority parents' perceptions and views of bilingual education by surveying 290 Latino parents whose children were enrolled in bilingual education classes in six elementary and four middle schools in the greater Los Angeles area. Results revealed the majority of the parents thought the use of two languages in the schools was helpful to their children's English development and desired their children to become bilingual. In contrast, a small percentage of parents did not support bilingual education because they believed all students should be treated equally and they viewed bilingual education as a form of institutional segregation (S. K. Lee, 1999). S. K. Lee suggested these parents took a position on bilingual education from a pseudo-cultural debate and not a pedagogical perspective. These parents may oppose bilingual education solely based on social and political viability.

Parents' Perceptions of Program Model Quality

With the growing number of ELLs in the United States, the challenge in finding language programs to address their academic needs is a growing one for both schools and parents. Though school districts and LEAs may be limited in the program models they can offer, parents are also faced with deciding which language program to choose based on availability. As noted in an earlier section, there are various program models: English-only, transitional bilingual (early-exit or late-exit), dual language (one-way or two-way), and ESL (content-based or pullout). The perspective of the quality of the language program model and whether it will aid in the student's language acquisition is seen in parental decisions or denials.

Depending on what program model school districts are offering, if students are identified as ELLs, they will be offered a special language program. However, parents are

free to choose for their child to be excluded from said model or not and there have been different studies performed to analyze parental attitudes for either decision. Munoz (2017) explored parental attitudes toward bilingual education and parental motivations for choosing dual language programs using a qualitative method of questionnaires. Participants in this study were parents of students from two middle schools in an urban school district in the northern New York City area (Munoz, 2017). There were 179 participants in the study; 103 participants were parents of students in the dual language program and 76 participants were parents of students in monolingual (English-only) classes. In Munoz's study, the results revealed parents who enrolled their children in the dual language program, identified, on average, more than three specific motivations for enrolling their child. Of the parents surveyed in the dual language bilingual program, most chose at least seven motivations for enrollment. The highest chosen motivation was related to biliteracy as parents felt being able to speak, read, and write in another language was a highly attractive quality about the program. Relating to other cultures, expectations of future benefits (e.g., possible career opportunities), bilingualism, and the idea it enhances overall learning were all listed as motivators for enrolling children in dual language programs. According to Munoz, most parents had favorable attitudes toward bilingual education.

Parent perceptions can also be viewed through the lens of whether parents feel as though they have in-depth knowledge of the program models and school experiences. In a study conducted by Mendoza (2014) about the challenges Latino parents of ELLs encounter in their children's schooling, parents were asked about their own school involvement. The purpose of this research was to explore the politics and practices at

school for Mexican and Mexican American/Latino parents of ELLs to identify the challenges and opportunities in building home–school relations (Mendoza, 2014). In this explanatory sequential mixed methods study, four research questions were used to guide the two-phase study. Parents of ELL students and school personnel were surveyed in the first phase, and focus group interviews with parents and school personnel were conducted in the second phase (Mendoza, 2014). Mendoza stated that although parents reported not being informed about the bilingual/ESL options and offerings, they would share during the focus groups their experiences and would gather information among themselves to learn about bilingual education and their child's programs. The researcher stated the parents sharing resources and advice among themselves supported the idea that parents do want information and do not want to be involved. Parental perceptions moved beyond just the program models and their knowledge of services provided and fell largely on their feelings of belonging in the school community. The researcher argued the aforementioned point by stating caregivers are likely to make decisions based on wanting to belong in their school community more so than relying on what they know about program models.

The relationship between policy and practice needs to be revisited because home–school relations and parent awareness of bilingual education are mostly led by compliance (Mendoza, 2014). School personnel do not understand the real purpose of bilingual/ESL programs as a support service for ELLs and their parents to ultimately close the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs but view bilingual education as a remediation model of English language proficiency (Mendoza, 2014). In the study titled, "Survey of Parents in a Predominantly Latino Elementary School to Determine

Factors that Affect Parental Involvement," the authors noted a variety of factors could influence parental involvement, including program model, student achievement, parental English language proficiency level, student grade level, parental education level, and family income level (Bodenstab, 2012).

<p style="text-align:center">Theoretical Framework: Sensemaking Theory</p>

Sensemaking theory has been defined as the ways people generate what they interpret (Weick, 1995). It involves social interactions with others within a specific context, making it both collective and situated in nature (Coburn, 2001, 2005, 2006; Weick, 1995). Sensemaking was used in an educational context in this study and defined as "the social practice of people constructing meaning out of what they do" (Thomson & Hall, 2011, p. 387). The theory of sensemaking is often used to understand the connection between how an educational innovation or policy is interpreted and then transferred into practice (Coburn, 2001; Ketelaar et al., 2012; Sleegers et al., 2009; Spillane et al., 2002).

Weick's Work

According to Weick (1995), sensemaking possesses at least seven distinguishing characteristics that set sensemaking apart from other explanatory processes. These seven characteristics are listed as identity, retrospect, enactment, social, ongoing, extracted cues, and plausibility. For the identity characteristic, Weick used the question, "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (p. 18). Sensemaking begins with the individual trying to make sense; the individual's identity is "constructed out of the process of interaction" (Weick, 1995, p. 20) with a change in the identity of self occurring as a result of changes in interactions. The first component of sensemaking,

individual cognition, refers to an individual's cognitive factors such as knowledge, beliefs, and prior experiences that explain how the individual responds to a given stimulus (Spillane et al., 2002). An individual's training and skills influence how and to what degree that person implements policies, and new information is filtered through existing beliefs and understood in relation to prior experiences (Spillane et al., 2002). Spillane et al. (2002) argued that if a person is more familiar with a given policy, it is more likely that they will adopt and implement said policy. Parents' familiarity or lack thereof with language programs may influence their likelihood of selecting or de-selecting enrollment for their children. In addition to cognitive factors, an individual's feelings, beliefs, and emotions can also have an impact on how the individual interprets change processes (Spillane et al., 2002).

The retrospect aspect of Weick's characteristics requires individuals to look back at events and what has already happened to give them meaning and make sense of the events. "The key word in the phrase, *lived*, is stated in the past tense to capture the reality that people can know what they are doing only after they have done it" (Weick, 1995, p. 24). The characteristic of sensemaking being enactive shows people are enacting in their environment and produce part of what they face. "They act, and in doing so create the materials that become the constraints and opportunities they face" (Weick, 1995, p. 31). Furthermore, sensemaking is a social process; "sensemaking is never solitary because what a person does internally is contingent on others. Even monologues and one-way communication presume an audience" (Weick, 1995, p. 40). The ongoing characteristic of sensemaking is one that is neither starting nor stopping. A sixth characteristic is that sensemaking is focused on and extracted by cues (Weick, 1995). Extracted cues are

simple, familiar structures that help people develop a greater sense of what is happening. Weick (1995) suggested an examination is needed of "how people deal with prolonged puzzles that defy sensemaking, puzzles such as paradoxes, dilemmas, and inconceivable events" and "ways people notice, extract cues, and embellish that which they extract" (p. 49). Finally, the sensemaking characteristic of plausibility resides in the "fact that it does not rely on accuracy: and that sensemaking is about plausibility, pragmatics, coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality" (p. 57).

Sensemaking Model

The iterative sensemaking model, developed by Zhang (2010), provides "a framework for analyzing and describing individual sensemaking focusing on the changes to the conceptual space and the cognitive mechanisms used in achieving these changes" (p. 261). Zhang et al. (2008) found the overall sensemaking process follows four stages: (a) task analysis; (b) exploratory stage; (c) focused stage; and (d) updates of knowledge representation with variations in length, number of loops involved, and focus at each stage. In the exploratory stage, the initially identified gap is a "loose notion of [a] lack of knowledge on some topic or problem" (Zhang, 2008, p. 10) followed by continued searching or sensemaking leading to more identified specific data or structural gaps. The updated knowledge loops back to inform the task or problem, the initial knowledge, and the structures to devise a solution, decisions, or task completion. If gaps are again identified, the process of sensemaking repeats.

In this study, I used sensemaking theory to examine parents' decision making in de-selecting language programs for their children. In other words, I used this theory to understand the motivations of parents in trusting the ability of school districts to properly

educate their children in both languages and to use their native language as an asset rather than a deficit. Sensemaking theory has been used to interpret cognitive factors such as knowledge, beliefs, and prior experiences that explain how an individual responds to a given stimulus (Spillane et al., 2002). When exploring parents' sensemaking of language programs, it is imperative to understand what parents know about bilingual education and the programs used for second language acquisition, what they believe about bilingualism and whether they see it as an asset, and what experiences they have endured with their children's school district.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed review of the methodology used in this

qualitative case study guided by the theoretical framework of sensemaking to identify

reasons behind parental denials of bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD.

Within this chapter, I discuss the research questions, research design and methods, site

selection, participant selection, data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness,

and limitations. The purpose of this research was to identify themes and patterns in the

reasons parents are denying bilingual services for their children in the district. A thorough

literature review revealed the need for a greater understanding of parents' perspectives

and attitudes leading to why they are denying special language services to which their

children are entitled. In addition, the literature review highlighted the importance of

parental involvement and partnership with schools and the community.

After reviewing the literature on qualitative methods, I confirmed my decision to

conduct a qualitative case study to understand how parents arrived at their decisions

regarding bilingual language programs. Yin (2009) outlined a qualitative case study as

"an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life

context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"

(p. 18). My hope in conducting the study was to hear the voices of parents who must

negotiate language policies and make programmatic choice decisions for their children. I

also hoped to provide information the school district leaders can use to understand

parents' motivations and perspectives that will enable them to strengthen their programs and advocate for equality in opportunity for enrichment language programs for all children at their schools.

I selected Central Texas ISD based on the number of families in this district that choose to reject bilingual education when compared to the total number of families that qualify for services (C. Jerkins, personal communication, 2019). Specifically, I sought a better understanding of why parents are denying bilingual services in this school district and what changes and improvements are needed to curb these denials of services. By investigating this phenomenon, I wanted to generate recommendations for change in district practices in terms of working with parents eligible to enroll their children in the bilingual program model.

Research Questions

The questions that guided this case study were designed to examine parents' perceptions regarding the language model provided by the district, as well as the reasoning that led parents to deny those services. In addition, I wanted to understand whether there are cultural, political, or social related issues tied to the decision of parents involved with bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD to de-select such services. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do district personnel perceive the effectiveness of communications between districts and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

2. How do caregivers perceive the effectiveness of communications between the district and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

3. How do parents make sense of their choice to deny bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD?

I used the sensemaking theory (Weick et al., 2005) as an analytic framework when examining the interviews of parents and district bilingual administrators and coordinators from Central Texas ISD. I worked with a select group of caregivers purposefully sampled to explore the research questions. I also worked with a select group of campus and district administrators to make sense of how parents' de-selection decisions affected the home–school relationship and how they believed the school district can effectively meet these families' needs in the future.

Research Design and Methods

In this section, I describe my choice of research design/methodology and the case study approach. I was interested in how parents make sense of the information they receive regarding bilingual education, their own attitudes and assumptions about special language programs, and how they arrive at the decision to deny these services for their children. I chose sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995, 2001; Weick et al., 2005) as the framework with which to study parental denials of language programs. My personal interest in bilingual education and my experience working in minority majority school districts inspired me to look at how parents made sense of bilingual education and how that influenced their decisions. I was led to this interest after speaking with the district

superintendent and district ELL coordinator about their concern regarding families not signing up for the district bilingual program at the designated campus.

The voices of parents of ELLs are traditionally underrepresented in education discussions both at the federal and local levels. Parents of ELLs struggle to have a voice with regard to their children's educational experiences. As Good et al. (2010) stated, "We suspect that the power and influence Hispanic parents can have on their children's education has been ignored by many and underestimated by most" (pp. 322-323). There is research on parents' expectations for their children's schooling, but as Jeynes (2010) stated, "much of this research has been conducted with predominantly Caucasian, middle class, children but comparatively fewer with ethnically diverse student groups" (p. 163). In addition, Good et al. (2010) found "parents expressed a great desire to advocate for their children but felt that schools did not, or would not, listen to them" (p. 329). The parents who de-selected bilingual language programs in this school district were given an opportunity to express their concerns or feelings about the bilingual language program that they may not have felt comfortable expressing before.

Case study research emphasizes detailed, in-depth data collection from multiple sources of information in the form of observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports (Creswell, 2018). I used an interview protocol to conduct face-to-face interviews with parents of ELL students to capture their thoughts, ideas, and understandings of the bilingual education system, their perceptions of bilingualism, and what led to their sensemaking. I also collected archival data in terms of pamphlets, letters, and correspondence between the school district and the families. In addition to interviewing families, I administered a questionnaire approved by the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) to district- and campus-level administrators to capture their perceptions of effectiveness regarding their communication with families. Results should assist educational practitioners in establishing a mutual understanding and collaboration with students' parents to curb the issue of denying language programs. Case studies enable participants to describe their contextual realities, which, in turn, allows the researcher to better understand the reasons behind their actions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Through this case study method, I engaged in efforts to hear and gauge the attitudes, opinions, and expectations of a group of parents whose children share a similar experience of historically struggling to perform well. The choice to use a qualitative approach in this study made the most sense because qualitative researchers position themselves closely to participants, conduct their studies in the field and then reflect on their own assumptions, and actively report their values and feelings (Creswell, 2018). The de-selection of a language program model is a unique phenomenon that deserves understanding, and I selected interviews as a qualitative method to understand and make meaning from these experiences. The only way to understand how an individual is processing a decision they make is to ask them questions about the event.

<center>Site Selection</center>

This case study took place in a suburban school district located in a rural city in Central Texas. I had access to participants in the school district because I currently work for the school district as a classroom teacher and serve as the superintendent's mentee. I discussed the study proposal with the district superintendent and district ELL coordinator prior to submitting a research request and received positive feedback. The school district

<center>57</center>

has a diverse group of bilingual students and families with different experiences and perspectives to take into account.

In the 2018–2019 school year, the school district had six elementary schools serving over 3,900 students of different racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Of the 3,900 students, 264 students received bilingual/ESL education (Texas Education Agency, 2019). One campus in the district is designated as the bilingual campus where students receive two-way bilingual instruction in an elementary setting. In this district, this elementary campus was receiving the students who accepted the bilingual services. On the district website, there was not a clear set of guidelines for parents to know the difference in program models between campuses, and this vague and broad stance created an opportunity to study parent sensemaking surrounding bilingual education. Parents have been given some information regarding the district's bilingual education program through the bilingual coordinator at the elementary school. Yet, parents are still denying services for their children, which has site and district coordinators at a loss.

Participant Selection

After securing IRB approval and formal approval from Central Texas ISD, I began the process of recruiting families for participation in this study. I first contacted the superintendent and provided information about the research and who would be interviewed to ensure he approved of the district and staff members' participation in the study. Thereafter, I emailed a recruitment letter to all of the families who qualified for bilingual services ($N = 63$) based on the Home Language Survey and denied those services. The participants were parents of elementary and intermediate aged children (i.e.,

pre-kindergarten through Grade 6) for whom, as noted on their enrollment forms, English was not the primary language used in the home. I also sent a recruitment letter to the bilingual site director, the district EL coordinator, and the bilingual campus principal.

I chose participants who indicated their interest based on the initial recruitment letter. I informed participants that the interviews were to be audio-recorded for an accurate account of the meeting both in the email and again prior to the start of any interviews. In addition, I notified participants of their ability to terminate the interviews and involvement with the study at any time without penalty. To ensure all participants remained anonymous, I assigned a pseudonym to each person interviewed and used these pseudonyms in the transcript of each interview. When coding and analyzing the qualitative data, I input information into an online drop box while completing the research. Thereafter, all secure and identifying information was removed.

I used purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2017), or the selection of specific participants based on a set of a group of characteristics, in this qualitative case study. I used this method to select the participants and district employees from the pool of willing participants who responded to the recruitment email. I used publicly available information provided by the school district and the state education agency to select families and district staff members. I chose district staff members based on their current positions working in the bilingual department using information provided by the district coordinator and district superintendent.

Data Collection Methods

The primary data collection devices were questionnaires administered to caregivers through face-to-face interviews, from which a sample group was chosen, and an interview protocol for interested participants. I also collected archival data to triangulate the data collected from questionnaires with district- and campus-level administrators and interviews with families. I developed the interview protocol for this study, and because the target caregivers were likely non-English speakers, I served as the district-approved translator to assist in ensuring accurate translations of the questionnaires and documents exchanged. The questionnaire was offered in English and language other than English (LOTE) majority. I translated all questions from English into the target language.

Both the questionnaire and interviews followed a protocol designed by me for the purposes of this study. First, I reviewed the questions and participants' responses to ensure the stories, perceptions, and attitudes were captured as intended as well as to ensure the removal of any bias and leading questions. This review also established confidence that the process and questions were culturally appropriate for the participants and for the purposes of this study. The purpose of both the questionnaire and interviews was to answer the research questions and gain the participants' perspective. Throughout the process, I ensured the questions were aligned with the research questions to make sure all were addressed and to avoid irrelevant questions.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data in real-time, guided by interviews and discussions, to gain the fullest understanding of the participants' perspectives and use the data to their fullest. According to Creswell (2012), there are three dimensions for organizing data: experiencing (observing and taking field notes), inquiring (asking people for information), and examining (using and making records). The dimensions are continuously ongoing as the data are coded and categories are created using comparisons. Data analysis involved transcribing interviews and looking for common themes to reflect on what was interpreted. Through coding, I identified significant themes that enabled me to compare and contrast the perceptions of participants (Creswell, 2012). I then analyzed and categorized the data into themes and commonalities and developed interpretations to report the final findings. I used this information to answer the leading research question of why parents are de-selecting language programs for their children.

Provisions for Trustworthiness

The area of validity most significant in qualitative research is related to trustworthiness. Trustworthiness includes the four concepts of confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is the confidence in the truth of the findings; transferability is showing the findings have applicability in other contexts; dependability is showing the findings are consistent and could be repeated; and confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest. The techniques used in this study to establish credibility were semi-structured interviews with parents, all

of whom de-selected language programs for their children; interviews with bilingual campus administrators, all of whom had contact with the parents and may or may not have explained the language programs; and interviews with district administrators who have attempted to establish parent training to explain the importance of selecting language programs for their children. I conducted follow-up interviews with participants to share the study's initial findings and emerging themes to confirm their accuracy.

The techniques I used in this study to establish transferability were purposeful sampling and writing thick and rich descriptions of the study while providing sufficient contextual information about the participants and setting where the study took place. Throughout purposeful sampling, the boundaries of the study were also conveyed. I described the participants and school sites in detail to include the family demographics of parents and their children, as well as the roles within these settings of campus and district administrators. I provided the boundaries of the study such as the number of participants, criteria for selection, data collection methods, and duration of the study. Transferability was established based on these actions.

The techniques used in this study to determine dependability were based on establishing credibility. Through this process of inquiry, other researchers will be able to recreate the study and find similar results, thereby making it dependable. Dependability was established based on these actions. The technique used in this study to determine confirmability was an audit and triangulation. I analyzed the findings, interpretations, and recommendations to confirm the data were coherent and support the product. I triangulated the data through participant interviews, observations, multiple participants, and my personal experiences and qualifications as an educator.

My personal involvement and experience as an ELL and working with bilingual families had the potential to lead to researcher bias in favor of increasing the number of students enrolling in bilingual language programs. When conducting the study, I was not a parent of a child receiving bilingual services in the district, nor was I a bilingual teacher at the designated campus. I did not have any previously established relationships with the parents interviewed and had not been one of the students' teachers.

This study included certain limitations that stemmed from biases I brought to the study. I began my career in education as an elementary bilingual teacher in Corpus Christi, Texas, in a dual language class, providing the English language content to my students in mathematics and science/social studies and Spanish content in language arts and science/social studies (the content areas were alternated depending on the week). I later became a bilingual elementary teacher in El Paso and Waco, Texas, and have seen the benefits of language programs and how difficult school systems are to navigate for parents of ELL students. The difficulty in the experiences I have witnessed come from my background as an ELL student with minority language parents. My parents' decisions for my language instruction often relied on acculturating to what the majority of other minority language parents decided for their children.

There were also delimitations of this study in terms of its design. This case study was bound to one school district and limited to parents of elementary-aged students who have de-selected language programs. According to Yin (2015), a common concern about case study research is an inability to generalize the results. Initially, I set the parameters of the study to request participation from caregivers who denied language services in

Central Texas ISD during the 2018–2019 school year. After not receiving any responses to the request for participation, I expanded the parameters to denials of language services any year, which increased the possible participant pool to 63. Of the 63 possible participants, only three families decided to participate after receiving the recruitment letters. Though the quantity of participants resulted in a small number, I also collected data from campus and district administrators to improve and add to the breadth of the research.

A limitation in this study that is worth noting is the size of the district, as Central Texas ISD serves just over 8,000 students and only 271 are ELL students. This population makes up 1.7% of the student demographics. Due to this size, caregivers' denials affect the ability to maintain the program and expand it to other campuses. To expand to other campuses, program enrollment and recruitment of bilingual teachers would need to increase. The limited response from caregivers to participate in this study also presented as a limitation. Due to the restrictions of adhering to FERPA regulations while also navigating COVID-19 protocols during the time of this study, establishing credibility and rapport with the caregivers became difficult and affected participation in the study. Another limitation of the study was the inability to interview classroom teachers as the program is currently not implemented in its intended form. Because of the low enrollment in the bilingual program, there is only one grade-level section that is a bilingual classroom: the pre-kindergarten classroom. The pre-kindergarten bilingual teacher is new to the district this year, and the bilingual teachers who previously taught in the program as it was intended are no longer employed with the district. My aim in this study was to help leaders of the Central Texas ISD bilingual program develop

improvements in their department, as well as to inform leaders of school districts across the nation who may be facing the same issue.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the methodology I used to conduct this qualitative case study of parents and bilingual education in a suburban school district. The purpose of this study was to determine parents' sensemaking as to why they are de-selecting language programs for their children. I conducted semi-structured interviews with families who had been coded by the school district as able to receive bilingual services based on the Home Language Survey, as well as with campus and district administrators. Only parents who qualified as being eligible to receive bilingual services but de-selected them for their children were asked to participate. Each interview was audio-recorded and I transcribed, analyzed, and coded each recording. My aim in conducting this study was to improve upon the programs, policies, and practices related to bilingual education within Central Texas ISD as well as to provide insight to district leaders on how to reach language-minority parents in the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Results

I designed this qualitative case study to make sense of caregivers' choice against the transitional bilingual program model for their emergent bilingual children in Central Texas ISD. This research stemmed from the phenomenon in the school district of parents not enrolling their emergent bilingual children in the bilingual program. The knowledge gained from this study can inform leaders of the school district of the effectiveness of their communication to caregivers about the language services. This study also was intended to provide school district leaders with caregivers' voices and perspectives on their decision to de-select the language program for their children. With this in mind, school district leaders and policymakers can be properly informed in their design of programs and policy that affect language learners, regardless of the primary language, but in particular ELLs.

This study was designed to investigate why caregivers are denying language services for which their children qualify in Central Texas ISD. Sensemaking theory has been defined as the ways people generate what they interpret (Weick, 1995). It involves social interactions with others within a specific context, making it both collective and situated in nature (Coburn, 2001, 2005, 2006; Weick, 1995). Sensemaking was used in an educational context in this study and defined as "the social practice of people constructing meaning out of what they do" (Thomson & Hall, 2011, p. 387). In this study, I used sensemaking theory to examine parents' decision making in de-selecting language

programs for their children. In other words, I used this theory to answer the following research questions:

1. How do district personnel perceive the effectiveness of communications between districts and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

2. How do caregivers perceive the effectiveness of communications between the district and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

3. How do parents make sense of their choice to deny bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD?

Chapter Four contains four sections presented in narrative form. The first section presents the data collection and data analysis methods. The second section provides descriptive data about Central Texas ISD, the setting, and the participants. The third section shows the case study's findings, including the themes constructed with Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory, that emerged from the interviews. Finally, there is a summary of the results.

Data Collection

I collected information in this study by interviewing caregivers in Central Texas ISD whose children qualified to receive bilingual language services but instead chose not to select enrollment for their children. In addition to interviewing the caregivers, I interviewed campus and district administrators and teachers to gain their perspectives on the effectiveness of district communication and what they perceive to be parents' reasons for language service denials. The aim of the interviews was to provide school district

leaders with pivotal information regarding the bilingual program to have emergent bilingual students reach their full educational potential. In this chapter, I present the results of the analysis of the study findings in relation to the research questions. The qualitative analysis allowed me not only to gather information pertaining to the sensemaking of the caregivers and the school district perspective but also the impact of the situations on individual behaviors and actions through interviews. Chapter Four is intended to bring the voices and sensemaking of the participants in this program to the surface as a way to effect change.

Data Analysis Procedures

The primary data collection devices were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. I also collected archival data to triangulate the data collection, alongside the questionnaire with district and campus-level administrators and interviews with families. The archival data were provided to me by the bilingual coordinator and included the recruitment flyers in English and Spanish and the salary scales showing stipends for the recruitment of certified bilingual educators. Because the target caregivers were most likely to be non-English speakers, I served as the district-approved translator to ensure accurate translations of the questionnaires and documents exchanged. The questionnaire was offered in English and LOTE majority. I translated all questions from English into the target language.

Both the questionnaire and interviews followed a protocol I designed for this study. First, I reviewed the questions and participants' responses to ensure the stories, perceptions, and attitudes were captured as intended and attempted to remove any bias and leading questions. This review also established confidence that the process and

questions were culturally appropriate for the participants and this study's purposes. The purpose of both the questionnaire and interviews was to answer the research questions and gain the participants' perspective. Throughout the process, I confirmed the questions were aligned with the research questions to avoid irrelevant questions.

I analyzed the data in real-time, guided by interviews and discussions, to gain the fullest understanding of the participants' perspectives and use the data to their fullest. According to Creswell (2012), there are three dimensions for organizing data: experiencing (observing and taking field notes), inquiring (asking people for information), and examining (using and making records). The dimensions are continuously ongoing as the data are coded and categories are created using comparisons. Data analysis was done by transcribing interviews and looking for common themes to reflect on what was interpreted. Through coding, I identified significant themes to understand better and compare and contrast participants' perceptions to comprehend and formulate commonalities and differences (Creswell, 2012). I then analyzed and categorized the data into themes and commonalities and developed interpretations to report the final findings. I used this information to answer the leading research question of why parents are de-selecting language programs for their children. The information collected from the caregivers and educators was inductively analyzed. The participants' feelings and opinions cannot be generalized to all Texas schools or all bilingual families.

This chapter includes an introduction to the participants, their perceptions and knowledge of bilingual education, their perceptions of communication from the district, their decision making related to de-selecting the language service for their children, and an analysis of the data. I purposefully selected three caregivers who denied these services

for their children and three administrators who are actively involved in the process in Central Texas ISD to participate in this research study. I chose caregivers from the four elementary schools in the school district and in sending out recruitment correspondence, three participants responded with their selection to participate. Each of these families willingly chose to participate in qualitative, in-depth interviews on a video conference application. The interviews took place in their homes and at their requested time during the Winter months of 2020 and 2021. These video conferences were private, and all three families agreed on predetermined times for the interviews.

When beginning each interview, I introduced myself and asked for consent to record the interviews. After consent was granted, I reminded the participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of the research process and that they may stop the interview at any time or decline to answer any questions. Seven constructs were identified related to what caregivers and educators perceived to be playing a role in their de-selection of language services for their children: (a) identity construction, (b) social construction, (c) enactment, (d) retrospective, (e) ongoing, (f) extracted cues, and (g) plausibility. The caregivers in this study represented varying backgrounds, languages spoken in the home, and personal experiences with language. However, the unifying factor was their choice not to have their children enrolled in the transitional bilingual program in Central Texas ISD. The fact that this same decision was made by parents from varying backgrounds supports the need to make sense of their choices. Before we can understand why these families have made such an important decision for their school-age children, it is important to honor the history and experiences they bring forward with them into this decision making.

Descriptive Data

This study was bound to one school district. Though the students were enrolled at different campuses, the affected campus of these language denials was bound to one: the designated bilingual campus. At the time of the study, this campus had 529 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. The school currently had 47 students being served in the bilingual/ESL instructional program, and the campus is a Title I campus, with 56.7% of students identified as economically disadvantaged. The campus demographics by ethnic group were 14.2% African American, 33.5% Hispanic, 43.1% White, 4% Asian, and 4.9% two or more races.

Central Texas ISD has a demographic population that differs from the bilingual campus in terms of program enrollment and student demographics. At the time of the study, the district had 8,348 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. The district had 276 students being served in the bilingual/ESL instructional program and 34.4% of students identified as economically disadvantaged. The district demographics by ethnic group were 11.3% African American, 24.2% Hispanic, 56% White, 4.6% Asian, and 3.7% two or more races. The caregivers who participated in this study were Hispanic. Two participating administrators were Hispanic and one was White. The school district, campuses, and each participant received pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. *Participant Demographic Information*

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years with district	Position
Hannah	37	F	Hispanic	6 years	Caregiver
Rebecca	44	F	Hispanic	5 years	Caregiver
Lucy	42	F	Hispanic	3 years	Caregiver
Pamela	46	F	Hispanic	10 years	Bilingual coordinator
Wendy	45	F	Hispanic	10 years	Campus principal
Michael	35	M	White	3 years	District coordinator-federal programs

Setting

This case study took place in a suburban school district located in a rural city in Central Texas. I had access to participants in the school district because I currently work for the school district as a classroom teacher and serve as the superintendent's mentee. I discussed the study proposal with the district superintendent and district ELL coordinator prior to submitting a research request and received positive feedback. The school district has a diverse group of bilingual students and families with different experiences and perspectives to take into account.

In the 2018–2019 school year, the school district had six elementary schools serving over 3,900 students of different racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Of the 3,900 students, 264 students received bilingual/ESL education (Texas Education Agency, 2019). One campus in the district is designated as the bilingual campus where students receive two-way bilingual instruction in an elementary setting. In this district, this elementary campus was receiving the students who accepted the bilingual services. On the district website, there was not a clear set of guidelines for parents to know the difference in program models between campuses, and this vague and

broad stance created an opportunity to study parent sensemaking surrounding bilingual education. Parents have been given some information regarding the district's bilingual education program through the bilingual coordinator at the elementary school. Yet, parents are still denying services for their children, which has site and district coordinators at a loss.

Findings

In this section, I present each participant's perspective to explain their unique experiences and context for de-selecting language services for their children and for administrators to provide their perspective. Each case includes information about the participants' experiences with enrollment, with communication about the language programs, and with their perceptions of communicative effectiveness. For the caregivers, I include relevant information about their personal experiences as language students themselves, as well as their academic/language goals for their children. For the educators, I include relevant information about their involvement with caregivers and experiences within the bilingual department. I analyzed the interviews using the themes within Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory: (a) identity construction, (b) social construction, (c) enactment, (d) retrospective, (e) ongoing, (f) extracted cues, and (g) plausibility. The four themes that emerged from the interviews were extracted cues, social environments, retrospective, and identity construction.

Participants made sense of how their environments played an active role in the decision not to enroll their children in the bilingual program at Central Texas ISD. By analyzing the school environment and how they interacted with the organization, participants could see the direct connection between their experiences in those

environments and how those relationships did not always lead to nourishing social connections, which may have led to the de-selection of language services. This social principle was prevalent based on the fact that schools are a communal organization between stakeholders: educators, community members, and families.

To assist in making sense of how their environments played a role in their decision making, participants extracted cues from their environment, which helped shape their perspectives, in this case, having to do with their bilingual language experiences. The participants in this study had a strong desire to share their perspectives. Although they had very definitive answers to the interview questions, they usually conceded to provide the district with the benefit of the doubt and good intentions in unknown circumstances. Each of these themes is presented paralleled with the voices of the participants in the discussion. The voices or findings were consistent and presented as such, with the pertinent literature in the field of bilingual education with respect to services accepted or denied by caregivers.

Introduction to the Participants

Participant 1: Hannah

Prior to the interview session, Hannah contacted me via text message to express a desire to participate in the study. Hannah was hesitant to participate in the study because she was limited in her grasp of the English language and asked if the interview could be conducted in Spanish. I agreed and let Hannah know they could schedule the interview for that weekend in December 2020. I assured Hannah that the decision to participate or not would be confidential and respected. I contacted Hannah that weekend and conducted

the interview. Hannah is a parent of three children, with two fifth graders in their neighborhood school in Central Texas ISD.

Hannah and her spouse were together during the interview, as the spouse has handled most of the enrollment and involvement with the school. Hannah is a parent of children at John Adams Campus (a pseudonym), where the children are no longer served in an ESL model because they have since exited the program as well as the campus currently not having an ESL teacher. With two children of the same age, Hannah was initially introduced to bilingual education when enrolling their children and filling out the Home Language Survey. Once the survey indicated the primary language was not English, they were invited to go to the district bilingual campus to have the children interviewed as well as the parents.

According to Hannah, "The children were taken to talk to one teacher while we talked to another teacher, and I think it was to see how much English they knew." As a Spanish-speaking mother from a Latin country, Hannah was not exposed to multiple languages, and certainly not the English language, and thus has not been as involved in the children's school activities or enrollment. Her spouse participated in the interview from the beginning because he has been the primary parent in school activities and enrollment. This father came from a bilingual home having been in bilingual classes as a student himself in his native country, but because of his spouse's lack of English, Spanish is spoken in the home. Hannah's spouse felt the students would learn English at school with ease as he did and was "more concerned with making sure they do not lose their Spanish."

Hannah had many difficulties learning the English language and attributed them to her older age when attempting to start acquiring a new language. However, her spouse, having grown up in a school setting where English was taught since primary school, was familiar with the language acquisition process of a young student. Although they were not labeled as bilingual education classes, many of the teachers primarily spoke Spanish but taught English to the students to promote bilingualism. Neither of the parents felt as though there was an urgency to quickly acquire the English language because they were confident they would pick it up at school.

> We speak Spanish to them at home, our church community speaks Spanish to them, and our families speak Spanish to them. Our concern has always been that they maintain the Spanish language and are strong in their fluency. Picking up the English language was inevitable since their classes are all in English and it was a nice bonus that they had an ESL classes that enriched any issues they may have had in speaking or understanding, but it was never a worry for us.

Although one of the parents is fluent in English and Spanish, the father is aware that his thick accent is different from how his children speak the language. He has attributed that to the establishment and development of the ESL program at their home campus. Due to their focus on retaining their mother tongue, the children are spoken to in Spanish. The parents decided early on that it was for the betterment of the family to maintain that language in the home.

Participant 2: Rebecca

Rebecca is an English-speaking mother of two who asked to conduct the interview in English as that is the language with which she is most comfortable. Rebecca contacted me via email after receiving the recruitment letter to participate in the study. I conducted the interview in January of 2021 initially with Rebecca and then with her spouse. Her spouse helped to clarify some questions regarding enrollment; Rebecca

76

primarily answered the interview questions. Rebecca enrolled her child, a fourth grader, in their neighborhood school in Central Texas ISD.

Rebecca is a parent of two children, but only one school-aged child who attends school at Blue Bonnet Campus (a pseudonym) in Central Texas ISD, which is his community school based on the attendance zone. Rebecca speaks both English and Spanish at home and her spouse does as well; however, the extended family language is primarily Spanish. Rebecca was unfamiliar with bilingual education other than her child's experiences at Blue Bonnet Campus, which is an ESL model. Rebecca was exposed to English and Spanish in her household and has used that same model with her children. When completing the Home Language Survey, she did not realize that "indicating any language other than English would have him [her child] qualify for a transitional bilingual model."

> When we arrived at the bilingual campus, we felt very at ease and loved the idea of having our child enrolled in a language model that was both in English and in Spanish. However, in reviewing how far it was from our home and seeing that we would have to put him on a school bus so early in the morning, we knew that it was not going to work for our family. When we have had to pick our child up, it is very close to our home and convenient for us and on the days when circumstances change, we can tell our child to take the bus home and it gets the bus arrives at a reasonable time. Aside from the issue of distance, once the program was explained to us that it was for English language learners, we did not think our child would necessarily benefit because we do speak both languages at home. We wanted there to be space for the kids who would benefit more from this type of program.

Rebecca's academic goals for her child are to succeed without receiving extra accommodations not needed by the other students in the classroom. Her language goals are to exit the ESL program at the end of elementary school without additional language support.

Rebecca and her spouse spoke highly of the ESL teacher, commenting, "She is absolutely aware of what our child needs as a language learner and has provided so many opportunities for him to grow academically and linguistically." The ESL program has worked for Rebecca's family. There is much more support in class without having the child miss any essential time in main subjects with classmates and providing cultural experiences that are familiar to the student. Throughout the time of Rebecca's child's enrollment at Blue Bonnet Campus, the family felt welcomed and as though both the campus and the district were able to adequately meet the needs of their family.

> All of the teachers and office staff have always been very kind and welcoming to our family and it really has become our home campus. However, throughout the years, I have had classroom teachers call me about my child's name and how difficult it was to pronounce. I understand that the name is unfamiliar and is in another language, but it is part of our culture and I am just not sure what they expect me to do about it. That name is a family name and receiving phone calls year after year has definitely created a small feeling of resentment.

While speaking about the feelings of resentment with the attention to his name, it is essential to note that this circles back to the lack of cultural understanding and leaving families feeling as though there is no balance in learning about the student's culture. In reflecting on the denial of language services, Rebecca attributed the decision to how she and her husband acquired the English language: in school and without any accommodations that they could recall. They did not feel their child needed to have a separate program in a different campus to acquire a language, especially when the community is primarily English speaking. The ESL model offered by the school district fits more in line with the needs of their family.

Participant 3: Lucy

Lucy is a Spanish-speaking mother of one who contacted me via email after receiving the recruitment letter. The email sent to me included her willingness to participate in the study as long as her identity and child were protected. Once Lucy understood that I would not use any personal identifiers, she scheduled an interview in January of 2021. The interview took place on a video conference application, Google Meets, in Spanish. Though Lucy felt very protective of her child's language experiences, she assured me she felt like proceeding with the interview. Lucy was informative about her experiences with the school district and recalled several interactions regarding the decision not to enroll in language services in great detail. Lucy enrolled her child, a fourth grader, in their neighborhood school in Central Texas ISD.

Lucy is not a Central Texas native and was excited about enrolling her child in their neighborhood school. Lucy is a native Spanish speaker and can understand English more than she can speak it but has been very involved in her child's enrollment and school processes. The family moved to Central Texas ISD after deciding that being in a big city did not align with their family's needs and wanted a slower paced environment for their child to grow up in. Although she and her husband were born in a Latin country, her husband acquired the English language with more ease and spoke to their child in English while Lucy spoke Spanish. Their child became more comfortable with the English language and although Lucy "did not want her to lose the Spanish language, my child couldn't be forced to speak Spanish because my child became resentful." Lucy explained that her child became so comfortable with the English language that the child would often translate for the parents and correct their mispronunciations.

Before they moved to Central Texas ISD, their child participated in the school spelling bee and won, and that was a great moment for both parents as it assured them that their child "has really mastered the English language and does not need any label as an English language learner." This sensemaking on the part of the caretakers played a role in their denial of language services in Central Texas ISD while also becoming a point of contention in the school-to-home relationship.

> I was very clear that I did not want any language services for my child: not the bilingual services and not the ESL services because we did not need it. I felt as though we were being pressured to sign up for these services because we are Hispanic and Spanish-speaking, and this was very disappointing because they were not listening to what I was telling them my child needed. While sitting in the meeting [at the school], the classroom teacher told my husband and I that the school received funds for these services, and we should reconsider the decision not to enroll our child. I understand needing extra funds, but not at the expense of my child and not slapping a label that would follow throughout the rest of my child's academic career. We felt very pressured and backed into a corner after refusing the services several times. The meeting with them was to confirm that my child would not be enrolled in any language services and we left on that note expecting our wishes would be followed. Our child was still enrolled in ESL services with the ESL teacher and at that point, I decided that I would not fight it but I still hold such confusion about why our wishes were not respected. I feel as though it was for the funds and it was because we are a Hispanic family.

Lucy's sensemaking was clear from the interview: Lucy felt pressured to use her child as a means to increase funds for the campus and felt the stigma associated with the label of being an ELL was not conducive to what she wanted for her child in Central Texas ISD. Throughout the interview, Lucy continued to refer back to this feeling of being selected for the bilingual services because they were Hispanic and because she was a Spanish-speaking parent. The reference back to the label connected to the literature about the stigma bilingual families may feel, especially during school enrollment.

Profiles of Administrative Personnel/Teaching Personnel in the Bilingual Department

The focus in this study was on the de-selection decision from the caregivers' viewpoint and the experiences and perceptions that led them to make sense of their decision. However, it was pivotal to include the vantage point of both essential stakeholders—caregivers and administrators. At either the school or district level, three members with significant administrative or teaching experience with the transitional bilingual program contributed to this research by participating in semi-structured interviews.

Each participating district employee was able to trace the beginning of their work with the bilingual program, in all three cases regarding the bilingual campus in the district, and their perception of the effectiveness of communication from the district/campus to the caregivers. In addition to their perception of communication effectiveness, they answered questions about the reasons caregivers divulged for denying language services and their opinions on the changes (upward or downward trends) in enrollment. Selection of the administrators and teaching personnel came through my conversations or requests to the superintendents for participation in the study and for permission to interview other personnel connected to the bilingual department in the district. Specifically, I requested the participation of anyone in administration at the campus or district level with historical knowledge of the program as well as a working history directly tied to recruitment, enrollment, and sustainability of the program. The combined experience of the three employees connected to the district's bilingual program is 23 years. For purposes of confidentiality, I provide aliases for each of the employees interviewed.

Participant 1A: Pamela

Pamela is the current bilingual program coordinator in the designated bilingual campus in Central Texas ISD. Central Texas ISD consists of 10 schools, six of which are elementary, and only one of those elementary campuses is where the bilingual program occurs. Pamela's experience spans 18 years since the beginning of her education career and 10 years with the bilingual campus at this district. Pamela came to Central Texas ISD as a bilingual teacher in various other districts in the State of Texas. Her current assignment as the district bilingual coordinator is at the designated bilingual campus of Central Texas ISD, working with administrators, teachers, caregivers, and students to properly serve the ELL demographics and complete the recruitment and enrollment. Since the beginning of her tenure at the elementary campus, she has been given these responsibilities based on her years of experience with bilingual families and students.

Her teaching experience has played a critical role in her work as a liaison between the district and the caregivers, as well as a liaison between the administration and the caregivers. Pamela has provided caregivers with information about the transitional bilingual program in the district, which is an early-exit model and has been able to help district leaders establish the program having had previous experience.

> I am an ESL and bilingual interventionist at my campus, which means that I pull kids into my room and I mostly work with kids who are tiered, so I am part of the RTI [Response to Intervention] process. So, if kids are in Tier 2 or Tier 3, they come to see me. Now, because I am also ESL and bilingual certified, I pull newcomers also for beginning language and basic language intervention and if my ELLs are struggling with comprehension or speaking, they get language intervention which means I am using their native language to make progress in English language and academic achievement.

Pamela is an educator in Central Texas ISD at the designated bilingual campus. Pamela serves as the bilingual coordinator at the campus. She has the most interaction with

parents who enroll their children in the transitional bilingual program and those who

qualify and have their children meet with her to go through the language interview.

Pamela agreed to participate in the interview as a pivotal stakeholder in the

district's bilingual department, and we conducted the interview in January of 2021. The

interview was conducted through a video conference application, Google Meets. Pamela

was very knowledgeable about the current state of the bilingual program in the district

and the changes it has transitioned through throughout the years. Pamela sent me archival

data via campus mail to show the past recruitment artifacts to attract parents.

Participant 2A: Wendy

Wendy has been serving the bilingual campus for 5 years as the campus principal.

Upon the beginning of her tenure there, the transitional bilingual program was already

established with Pamela's help. Her role was more to oversee compliance and welcome

the families to the campus.

> Our bilingual coordinator handles the logistics of the program; I really am more
> of a facilitator for the families when they come to tour the school and answer any
> questions that I can. The tricky part for me, though, as a Hispanic administrator is
> that I can understand the Spanish language, but I can't speak it, so when our
> coordinator is not here, I let them know I can help answer their questions, but I
> am just not fluent.

Wendy acknowledged how much of a great advocate and supporter the campus

coordinator has been in ensuring the parents have all of the necessary and legal

information about the program.

> [Pamela] really makes sure to cover those legalities in terms of informing the
> caregivers as well as conducting the TELPAS testing. I will facilitate and sit in on
> the LPAC meetings but the main point of contact the caregivers have is with her.

> I don't usually communicate with the parents like our coordinator does,
> but based on the enrollment changes, I can certainly attribute it to the issue of
> bussing a student. Parents are hesitant to put their child on a bus, particularly, if

83

they live in a whole other part of the city. You are talking about putting a (possibly) 5-year-old on a bus at 6 am just to get them to school on time and then having them home late in the afternoon. That may just not work for some families and that is where we are seeing a lot of parents decide to keep their children at their home campuses. I know that the attendance zones play a part in the downward trend of the program, but the community that our campus serves is also highly transient and there is a lot of mobility. I have seen how expensive rent is and a lot of times, it is more economical for a family to buy a home than to rent something in the area, and that decision often leads to the students having to enroll elsewhere.

The transitional bilingual program has changed since the 2018–2019 school year because of the low student enrollment, and therefore, the focus in the district has shifted to providing ESL services. Though Pamela is still the bilingual coordinator and will serve those students in the capacity intended from a transitional bilingual model, there is only one bilingual classroom at the campus now. It is serving pre-kindergarten students. There has been a downward trend in enrollment in the transitional bilingual program. The answer in the current research, which this study has grown only more robust, shows that attendance zones have played a part in the enrollment change.

Wendy is an administrator in Central Texas ISD at the designated bilingual campus. Wendy was contacted via email with the recruitment letter, and she agreed to participate in an interview in January of 2021. The interview was conducted through a video conference application, Google Meets, and Wendy was willing to disclose campus information to help the study. Wendy has been the principal for 5 years and was able to speak about changes in enrollment in the bilingual program throughout her tenure at the campus. The participant's interaction with the parents "is more informal in that the program coordinator handles the interviews and the contact" more than she does. Wendy said she looks forward to the findings and implications for practice from this study.

Participant 3A: Michael

Michael is the current coordinator for federal programs, including, but not limited to, the department for ELLs. With more than 15 years in education, he began his experience as a paraprofessional and 2 years later moved into a bilingual classroom. Michael has been in Central Texas ISD for 3 years, the first two as an assistant principal and then moving into this coordinator position. In the previous district he served, he had experience as a campus bilingual coordinator. His primary role is to ensure the teachers comply with their ESL teachers if their position calls for it, that the bilingual campus has certified bilingual teachers, and that the teachers receive the appropriate training and testing training to conduct TELPAS testing. The current program being offered is not the transitional bilingual program but rather an ESL model, where only one pre-kindergarten class is the bilingual section. Unfortunately, there has been a downward trend in enrollment, which has caused the discontinuation of this transitional bilingual service.

> It is tricky at this current moment, because we cannot offer families access to the bilingual program as we do not currently have one. The impact of parent denials has made it so that we do not have enough students participating and we cannot justify an FTE [full-time employee] for a class that would only consist of just a small number of students. There's also the issue of attempting to recruit and retain certified bilingual teachers, because our teacher candidates don't usually fit that model. That is why the district has implemented stipends and recruitment efforts aimed at hiring certified bilingual teachers, but it does present a challenge. I hope we are able to bring the program back in the way it was originally intended.

Michael is a district coordinator in Central Texas ISD and oversees federal programs including the department of English Language Learners. I contacted Michael before the interview sessions because he was part of the district's IRB team approving or denying the study request. In addition to this request, I contacted Michael after receiving district approval to obtain the number of qualifying participants at each elementary campus and discuss a plan for getting recruitment letters to caregivers without violating

FERPA. Michael was willing to brainstorm with me to best ask for participation without disclosing this information and allowed me to explain the study to the ESL teachers and ask for their assistance in sending the letters home. Michael looks forward to how the findings will aid the district in the future to bring back the transitional bilingual program as it was initially intended.

<center>*School and District Profiles*</center>

Central Texas ISD, a rural school district in Texas, serves just over 8,000 students. With 10 schools, Central Texas ISD consists of six elementary campuses, two intermediate campuses, one middle school, and one high school. Of the six elementary campuses, one is the designated bilingual campus where leaders have implemented the early-exit model. This early-exit model in the bilingual campus is designed to exit the students by first grade, which only requires bilingual teachers in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade. "Many times, we could have the bilingual teacher loop up with a cohort of students if that was preferred or if we didn't have a certified bilingual teacher for one of the grade levels" (Pamela). This action of having the bilingual teacher loop with her class alleviated the difficulty in finding a certified bilingual teacher. It kept the students with a teacher with whom they were comfortable and understood how to meet their needs.

For this study, I assigned pseudonyms to the campuses: John Adams Intermediate, Blue Bonnet Elementary, and Cactus Way Elementary. John Adams was designated as the intermediate campus for Hannah, Blue Bonnet was designated as the elementary campus for Rebecca, and Cactus Way was designated as the elementary campus for Lucy. The John Adams and Cactus Way campuses are part of the same neighborhood

community, with John Adams currently serving Grades 5–6 and Cactus Way currently serving PK–4. Blue Bonnet, still within Central Texas ISD, serves a distinctly different community nearly 6 miles away and is currently serving PK–4. Both Blue Bonnet and Cactus Way campuses serve their ELLs with an ESL model. I sought equal representation of families from the school communities. I recruited Spanish-speaking families that qualified for transitional bilingual services but denied them and stayed at the campus in which they were currently enrolled.

John Adams Campus in Central Texas ISD serves 569 students in Grades 5 and 6. Each grade level consists of three blocks, and each block has a content teacher for subjects in mathematics, reading, science, and integrated studies (which include social studies and writing). There are no ESL teachers on campus serving ELLs, and the student demographic of ELLs on that campus represents 1.2%, or seven of the 569 students, according to the most recent school report (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The caregivers interviewed from this campus had de-selected language services in a previous year at Cactus Way Campus, which is part of John Adams Campus's feeder pattern.

Blue Bonnet Campus in Central Texas ISD serves 650 students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. Each grade level from kindergarten through fourth grade consists of six sections, and the pre-kindergarten section consists of two sections. There is an ESL cohort in each of the grade levels that facilitates the classroom teacher providing language accommodations and sheltered instruction where needed. Those students receive their core instruction from the classroom teacher and the ESL teacher provides language services in a pull-out method. Data from the most recent School Report Card (Texas Education Agency, 2021) show 8.4%, or 54 of the 650 students, are

ELLs. According to the same report, roughly 31% of the campus student population is Hispanic and the school community's predominant home languages are English and Spanish.

Cactus Way Campus in Central Texas ISD serves 699 students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. Each grade level from kindergarten through third grade consists of six sections, fourth grade consists of seven sections, and the pre-kindergarten section consists of two sections. An ESL cohort houses either mainstream or sheltered English immersion English-only classrooms in each of the grade levels. The ESL teacher facilitates the classroom teacher to provide language accommodations and serves the students in a pull-out ESL model in kindergarten through second grade and push-in for third and fourth grades. Data from the most recent School Report Card (Texas Education Agency, 2021) show 4.7%, or 32 of the 699 students, are ELLs. According to the same report, roughly 14% of the campus's student population is Hispanic and the school community's predominant home languages are Spanish, Chinese, and Korean.

Thematic Findings

Though I interviewed both caregivers and district administrators, these thematic findings represent the caregivers' voices regarding the reasons for denial of language services. The administrators' voices are analyzed and presented in Chapter Five when discussing the research questions. The following sections are divided into the principal themes that emerged from analyzing of the multiple forms of qualitative data collected. From the onset, I examined the sensemaking process used by caregivers as they made decisions regarding the de-selection of language services through the lens of the sensemaking theory introduced by Karl Weick (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). Given the

implications of de-selection for the school district studied, analysis of caregivers'

sensemaking is significant. These denials have resulted in low enough enrollment in the

bilingual program that it has not been offered in the last 2 years.

A pre-kindergarten bilingual teacher is currently serving the students at the

bilingual campus, but there is no bilingual program in its current form as it was

previously offered. District leaders can use the results of this study to understand why

caregivers have denied the language services while filling a void in the literature on

language service denials. The seven sensemaking principles of identity construction,

retrospective, environment, social, ongoing, extracted cues, and driven by plausibility

were embedded in the questions of the caregiver and educator interviews (Appendix A).

Analysis of the results follows.

Identity Construction

Identity construction, or how individuals define their identity, is constructed at

both the individual and organizational levels. Weick (1995) stated that at the individual

level, the question asked is "who am I?" and at the organizational level, "who are we?"

Identities include self-enhancement, self-efficacy, and self-consistency and are created in

part by how individuals believe others view themselves and their organizations (Weick,

1995). Identity construction is a central principle of sensemaking, so it is the first

principle listed (Weick, 1995).

Identity construction for the caregivers participating in this study began in the

early years of life, even as students themselves. The variables shaping the participants'

identities included geographical region, native language, and school experiences with the

critical aspects of language. Throughout the interviews with caregivers, it became

apparent that they, themselves, had not had the time to think about the reasons for denying these services and at the time of denial, they had different life circumstances that influenced their decision. Having that opportunity to reflect on their decision confirmed Weick's statement about sense makers: "The sense maker is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual redefinition, coincident with presenting some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate" (Weick, 1995). The caregivers made decisions for their children based on what they considered appropriate, and those decisions were made on the life and language experiences they had encountered. Therefore, the sense maker is a separate self in different situations they encounter.

Hannah highlighted the principle of identity construction when she and her husband explained their experiences in school with critical aspects of language: "During my attempt of learning the English language, it was very difficult" and in school "having no support while acquiring this language made me uncomfortable with the process of language learning." Further citing this principle was Lucy, who described, "I attended a private Catholic school where we had content classes in Spanish and English was taught as a supplement" and "there was only an emphasis on learning the speaking part of the language and not so much the reading, writing, and grammar" and that "has always helped me get by in non-Spanish-speaking communities; just being fluent in the speaking." Identity construction is based on the assumption that people are trying to understand their environment and how they fit into it while simultaneously reacting to situations, circumstances, and people.

Hannah understood her environment after seeing her children were thriving in an English–Spanish home and felt they already fit in just fine without the extra language

accommodations. Hannah and her spouse emphasized that their focu was to "ensure the children would not lose their mother tongue since it defines their culture." Hannah advocated for her children to remain with Spanish as a primary language because of their religious community being Spanish-speaking as well as their extended family. The identity construction in how the children would fit in at school came from the assumption or knowledge that English would naturally be acquired among peers and their classrooms. In light of defining their identity at the individual and organizational level, caregivers felt strongly about their children identifying with their English-speaking peers and not being in a program that identified as "other than." Due to their strong feelings about the students learning English among peers, they wanted their children to be identified as English speakers rather than English learners.

Both Hannah and Lucy had difficulty with acquiring the English language. They focused on the speaking aspect of the language, which is what they expressed as the language goal for their children. Their childhood experiences, as language students themselves, played a significant role in their identity construction. The way these participants experienced language learning shaped the way they view language learning, possibly for their children as well.

Though Hannah and Lucy used their own difficult experiences as language students to frame how they viewed language services for their children, Rebecca did not. Rebecca was brought up as an English learner without having been enrolled in a bilingual program and stated, "since I learned the language with ease, I felt like my child would have the same ease and enrolling him in a bilingual program with two different languages being taught simultaneous felt like an overload for a young child." Rebecca reiterated

throughout the interview that she never considered herself an English learner because as far back as she could recall, she had spoken both English and Spanish. When language is important to one's own identity, individuals will likely work hard to ensure they are clear on whether it was a journey of difficulty or not, and work to avoid adverse outcomes for their children.

Lucy made sense of her environment and how she fits into it based on her experiences with the school. Lucy felt her child, who had won a spelling bee in English in another state, did not need to be placed in any language program because she had acquired the English language with ease and does not even speak Spanish. The spelling bee win indicated to Lucy that her child was developing along just fine in English and suggesting the child "qualified for bilingual services made me feel out of place and like I was being selected or prejudiced against because we are Hispanic."

The identity construction principle in sensemaking is a complex process focused on self-identity and self-concept. It is assumed that people are trying to understand their environment and how they fit into it while simultaneously reacting to situations, circumstances, and people. In effect, sometimes people need to see things happen before they can react or understand who they are and what their role is within various situations. All three participants identified making the decisions for their own children based on their experience acquiring a second language. In this study, sensemaking was influenced by participants' own experiences with language, thereby shaping their decision not to enroll their children in a transitional bilingual program.

Retrospective

The retrospective principle requires the ability to look to the past and determine the meaning of what occurred. This includes looking at both what has already occurred and what is currently occurring. Being retrospective is taking time to reflect upon circumstances to extract some form of meaning about the experience. According to Weick (1995), it is important to note that this reflection needs to happen relatively quickly so the past can be clarified, if necessary, resulting in a more confident feeling about the situation.

The retrospective principle was embedded in many of the interview questions and was evident in the responses provided by the participants of this study. Through careful questioning strategies, listening, and analysis of the information, caregivers were able to engage in a retrospective interview to make sense of their understanding of bilingual education, to make sense of the factors that played into their denial of language service, and to make sense of what changes could have led them to make different choices. The first retrospective cycle began with the understanding of what the participants knew and understood about bilingual education.

Hannah and her spouse described their understanding of retrospection of the language program as they discussed what they learned: "In reality, we have almost no understanding of bilingual education in this country, and we didn't receive much of an explanation of the different models from the district or the campus." In continuing with this retrospect, Hannah and her spouse were very aware of the decisions they made in terms of denying services for their children:

> We never thought that there was a service that we didn't need or that our children wouldn't benefit from. However, when we interviewed at the bilingual campus

93

we felt as though we were interviewed more as opposed to the kids and testing their English capabilities. But we also didn't know that there was even a difference in the program that they were offering at this campus and the one we had available to us at the home campus. Now that we know there is a difference, we might have made a different choice but at the time, it felt like an easy decision; leaving our children at the campus that we corresponded to as well as still receiving, what we thought, was the same language service. We didn't know what we didn't know.

The second cycle of retrospect occurred with Rebecca and Lucy concerning their

clear understanding of bilingual education. Rebecca said:

I knew what bilingual education was from my time as a student here in the United States, but because I was raised the same way as I am raising my child of speaking both English and Spanish at the home, I realized that a full bilingual program wasn't what we needed for our family.

Rebecca illustrated the retrospect of understanding that one system of acquiring a

language worked for her and her husband and therefore would work for her child.

Meanwhile, Lucy had a very clear retrospect on her reasons for denying the language

services aside from not having a clear understanding of the bilingual program models:

When the survey asked me what language we spoke at home, I was honest in my answer about speaking Spanish and English. My child does not speak Spanish, but my husband and I do, to each other. In looking back at that moment, I feel as though that was a sentence I put on my child by us being Hispanic and speaking Spanish at the home even though she does not speak it. My child is English-speaking and I felt like we were being put in a box because of that survey answer. My child's first language is English, her current language is English, and they are wanting to send her to a bilingual program where they use the Spanish language to support the English language? If the campus had explained to me that this program was to help with pronunciation, grammar, or writing, then I may have been more inclined to enroll my child in it. However, there is nothing a bilingual teacher could help my child with about acquiring a language she is fluent in. The school district has put my child in a box that says we need that program because we are from another country and we are Hispanic. I have had a label on me from the beginning of my time in this country as a "Spanish-speaker" and I didn't want that label on my child. My child is not going to have a label for the rest of the time in public school because the school decided we needed a program that we wouldn't benefit from.

An essential principle of the sensemaking theory, retrospect, enables humans to process events after they have occurred. Weick's (1995) retrospective principle informed my understanding of the findings by emphasizing the experiences caregivers had and how they remain at the forefront of their decisions.

Applying Weick's retrospective principle to this study revealed how the caregivers applied this retrospect to decide on their children's receiving language services. The participants in the study were able to use the questions asked as a way to make sense of their actions. Weick stated actions are known only when they have been completed, which means we are always a little behind or our actions are still a bit ahead of us.

The retrospective principle requires looking to the past and determining the meaning of what occurred, which the caregivers all did during the interviews. All three of the participants reflected on what they knew and understood about the bilingual program (having been English learners themselves) and how their children would either benefit or fall behind, in their opinion. It is important to note that this reflection needs to happen relatively quickly so the past can be clarified, if necessary, resulting in a more confident feeling about the situation (Weick, 1995). Though the caregivers who participated in this study were not aware that they were looking to their past, they could identify it during our interview protocol. The retrospective principle highlights the importance of caregivers being informed about program models and how they will meet the needs of their emergent bilingual students. Effective communication about these models supports proper understanding despite caregivers' own retrospective on their English acquisition process and may make a difference in the decision to enroll in a language program. This

lack of understanding left caregivers to make decisions based on their experience as English learners and not what the district offered.

Social Environments

In a social environment, there are shared meanings, common languages, and social interactions co-occurring. The environments created can serve as limitations or opportunities (Weick, 1995). The principle of the social environment within sensemaking theory is that people shape their environments through their actions. The participants' environments played an active role in their denial of language services, and I was able to synthesize how these environments served as a limitation for this study. Sensemaking researchers pay a lot of attention to talk, discourse, and conversation because that is how a great deal of social contact is meditated (Weick, 1995). Rebecca reflected on how the home–school relationship created some resentment:

> My child's school has been wonderful, and his ESL teacher is more than we could have ever asked for. She really does provide great experiences for all the students and our child has grown so much under her direction. But when I have to answer if I always felt welcomed at the school, I have to say that is not the case. Year after year, I have received phone calls from classroom teachers and front office staff about my child's name and how difficult it is to pronounce. I can understand having that conversation at the beginning of the year during a parent conference or a situation that was directly related to the name, but these were phone calls I would receive asking if they could call my child a nickname for short or something related. I grew to become very confused as to why I was being called and what I was supposed to do about it. I don't have any complaints about the school and the education they have provided my child, but I still think about that often and it makes me feel like we don't fit into the school community.

Relationships develop naturally based on human interaction and with those relationships, trust and safe communication develop. Lucy related how her relationship with the school community changed based on this communication and feelings of misunderstanding

when she did not feel heard or valued on the decision she made for her child not to receive any language services at all. Lucy said:

> Regardless of the great interactions that we have at [Campus Way] I can't help but feel a resentment about the meeting we had. I distinctly remember the feeling of anger and frustration at being told she needed a language service that she did not need, because she does not even speak Spanish. The conduct of those in attendance in the meeting spoke volumes about assumptions they made of us as a Hispanic family.

Weick (1995) stressed that people who do not believe sensemaking is a social process miss a constant substrate that shapes interpretations and interpreting. Conduct is contingent on the conduct of others, whether those are imagined or physically present (Weick, 1995, p. 39). Whether Lucy imagined the conceived inappropriate conduct or it was physically present, it was valid enough to make her resentful toward the organization and any service related to acquiring English as a second language.

The social environment property highlights the importance of the social aspect of sensemaking. Just as the caregivers are important in this process, so was the influence others had on the caregivers and their environment. Dedicated support and collaboration, or lack thereof, can significantly affect how meaning is defined. This lack of support or collaboration was particularly evident during Rebecca's interview about her child's name. The support provided to her child was not voided, but the incident was recounted during several of the interview questions. This lack of perceived support affected Rebecca's interpretation of the school's cultural understanding and support. Even when the social environment was supportive in other aspects, it was hard to remove the influence of those actions.

Sensemaking is a social and collective process. Weick and Roberts (1993) examined the framework of the collective mind using the context of flight operations.

Their study demonstrated the process of sensemaking goes beyond individual cognitive activities and involves interactions among members to determine the optimal actions in a specific context. The application of Weick's (1995) social sensemaking principle promotes the maintenance of parent and school relationships, as schools are communities that are designed to be social in nature. The social process is an integral part of an organization. Cultural differences and conflicts of perception and approach cannot be entirely erased. Still, good faith effort on the part of school leaders to eradicate unwelcoming interactions, such as these, can minimize these conflicts, particularly for the growing ELL population.

Extracted Cues

Sensemaking includes a focus on extracted cues pulled from inputs that are used to develop a sense of what has just occurred (Weick, 1995). The cues chosen to be separated have implications for how an individual will make sense of a situation. As caregivers, the participants of this study extracted cues from their campus and district settings that shaped their perspectives on bilingual education and what decisions they made for their families in terms of whether to select or de-select services. For this study, questions that helped examine the participants' extracted cues were asked about the communication/communicative experiences the caregivers received about bilingual education and the program models. Hannah observed the cues by stating:

> There was no difference in program model because no one told us anything different. We cannot remember receiving any letters, but I am fairly certain that we did not receive anything explaining the services we were denying and the services we would then receive at our school. That led us to think that there was only one model for bilingual children and that was the ESL model that were receiving at [Cactus Way Campus]. If there was a significant difference in the service the children would receive, the district would have informed us right?

Hannah extracted cues from previous communicative experiences with the district where important information was discussed and felt educated to make the appropriate decision. The sources of cues extended beyond not (possibly) receiving any letters or phone calls about the various services and led participants to make assumptions about communicative experiences in the future with the school.

Rebecca extracted cues from external factors that led to her ultimately denying the bilingual service for her child. Rebecca expanded on the issue of bussing her child across many miles during the school year:

> I didn't know that there was a distinct difference between the programs, but I knew it was implied because the school presented me with the options of traveling for my child. They explained that in order to enroll our child for this program, we would have to bus our child to this campus as opposed to where we were zoned for attendance. I didn't know what the differences were, but they didn't seem significant enough to put my child on a bus and travel many miles, especially when this was taking place during our pre-kindergarten enrollment year. I thought about how inconvenient the winters would be in the mornings at a bus stop, as well as at the end of the year when it was very warm, and we would have to wait during those very warm afternoons.

In retrospect, Rebecca praised the language service her child was receiving at Blue Bonnet Campus and stated, "it certainly wouldn't have been worth the travel."

The principle of extracted cues allows individuals to develop a larger sense of what may be occurring based on familiar structures. The process by which cues are identified for sensemaking begins by noticing activities of filtering, classifying, and comparing. In contrast, sensemaking refers more to the interpretation and the activity that determines what the noticed cues mean (Weick, 1995).

The three caregivers who participated in this study began identifying cues based on their perceived as negative experiences. Weick (1995) noted the combination of a past moment + connection + present moment of experience creates a meaningful definition of

the current situation. Rebecca compared the benefits of having her child bussed to school against the benefit of a program she did not feel would make much of a difference and determined it was not workable for her family. Hannah referred more to the interpretation of not being informed of a distinct program model. Therefore, she decided the best choice for her children was to remain enrolled at their home campus and in an ESL model. The participants of this study extracted cues from their personal experiences and the communicative interactions with their environments, in this case, the school district or campus. Table 4.2 illustrates the sensemaking themes identified within the caregivers' statements.

Table 4.2. *Sensemaking Themes by Responses of Caregiver Participants*

Identity construction	Retrospective	Social construction	Extracted cues	Ongoing	Plausibility
Home language: Spanish	Experience as a language student: learned the language as an adult and became too frustrated with the inability to acquire fluency	No community advice regarding language services or enrollment at current campus	Did not have any knowledge about bilingual education other than their own experience as a language learner	Language goals for their children match academic goals: they would like them fully bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate to interact with others	Feels as though the school district adequately met the needs of a bilingual student and their bilingual family
Home language: English and Spanish	Feelings of belonging in the campus: felt welcome but felt a lack of connection due to the teachers and office staff inability to pronounce student's name	Attendance zone played a part in denial of language service: putting student on a bus was not feasible for the family	Did not select transitional bilingual services because they speak English in the home as well and did not feel as though their child would benefit from the program as explained	Would enroll child in the bilingual program if offered in their home campus for all speakers, not just Spanish-speakers	Feels as though the school district, particularly the campus, understands the needs of a language learner and adequately meets those needs

(Continued)

Identity construction	Retrospective	Social construction	Extracted cues	Ongoing	Plausibility
Home language: Spanish	Felt as though the school district was targeting family because they were Spanish-speaking and attempting to label the student	Fear of stigma and labeling played a major role in the de-selection of the transitional bilingual program as well as ESL program	Felt pressured by the campus to enroll child in the program and felt targeted due to Spanish-speaking background	Feels strongly about student's academic achievements and education because she believes that is the way she will succeed	When enrolling student, the push to enroll her child in language services played a part in her denial of all services

Summary

This chapter presented the findings from this qualitative case study on making sense of caregivers' decisions to deny language services at Central Texas ISD. The chapter presented findings from the caregiver interviews and administrator interviews and the emergent themes based on the sensemaking theory as the theoretical framework.

I used a priori coded based upon the seven principles of Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory as a lens to examine the reasons behind caregiver denials of transitional bilingual services for their children. The lens of identity construction was a great starting point for participants when reflecting on their own experiences as language students during their school-aged years. Results from this study showed the retrospective principle was a critical and foundational factor for participants in how they arrived at their decisions. This retrospective thought was constantly practiced by participants, particularly when using their own experiences to frame what they knew about bilingual education and why they denied the language services offered to their children. As participants continued to look at their decision making retrospectively, they could draw

conclusions and make connections about their own identity as language learners and their current environment.

The responses and themes that most stood out as most compelling were those that made sense of their decisions through their social environment. The caregivers' limited knowledge of language programs can be assumed based on how they are implemented differently in different districts and states. However, the social environment in Central Texas ISD surprised me due to the caregivers' perspectives of satisfaction with the education their children were receiving. Rebecca explained how much her child had grown and received support in language arts from the ESL teacher and was 100% satisfied with being at Cactus Way Elementary. However, every interaction was considered and analyzed through the lens of classroom teachers and office staff calling her about her child's name. These interactions affected how she felt her child would be treated in a bilingual program and even in his mainstream English classrooms.

Lucy spoke at length about how much the social impact of feeling pressured to enroll her child left a distaste and distrust in the process itself. Lucy's interview reassured me that the caregivers view the language programs as a separate entity from the education their children are receiving and do not want it to impact their child's education in a negative way. Weick's (1995) theoretical supposition was the social impact involved in decision-making. Community culture played a significant role in the decision-making process of families in Central Texas ISD. They were navigating foreign waters of deciding to enroll their emergent bilingual children in language services. The importance of community culture is a resource for identification with a sense of belonging people felt as a way to feel connected to the community (Maninger, 2016).

The responses and themes that were least surprising to me about the caregivers'

decisions to de-select language services for their children were in response to their

geographical location to the campus. In terms of practicality and familiar identity, it was

not best for them to place their very young children on a bus to travel to this campus for a

program they did not have enough background knowledge on to justify that. Rebecca

made sure to explain that when she enrolled her child at age 5 at Central Texas ISD, it

would have been impossible for her to feel at ease with putting her child on a bus that

early and wait for him to get home later than usual. This hesitancy of putting her child on

a bus was also the same response from Hannah in response to preferring that their

children attend a neighborhood as opposed to one that would have made it difficult to

pick up and drop off. Identity is the first, and arguably the most important, on the list of

seven properties in Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory. In this study, I found families

had strong familiar identities that affected their decision making to enroll in a language

program and their identity contributed to de-selection (geographical location). Therefore,

familial identities are a significant contributor to the sensemaking of this phenomenon.

Participants made sense of how their environments played an active role in

deciding not to enroll their children in the bilingual program at Central Texas ISD. By

analyzing the school environment and how they interacted with the organization,

participants could see the direct connection between their experiences in those

environments and how those relationships did not always lead to nourishing social

connections, which may have led to the de-selection of language services. This social

principle was prevalent because schools are a communal organization between

stakeholders: educators, community members, and families. To assist with making sense

of how their environments played a role in their decision making, participants extracted cues from their environments, which helped shape their perspectives, in this case with their bilingual language experiences.

The participants in this study had a strong desire to share their perspectives. Although they had very definitive answers to the interview questions, they usually conceded to provide the district with the benefit of the doubt and good intentions in unknown circumstances. Each of these themes was presented paralleled with the voices of the participants in the discussion. The voices or findings were consistent and presented as such, with the pertinent literature in the field of bilingual education with respect to services accepted or denied by caregivers. The findings were also examined through the sensemaking theory. Using this framework, implications of each of these themes were presented to unify the voices to make sense of those decisions. This study extends beyond the period of interview for these families as they will live with the consequences of their choices, aware that these decisions will play a part in their children's academic and linguistic success throughout their academic careers.

After a thorough analysis of the qualitative data through the lens of sensemaking theory, in Chapter Five, I present an interpretation of the findings and reactions to caregivers' and administrators' voices who graciously offered their time and experiences to this study. I then present recommendations to the school administrators, district administrators, and families regarding bilingual program enrollment, particularly concerning the current denial rate.

CHAPTER FIVE

Implications and Discussion

In the previous chapters, I provided a background of the de-selection of the transitional bilingual programs by caregivers in Central Texas ISD. The literature has parental choice includes feelings of mistrust, perceptions of program model quality, and navigating acculturation and assimilation in the community (Bodenstab, 2012). The caregivers in this study shared some of these experiences while making sense of their decisions to de-select the transitional bilingual service offered by the district.

Central Texas ISD serves just over 8,000 students in 10 campuses that include six elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. ELLs compose 3.3% of the student population, at 271 students, according to Central Texas ISD TAPR data for the 2018–2019 school year. Of those 271 students, a prevalent issue is the number of bilingual language denials taking place in the elementary and intermediate settings. During the 2018–2019 school year, there were 56 bilingual language denials in Central Texas ISD (C. Jerkins, personal communication, 2019), possibly affecting these students' acquisition of the English language.

The purpose of this study was to examine the sensemaking of parents who have chosen against transitional bilingual program services for their children enrolled in Central Texas ISD. Though federal and state policies may be difficult for parents to comprehend, leaders of school districts or campuses are responsible for explaining the

benefits of a bilingual program and what de-selection means in an academic setting. My hopes for this study were to (a) understand the viewpoints of parents who have to negotiate district-level language policies for their children, (b) help Central Texas ISD leaders better understand the communication processes connected with bilingual education and the sensemaking and perspectives of bilingual caregivers, and (v) provide leaders at the designated bilingual campus in Central Texas ISD with parent perspectives regarding district programs.

The theoretical framework I chose for this study was Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory, a framework used to examine the ways people generate what they interpret. This sensemaking process includes seven principles that set sensemaking apart from other explanatory processes: identity construction, retrospective, enactment, social, ongoing, extracted cues, and driven by plausibility. Using this framework as the lens for analysis, I studied three schools, interviewed three families who de-selected transitional bilingual services for their children, and interviewed three administrators from the Central Texas ISD bilingual department (Merriam, 2017). Using qualitative research methods and analyses, I examined the caregivers' shared experiences using sensemaking theory to understand this phenomenon.

In this chapter, I provide the implications and discussion of the study and recommendations to the affected stakeholders. In the first section on interpretation of the findings, I answer the research questions with the themes presented after coding participant responses. After that, I provide the conclusion for this research. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do district personnel perceive the effectiveness of communications between district and caregivers in terms of educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

2. How do caregivers perceive the effectiveness of communications between the district and caregivers in terms of educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings?

3. How do parents make sense of their choice to deny bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD?

For those for whom the study was conducted and this research was written come implications for practice and recommendations for actions they may be able to take to positively affect school districts that provide this resource of language services for their communities. The recommendations center around four educational stakeholders: recommendations for future researchers, recommendations for school administrators, recommendations for caregivers, and recommendations for school district leaders in the implementation of their language programs. The recommendations are based on the impact of the de-selection of language services, including a lack of opportunity to experience an enrichment program, less opportunity for academic content using the primary language to enhance second language acquisition and less academic growth.

Discussion of the Findings

The results of the study revealed the emergent themes for each research question. An interpretation of the findings for each theme is presented as well as the connection back to the literature. Additionally, an interpretation of the findings for the principles of the sensemaking theory follows the most associated themes. The three themes that

became evident—choice as a family decision, stigma, and misunderstanding/mistrust of program model quality—parallel the research covered in the literature review. The discussion indicates how the findings substantiate, refute, or enhance knowledge within this discipline.

Research Question 1: District Personnel Perspectives

The study's first research question was: How do district personnel perceive the effectiveness of communications between district and caregivers in terms of educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings? The responses that emerged in every interview during a priori coding were the perception that communication was effective and personnel were openly available to caregivers to answer questions.

Every district participant emphasized supporting caregivers by providing information about the program model in English and Spanish. The participants mentioned their availability in addition to the information provided. For example, when asked about how they communicate to the caregivers, Patricia stated:

> They are given the pamphlet explaining the bilingual program offered as well as class sizes and language spoken. If the parents [caregivers] have any other questions, I am always available to help them. Having someone who speaks Spanish that they can contact has helped the parents feel at ease.

She noted that though the program is not operating in its original intended form, she still provides caregivers with information about the bilingual education programs in the hopes that they will have enough enrollment to bring it back. Overall, the district personnel believed the required processes of providing information meant caregivers had a clear understanding of the transitional bilingual program model and the difference in the ESL model provided at the home campuses. One of the archival data points used in this study was the pamphlet provided to caregivers explaining the bilingual program in English and

Spanish. Though this may have explained the program, there was not enough detailed explanation of the differences in the models offered. Hannah, for example, told me, "until you reached out to me, I was not even sure that I had denied one service for another. I thought the same program was being offered, just at their home campus." The other participants also noted they knew there was some difference, but not to the extent that it was a different model entirely.

According to Weick's sensemaking theory (1995), people usually attempt to produce part of the environment that they counter through enactment. People bracket their organizational experience and then provide labels and categories for these events. In essence, enactment connects action to cognition (Weick, 1995). This study's findings aligned with the theory, as the enactment of district personnel was at the forefront and therefore, the most important in answering the research question about the effectiveness of district communication to caregivers in terms of educating about bilingual educational offerings. This indicates that though district personnel provide the necessary and legal communication to caregivers, it is not proving effective in educating about the differences in bilingual educational offerings. However, specific to caregiver support, the study showed district personnel acknowledge that bilingual caregivers need more in terms of what the program is offering, hence the low enrollment.

The findings aligned with the research identifying parental attitudes and understanding of bilingual education as the backbone of successful bilingual education programs (Craig, 1996; S. K. Lee, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Ramos, 2007; Saucedo, 1997). Research shows the importance of parents' perceptions of the purpose, advantages, and disadvantages of learning in English only or a dual English-

Spanish setting (Wright, 2017). This study showed district personnel perceived communication to be effective when educating caregivers, whereas caregivers expressed a lack of knowledge in the bilingual educational offerings. Effective communication would provide information on both programs to ensure understanding of the different programs so caregivers can make a more informed decision.

This study not only aligned with the literature on the impact of communication to parents about program differences but contributed to the research by indicating precisely what the caregivers specified needing to know to make a more informed decision. The findings showed caregivers needed to understand that the transitional bilingual program offered at one campus was different from those offered at their home campus. There has mainly been quantitative research on parent experiences navigating language services in the U.S. educational system and language service denials has not been explored in-depth. The findings in this study will enable future researchers, districts, and administrators to understand the communication they provide to educate caregivers on bilingual educational offerings.

Research Question 2: Caregivers' Perceptions on Communication

The study's second research question was: How do caregivers perceive the effectiveness of communications between the district and caregivers in educating caregivers about bilingual educational offerings? The responses that emerged in every interview during a priori coding were the perception of communication not being effective and caregivers feeling they were making decisions without knowing they did not have all of the information. All the caregiver participants mentioned not feeling educated about the differences in programs. When Hannah and Rebecca were weighing

110

pros and cons, they felt as if there was no point in moving their children to a campus further away for "a program that we thought was the same." Overall, the caregivers felt satisfied with the education their children were receiving in Central Texas ISD. Still, in speaking to the research question precisely, they had to disagree in thinking they were educated about the bilingual educational offerings.

This finding aligned with Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory occasions of ambiguity and uncertainty in organizations. According to Weick, the major emphasis of organizational sensemaking is to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty through identifying cues breakdowns or discontinuities. These breakdowns or discontinuities interrupt the ongoing flow of the process. In this study, caregivers identified the uncertainty or unknowns of navigating the bilingual educational offerings in Central Texas ISD and how that unknown played a part in denying services.

This finding also aligned with the research indicating parents describe a misunderstanding between themselves and school organizations, not having a context for comprehending policies and practices (Gonzalez et al., 2013). Moreno (2016) stated miscommunications between their child's bilingual education teacher and themselves was prevalent in the findings of researching migrant parents' perceptions and involvement in bilingual education programs in South Texas. The miscommunications are prevalent both in navigating the enrollment of bilingual educational offerings and participating in them. This study contributed to the research because there have been no studies on denial of language services in a Texas school district and the impact of these denials on maintaining a bilingual program in place.

Research Question 3: Caregivers' Sensemaking on De-Selection

The study's third research question was: How do caregivers make sense of their choice to deny bilingual language programs in Central Texas ISD? The responses that emerged in every interview during a priori coding were the effect of the social environment and desire to stay at the home campus and the retrospect of not wanting/feeling the label of being an ELL. Research indicates that in assimilating to their school community, although parents understand how important English language acquisition is, migrant parents were pushed beyond their comfort zone when deciding to make this drastic change of learning a new language (Wright, 2017). As indicated in Chapter Four, participants mentioned not wanting their children to be out of place compared to their English-speaking peers, suggesting assimilation is of the utmost importance. The effect of the social environment was the next most important motivator; this indicates the importance of providing an inclusive environment to the backgrounds served. Though families want to assimilate into their communities, they also wish for their cultures to be respected and validated.

This study addressed the most important aspects of sensemaking both from the perspective of district personnel and caregivers. The participants frequently mentioned the other sensemaking principles; thus, the findings do present them in depth: (a) identity construction, or how individuals define their identity; (b) retrospective, the ability to determine the meaning of what occurred; (c) social environments, such as shared meanings, common languages, and social interactions co-occurring; and (d) extracted cues, pulling from inputs used to develop a sense of what occurred. A review of the literature on parents' involvement in bilingual education and sensemaking theory showed

all of these principles contributed to caregivers' denial of language services in Central Texas ISD.

Weick (1995) noted sensemaking refers to the enlargement of small cues. In sensemaking, people try to make do with whatever they have. They interact with each other in a continuous flow, trying to build confidence in the system. This study showed misunderstanding of the program model played a critical role in denying language services. Caregivers did not understand the differences in what their children qualified for and what they were receiving at their home campus. However, regardless of the misunderstanding, caregivers continued the desire to keep their emergent bilingual children on par with their English-speaking peers. The findings of this study show caregivers made sense of their decision based on the information they had about the program models and making sense of how they assimilated to their social environments.

Implications for Practice

This study's findings reflect changes needed at the district level to increase enrollment in the bilingual program in Texas schools where the denial rate continues to be an issue. District administrators and coordinators can create a well-rounded set of informative sessions for caregivers to ensure they are empowered to make the best decision for their families. This research shows caregivers made decisions with limited knowledge on program models, which affected the learning opportunities for their emergent bilingual children. The literature shows achievement gaps between English proficient students and their ELL counterparts continue to exist in the United States (Gibson, 2016). This underachievement continues to be a problem and interventions such as language programs have been put into place across schools.

District-level administrators understand the importance of these language programs and wish to continue them in Central Texas ISD. The findings support the need to re-evaluate or modify the information presented to caregivers about the language services offered. It is important to note that hiring more certified bilingual teachers would also make it feasible to expand this program to other campuses, tackling the issue caregivers expressed about putting their children on a bus away from their neighborhood campus.

Recommendations

The study contributes to the literature on caregivers' choice concerning language services in Texas, particularly in Central Texas ISD, using the sensemaking theory. In light of the study's limitations and the restriction of the setting to one school district, the work of researchers contributing to this field is far from complete. My recommendations for further research are the following:

- *Broaden the scope of the study*: With the number of ELLs increasing across the United States, the study of de-selection is likely broader in minority-majority cities where the de-selection population may be greater than in Central Texas ISD. Given the nature of the isolated language model used in Central Texas ISD, aspects of this study may not be replicated, primarily with respect to the de-selection of the transitional bilingual program, in other areas. However, other school districts in Texas and across the country with other language programs such as dual-language programs and restrictive language policies may allow for a broader research group.

- *Include the voices of classroom teachers*: Empirical research and the findings

  from this study indicate classroom teachers can be the difference-makers in

  terms of caregivers feeling welcomed and their backgrounds valued (Gonzalez

  et al., 2013). For caregivers to participate in an unfamiliar school

  organization, they need to know how the school system functions, and

  classroom teachers could serve as the communicative bridge from unknown to

  actively engaging (Gonzalez & Maez, 1995). Caregivers were interviewed and

  spoke about their perspectives with regard to the effectiveness of

  communication and the sensemaking of their decision to deny language

  services. Because of the study's limitations, classroom teachers could not be

  interviewed as the transitional bilingual program is not being implemented

  this year. Currently, in Central Texas ISD, there is only one bilingual

  classroom, which is the pre-kindergarten section at the campus where the

  bilingual program was previously implemented. Because of this limitation, I

  was unable to triangulate the data via interviews with classroom teachers. I

  did hear accounts from caregivers and administrators, though hearing the

  words from certified bilingual teachers would provide another perspective

  from which to examine this phenomenon.

- *Quantify the impact of language service denials on ELLs*: Empirical research

  indicates achievement gaps between proficient English speakers and their

  ELL counterparts have always existed in the United States (Gibson, 2016). In

  2017, there was still an apparent setback with ELL students in terms of

  academic achievement in the State of Texas (Sanchez, 2017). Accountability

in Texas includes growth measures for subpopulations, including, but not limited to, ELLs. For the designated bilingual campus where ELLs would receive the transitional bilingual services, the growth measure data of their progress against those in ESL programs and full English immersion classes would address the gap in the literature as well as provide program leaders with the information they need to educate caregivers.

Related to my role as a bilingual educator in Central Texas ISD, this study was enlightening. It revealed the perceptions of caregivers of emergent bilingual students who have been enrolled in my campus as students in an ESL cluster. For school administrators, mainly those responsible for communicating program details and goals, this study provides helpful information for future recruitment for bilingual programs. The administrators who participated in this study were able to share some of their perspectives about their communication experiences with caregivers and reasons they believe for the denial of services, including the challenges they have in recruiting teachers and the program changes that have taken place over the past 10 years. Given this perspective of addressing program needs, my recommendations for school district leaders and administrators are as follows:

- *Educate parents of ELLs*: Empirical research and the findings from this study indicate that parents of bilingual students experience difficulty navigating the oftentimes foreign policies and programs in U.S. school systems (Mendoza, 2014). Parent understanding and involvement can directly impact both enrollment and achievement in a language service offered, including misunderstanding of program model (Bodenstab, 2012). Hold meetings at the

beginning and end of each school year to inform the bilingual community of ELLs of their language program options. At the beginning of the school year, such meetings would serve as an information session for newly classified students and reclassified year 1 students. At the end of the school year, the meeting would serve as an information session for students who may have wanted to enroll but did not for other reasons. These meetings serve as a prime opportunity to increase the number of bilingual participants in the program. The caregivers of students in full English immersion classes or the ESL model should know and be informed that their children can participate upon reclassification.

- *Re-evaluate program design*: Empirical research and the findings from this study indicate cultural considerations are essential in implementing sound curricula, choosing materials, integrating with and disciplining students, and understanding different ways to demonstrate knowledge (Brisk, 2006). The enactment of bilingual education policies allows state and local control to determine the best program models and instructional interventions to provide equitable education opportunities to ELLs and bilingual programs continue to be vastly different with respect to the use and implementation (Hornberger, 1994). Conduct a needs assessment with teachers, students, and caregivers to ensure the program design is directly aligned with the outcomes. As enrollment trends have changed, either upward or downward, the program's needs have changed and need to change based on the families and students being served.

The caregivers in this study struggled with how their children qualified for programs within the school district, had difficulty understanding the differences in program models and were uncomfortable with the perception of the "bilingual" stigma. The caregivers appeared to be resolved to the fact that they are unlikely to receive answers from the school community. My recommendations for caregivers are:

- *Seek out community resources*: Empirical research and the findings from this study indicate caregivers do not seek out community resources to help in the decision of de-selecting language services for their children, and resources a family has access to will influence upward or downward mobility (Bondy et al., 2017). Through the participant interviews, I discovered none of the three caregivers received or sought advice from community members, either previous bilingual caregivers themselves or not, about the enrollment process of a language service. The power of the collective over the individual is essential to note, and perhaps the caregivers who have previously denied services would gather information from others with shared goals and interests. The collective effort to equip caregivers with community resources may address the misunderstanding of the program models as well as navigating the foreign policies, particularly for migrant families new to the community (Mendoza, 2014).

- *Advocate for equitable access*: Empirical research and the findings from this study show the decision to de-select in the language program offered relates to it being limited to one campus and caregivers wanting their children to be treated equally (S. K. Lee, 1999). Many caregivers, out of fear of disrupting

the norm or fear of unwanted attention to their families, are not comfortable advocating for necessary change. The participants, both caregivers and administrators, explained how a recurring deterrent for families was the isolation of this program to one campus. It is incumbent on family members to speak out about the importance of having these services offered at their home campuses to reap the benefits without disregarding the needs of their families.

Conclusions of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the sensemaking of caregivers who denied language services for their emergent bilingual children in Central Texas ISD. There is extensive research on the impact of language services on second language acquisition. This was a unique study because it addressed the high denial rate of caregivers in a higher affluent district in Texas. This study also contributed to the research because it was an in-depth qualitative study on the sensemaking of caregivers, which has not previously been conducted. Scholars have primarily approached parents and bilingual education from a deficit approach, using qualitative measures, to examine why there is lower parental involvement with families of ELL students. However, this study had an asset-based approach, as interviews with caregivers and administrators were meant to learn what is working within the bilingual department and what could be improved to increase enrollment.

As a proponent of quality learning experiences for ELLs, I see value in acquiring a second language through the intricate process of using the first language to obtain the second. The process of acquiring a second language is just as important as obtaining fluency, and this study has shown it is the language goal caretakers have for their

emergent bilingual children. I have successfully learned English as a second language to a point of fluency and it has positively affected my work opportunities, my education, and my exposure to different ways of processing information. I approach the field of bilingual education as an active participant who has felt the victory of being fully bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Aside from my personal experience as a language learner, as a practitioner in the field of bilingual education I feel compelled to consider language learners at the forefront of the learning experience. This study reaffirms that the practice of learning a language is often times decided based on the perceptions of others, rather than on the needs of the learners themselves.

Themes and words in the title of this study may give the illusion of a negative study about bilingual education, but the truth is we have heard from key stakeholders in the matter of bilingual education and how they make sense of their reality to make the best decisions for their children. The negative aspect is not the de-selection of services, but rather that families feel the need to part with their language, their culture, and their identity to fit their current community instead of participating in an enrichment opportunity to celebrate those differences. It is my sincere hope that this study can add to the field of bilingual education and compel policymakers, school district leaders, and caregivers to learn more open and accepting measures so language learning and diversity can become a token of understanding and be seen for the true value they bring to a community.

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1988). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckmann (Eds.), *Action control: From cognition to behavior*. Springer-Verlag.

Alonso, O. (2013). Success with ELLs. *English Journal*, *102*(5), 91–93.

Alvear, S. A. (2015). *Learning more than language: An examination of bilingual programs and student achievement in a large urban school district* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Rice University.

Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times* [Policy brief]. Education and the Public Interest Center.

Bailey, A. L. (Ed.). (2007). *The language demands of school: Putting academic language to the test*. Yale University Press.

Baker, C. (2006). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (4th ed.). Multilingual Matters.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (6th ed.). Wiley/Jossey-Bass Education.

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *13*(4), 544–559. http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf

Becerra, D. (2012). Perceptions of educational barriers affecting the academic achievement of Latino K-12 students. *Children & Schools*, *34*(3), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cds001

Becker, J. K., Becker, B. J., & Kim, Y. (2014). Examining differential item functioning trends for English language learners in a reading test: A meta-analytical approach. *Language Testing*, *31*(1), 89–101.

Berenyi, J. R. (2008). "Appropriate action," inappropriately defined: Amending the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. *Washington & Lee Law Review*, *65*, 639–657.

Bodenstab, T. (2012). *Survey of parents in a predominantly Latino elementary school to determine factors that affect parental involvement* (Publication No. 3492992) [Doctoral dissertation, Aurora University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Bondy, J. M., Peguero, A. A., & Johnson, B. E. (2017). The children of immigrants' academic self-efficacy: The significance of gender, race, ethnicity, and segmented assimilation. *Education and Urban Society*, *49*(5), 486–517. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516644049

Bower, H., & Griffin, D. (2011). Can the Epstein model of parental involvement work in a high minority, high-poverty elementary school? A case study. *Professional School Counseling*, *15*(2), 77–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X1101500201

Brisk, M. E. (2005). Bilingual education. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 7–24). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brisk, M. E. (2006). *Bilingual education: From compensatory to quality schooling* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Buysse, V., Castro, D. C., & Peisner-Feinberg, E. (2010). Effects of a professional development program on classroom practices and outcomes for Latino dual language learners. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *25*(2), 194–206. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.10.001

Carroll, P. E., & Bailey, A. L. (2016). Do decision rules matter? A descriptive study of English language proficiency assessment classifications for English-language learners and native English speakers in fifth grade. *Language Testing*, *33*(1), 23–52. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532215576380

Casas, J. F., & Ryan, C. S. (2010). How Latinos are transforming the United States: Research, theory, and policy. *Journal of Social Issues*, *66*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01629.x

Cavazos-Rehg, P. A., & Delucia-Waack, J. L. (2009). Education, ethnic identity and acculturation as predictors of self-esteem in Latino adolescents. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *87*(1), 47–54. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2009.tb00548.x

Chavkin, N., & Gonzalez, D. (1995). *Forging partnerships between Mexican American parents and the schools* (ED388489). ERIC. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED388489.pdf

Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *23*(2), 145–170. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023002145

Coburn, C. E. (2005). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. *Educational Policy*, *19*(3), 476–509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904805276143

Cole, N. L. (2019, November 8). *Understanding acculturation and why it happens*. Thought Co. https://www.thoughtco.com/acculturation-definition-3026039

Collier, V. P. (1995a). Acquiring a second language for school. *Directions in Language and Education: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*, *7*(4), 1–10.

Collier, V. P. (1995b). *Promoting academic success for ESL students: Understanding second language acquisition for school*. New Jersey Teachers of English Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators.

Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, *2*(1).

Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2009). *Educating English language learners for a transformed world*. Fuente Press.

Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2017). Validating the power of bilingual schooling: Thirty-two years of large-scale, longitudinal research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *37*, 203–217. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190517000034

Craig, B. A. (1996). Parental attitudes toward bilingualism in a local two-way immersion program. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *20*(3-4), 383–410. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1996.10668636

Crawford, J. (1989). *Bilingual education: History, politics, theory, and practice*. Crane Publishing Company.

Crawford, J. (2002, Summer). *OBITUARY: The Bilingual Ed Act, 1968-2002*. Rethinking Schools. http://rethinkingschools.aidcvt.com/special_reports /bilingual/Bil164.shtml

Crawford, J., & Krashen, S. (2007). *English language learners in American classrooms: 101 questions, 101 answers*. Scholastic.

Crespo-Jimenez, M. (2011). *Patterns of Latino parental involvement in middle school: Case studies of Mexican, Dominican, and Puerto Rican families* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Connecticut.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (1998). *Beyond adversarial discourse: Searching for common ground in the education of bilingual students*. Presentation to the California State Board of Education, Sacramento, CA.

Del Valle, S. (2009). The bilingual's hoarse voice: Losing rights in two languages. In M. R. Salaberry (Ed.), *Language allegiances and bilingualism in the US* (pp. 80–109). Multilingual Matters.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Dervin, B. (1983). *An overview of sense-making research: Concepts, methods, and results to date*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Dallas, TX.

Dervin, B. (1991). Comparative theory reconceptualized: From entities and states to processes and dynamics. *Communication Theory*, *1*(1), 59–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1991.tb00005.x

Dervin, B. (1994). Information – Democracy: An examination of underlying assumptions. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *45*(6), 369–385. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199407)45:6<369::AID-ASI3>3.0.CO;2-5

Dervin, B. (2003a). *Chaos, order, and sense-making: A proposed theory for information design*. Hampton Press.

Dervin, B. (2003b). Sense-making's journey from metatheory to methodology to method: An example using information seeking and use as research focus. In B. Dervin, L. Foreman-Wernet, & E. Lauterbach (Eds.), *Sense-making methodology reader: Selected writings of Brenda Dervin* (pp. 133–164). Hampton Press.

Dervin, B. (2010). Clear . . . unclear? Accurate . . . inaccurate? Objective . . . subjective? Research . . . practice? Why polarities impede the research, practice and design of information systems and how sense-making methodology attempts to bridge the gaps: Part 1. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, *16*(5), 994–997. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2753.2010.01530.x

Dervin, B., & Frenette, M. (2001). Sense-making methodology: Communicating communicatively with campaign audiences. In R. E. Rice & C. K. Atkin (Eds.), *Public communication campaigns* (3rd ed., pp. 69–87). Sage.

Developing ELL Programs: Lau v. Nichols. (2020, January 16). Retrieved April 6, 2020, from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/lau.html

Duncan, A., & Gil, L. (2014, February 19). English language learners an asset for global, multilingual future. *Los Angeles Daily News*. http://www.dailynews.com/opinion/20140219/english-learners-an-asset-for globalmultilingual-future-arne-duncan-and-libia-gil

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Allyn & Bacon/Merrill.

124

Edwards, V. (2004). *Multilingualism in the English-speaking world*. Blackwell.

Elfers, A. M., & Stritikus, T. (2014). How school and district leaders support classroom teachers' work with English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(2), 305–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13492797

Epstein, J., & Sheldon, S. (2006). Moving forward: Ideas for research on school, family, and community partnerships. In C. F. Conrad & R. Serlin (Eds.), *Sage handbook for research in education: Engaging ideas and enriching inquiry* (pp. 117–138). Sage.

Farruggio, P. (2010). Latino immigrant parents' views of bilingual education as a vehicle for heritage preservation. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *9*(1), 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348430903252011

Freeman, Y., & Freeman, D. (1998). *ESL/EFL teaching: Principles for success*. Heinemann.

García, O., & Sánchez, M. T. (2015). *Transforming schools with emergent bilingual students*. The CUNY-NYSIEB Project.

Gee, J. P. (2007). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Taylor & Francis.

Gibbons, P. (2009). *English language learners, academic literacy, and thinking*. Heinemann.

Gibson, C. (2016). Bridging English language learner achievement gaps through effective vocabulary development strategies. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(9), 134. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n9p134

Gonzalez, L., Borders, D., Hines, E., Villalba, J., & Henderson, A. (2013). Parental involvement in children's education: Consideration for school counselors working with Latino immigrant families. *Professional School Counseling*, *16*(3), 185–193. https://doi.org/10.5330/PSC.n.2013-16.183

Good, M. E., Masewicz, S., & Vogel, L. (2010). Latino English language learners: Bridging achievement and cultural gaps between schools and families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *9*(4), 321–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2010.491048

Gottlieb, M., Katz, A., & Ernst-Slavit, G. (2009). *Paper to practice: Using the English language proficiency standards in PreK-12 classrooms*. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Guinn, R., Vincent, V., Wang, L., & Villas, P. (2011). Acculturation tendencies in a border Latino population. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *33*(2), 170–183. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986311398209

Hakuta, K. (2011). Educating language minority students and affirming their equal rights: Research and practical perspectives. *Educational Researcher*, *40*(4), 163–174. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X11404943

Hosch, H. M. (1984). *Attitudes toward bilingual education: A view from the border*. Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso.

Howard, E. R., & Christian, D. (2002). *Two-way immersion 101: Designing and implementing a two-way immersion education program at the elementary level*. Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. L., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., & Christian, D. (2018). *Guiding principles of dual language education* (3rd ed.). Center for Applied Linguistics.

Institute of Education Science. (2020). *English language learners in public schools 2020*. U.S. Department of Education.

Jeynes, W. (Ed.). (2010). *Family factors and the educational success of children*. Routledge.

Kelly, M. (2019, August 13). *Do you know the meaning of the fourteenth amendment?* ThoughtCo. https://www.thoughtco.com/us-constitution-14th amendment-summary-105382

Ketelaar, E., Beijaard, D., Boshuizen, H. P. A., & Den Brok, P. J. (2012). Teachers' positioning towards an educational innovation in the light of ownership. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *28*(2), 273–282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.10.004

Kihuen, M. (2009). Leaving no child behind: A civil right. *American University Journal of Gender Social Policy & Law*, *17*, 113–147.

Kim, J. M., Heo, J., & Malonebeach, E. (2015). Exploratory examination of the relationship between acculturation and personal growth among Korean immigrants. *Psychological Reports*, *116*(2), 613–663. https://doi.org/10.2466/17.21.pro.116k19w7

Kim, Y. M. (2013). *Linking acculturation patterns, acculturative stress, and education policies to educational competence among Mexican-American children* (Publication No. 3577014) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Klein, G. (2006). The strengths and limitations of teams for detecting problems. *Cognition, Technology & Work*, *8*(4), 227–236. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10111-005-0024-6

Krogstad, J. M. (2004, March 19). *Assimilation and language*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2004/03/19/assimilation-and-language/

Lara-Alecio, R., Galloway, M., Irby, B. J., Rodriguez, L., & Gómez, L. (2004). Two-way immersion bilingual programs in Texas. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *28*(1), 35–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2004.10162611

Lee, M., Shetgiri, R., Barina, A., Tillitski, J., & Flores, G. (2015). Raising bilingual children: A qualitative study of parental attitudes, beliefs, and intended behaviors. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *37*(4), 503–521. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986315602669

Lee, S. K. (1999). The linguistic minority parents' perceptions of bilingual education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *23*(2-3), 113–124.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2001). *Dual language education* (Vol. 28). Multilingual Matters.

Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2005). The rich promise of two-way immersion. *Educational Leadership*, *62*(4), 56–59.

Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2016). Students' perceptions of bilingualism in Spanish and Mandarin dual language programs. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *10*(1), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2016.1118671

Linquanti, R. (1999). *Fostering academic success for English language learners: What do we know?* WestEd.

Linton, A. (2004). *Learning in two languages: Spanish-English immersion in U.S. public schools*. The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies. https://ccis.ucsd.edu/_files/wp106.pdf

Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. Routledge.

López, M. M. (2013). Mothers choose: Reasons for enrolling their children in a two-way immersion program. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *36*(2), 208–227. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2013.818595

Malone, D. (2015). Culture: A potential challenge for parental involvement in schools. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *82*(1), 14–18.

Marian, V., Shook, A., & Schroeder, R. (2013). Bilingual two-way immersion programs benefit academic achievement. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *36*(2), 167–186. https://doi.org/10.1080%2F15235882.2013.818075

Mavrogordato, M. (2012). Educational equity policies and the centralization of American public education: The case of bilingual education. *Peabody Journal o f Education*, *87*(4), 455–467. https://doi.org/10.1080/016'956X.2012.705147

McKinney, C. (2017). *Language and power in post-colonial schooling. Ideologies in practice*. Routledge.

Mendoza, V. E. (2014). *The challenges Latino parents of English language learners encounter in their child's schooling: The politics and the praxis* (Publication No. 3682459) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at El Paso]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2017). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Langara College.

Mohan, B. (1986). *Language and content*. Addison-Wesley.

Moran, R. (1998). The politics of discretion: Federal intervention in bilingual education. *California Law Review*, *76*(6), 1249–1352. https://doi.org/10.2307/3480675

Moreno, H. I. (2016). *Migrant parents' perceptions of their involvement in bilingual educational programs in South Texas* (Publication No. 10930645) [Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University Kingsville]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*. https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/bgquest.asp

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2002).

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2018, April). *English learner populations by local education agency*. https://ncela.ed.gov/files/fast_facts /LEAs_Fact_Sheet_2018_Final.pdf

Osorio-O'Dea, P. (2001). *Bilingual education: An overview* [CRS Report for Congress]. The Library of Congress.

Ovando, C. J. (2003). Bilingual education in the United States: Historical development and current issues. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *27*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2003.10162589

Ovando, C. J., Combs, M. C., & Collier, V. P. (2006). *Bilingual & ESL classrooms* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Paris, D., & Alim, S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.982l873k2ht16m77

Parkes, J., & Ruth, T. (2011). How satisfied are parents of students in dual language education programs?: "Me parece maravillosa la gran oportunidad que le estan dando a estos ninos". *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *1*(14), 701–718. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2011.577762

Pawan, F., & Seralathan, A. (2015). Moving on up with WIDA: Helping near-proficient English learners reach full proficiency. *INTESOL Journal*, *12*(1).

Pimentel, C. (2011). The color of language: The racialized educational trajectory of an emerging bilingual student. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *10*(4), 335–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2011.605686

Pulliam, J. D., & Van Patten, J. J. (2007). *History of education in America* (9th ed.). Pearson.

Ramirez, D., Pasta, D., Yuen, S., Billings, D., & Ramey, D. (1991). *Final report: Longitudinal study of structured English immersion strategy, early-exit and late-exit bilingual educational programs for language minority children* (Vol. 1, Publication No. 300-87 0156). U.S. Department of Education.

Ramos, F. (2007). What do parents think of two-way bilingual education? An analysis of responses. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *6*(2), 139–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348430701304807

Rhodes, R. L., Ochoa, S. H., & Ortiz, S. O. (2005). *Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: A practical guide*. Guilford Press.

Rivera, L. (2002, April 1). *A review of the literature on bilingual education*. http://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/149

Rodríguez, M. V. (2015). Families and educators supporting bilingualism in early childhood. *School Community Journal*, *25*(2), 177–194. http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Rossell, C. (2009). *Does bilingual education work? The case of Texas* [Monograph]. Texas Public Policy Foundation.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Portes, A. (2001). *Ethnicities: Children of immigrants in America*. University of California Press.

Ryan, C. S., Casas, J. F., Kelly-Vance, L., Ryalls, B. O., & Nero, C. (2010). Parent involvement and views of school success: The role of parents' Latino and White American cultural orientations. *Psychology in the Schools*, *47*(4), 391–405. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20477

Salinas, C., & Franquiz, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Scholars in the field: The challenges of migrant education* (ED482321). ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED482321

Samson, J., & Collins, B. A. (2012, April 30). *Preparing all teachers to meet the needs of English language learners*. Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k 12/reports/2012/04/30/11372/preparing-all-teachers-to-meet-the-needs-of-english language-learners/

Sanchez, C. (2017, February 23). *English language learners: How your state is doing*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/02/23/512451228/5million-english-language learners-a-vast-pool-of-talent-at-risk

Saucedo, L. (1997). *Parents' attitudes towards dual language immersion programs* (ED405730). ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED405730

Schecter, S. R., Sharken-Taboada, D., & Bayley, R. (1996). Bilingual by choice: Latino parents' rationales and strategies for raising children with two languages. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *20*(2), 261–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1996.10668630

Schumann, J. (1986). Research on acculturation model for L2 acquisition. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *7*(5), 379–392. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1986.9994254

Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. (2005). Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and mathematics achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *98*(4), 196–207. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.98.4.196-207

Shin, H. B., & Kominski, R. A. (2010). *Language use in the United States: 2007* (ACS Reports, ACS-12). U.S. Census Bureau.

Singh, M. (2013). A study of a state-wide reading assessment: The importance of early achievement and socio-demographic factors. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *19*(1), 4–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.737572

Slavin, R. E., Madden, N., & Calderon, M. (2010). Reading and language outcomes of a five year randomized evaluation of transitional bilingual education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *33*(1), 47–58. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41238537

Sleegers, P., Wassink, H., Veen, K. V., & Imants, J. (2009). School leaders' problem framing: A sense-making approach to problem solving processes of beginning school leaders. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *8*(2), 152–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760902737162

Sosa, A. S. (1997). Involving Hispanic parents in educational activities through collaborative relationships. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *21*(2-3), 285–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1997.10668665

Souto-Manning, M., & Swick, K. J. (2006). Teachers' beliefs about parent and family involvement: Rethinking our family involvement paradigm. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *34*(2), 187–193. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-006-0063-5

Spillane, J., Reiser, B., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(3), 387–431. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003387

Stewner-Manzanares, G. (1988). *The Bilingual Education Act: Twenty years later*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/files/rcd/BE021037/Fall88_6.pdf

Texas Administrative Code. (2018, July 15). *Chapter 89. Adaptations for special populations. Subchapter BB. Commissioner's rules concerning state plan for educating English learners*. http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules /tac/chapter089/ch089bb.html

Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 29 subchapter BB.

Texas Education Agency. (2019, July). *Enrollment in Texas public schools 2019-2019*. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/enroll_2018-19.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2020). *Student attendance accounting handbook*, *January 2020*. http://www.tea.texas.gov

Texas Education Code, Chapter 29, Section 29.053.

Theoharis, G., & O'Toole, J. (2011). Leading inclusive ELL social justice leadership for English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *47*(4), 646–688. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11401616

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. University of California, Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Thomson, P., & Hall, C. (2011). Sense-making as a lens on everyday change leadership practice: The case of Holly Tree Primary. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, *14*(4), 385–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2011.585665

Tinkler, B. (2002). *A review of literature on Hispanic/Latino parent involvement in K-12 education*. University of Denver. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469134.pdf

Torres-Guzman, M. E. (2002). Dual language programs: Key features and results. *Directions in Language and Education*, *14*, 1–16.

Treffner, C. (2003). *School accountability and non-English speaking students' academic performance* (Publication No. 3081551) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Tsianguebeni, P. (2017). *Issues of ambivalence between acculturation and assimilation in transitional programs for English language learners* (Publication No. 3081551) [Doctoral dissertation, Northcentral University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Umansky, I. M., & Reardon, S. F. (2015). Reclassification patterns among Latino English learner students in bilingual, dual immersion, and English immersion classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, *51*(5), 879–912. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214545110

Unganer, T. (2014). First language loss; Why should we care? *Social and Behavioral Science*, *158*, 351–355. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.099

U.S. Const., amend. XIV, § 1.

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Part A- English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act*. http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg40.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2016, September 23). *U.S. Department of Education releases guidance on English learners*. https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-guidance-english-learners

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. State University of New York Press.

Varghese, M., & Park, C. (2010). Teachers as intellectuals and advocates: Professional development for bilingual education teachers. *Journal of Latinos & Education*, *9*(1), 72–80.

Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Sage.

Weick, K., Sutcliffe, K., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, *16*(4), 409–421.

Welner, K. G., & Carter, P. L. (2013). Achievement gaps arise from opportunity gaps. In P. L. Carter & K. G. Welner (Eds.), *Closing the opportunity gap* (p. 1). Oxford University Press.

Wiese, A. M., & Garcia, E. E. (1998). The Bilingual Education Act: Language minority students and equal educational opportunity. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *22*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1998.10668670

Wlazlinski, M. (2014). From state rule to practice: How ESOL push-in looks like in the classroom. *GATESOL in Action*, *1*(Spring 2014). http://georgiatesoljournal.org/ojs/index.php/GATESOL/article/view/6/18%3E

Worthy, J., & Rodríguez-Galindo, A. (2006). "Mi hija vale dos personas": Latino immigrant parents' perspectives about their children's bilingualism. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *30*(2), 579–601. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2006.10162891

Wright, A. C. (2017). *Rethinking Spanish: Understanding Spanish speakers motivations and reasons to opt for either an English only or a dual English-Spanish educational program* (Publication No. 10619273) [Doctoral dissertation, Alliant International University San Diego]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Zehr, M. (2007, May 8). NCLB seen a damper on bilingual programs. Some states and districts say testing requirements may discourage efforts. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/nclb-seen-a-damper-on-bilingual-programs/2007/05

Zhang, P. (2010). *Sensemaking: Conceptual changes, cognitive mechanisms, and structural representations* (Publication No. 3409887) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Zhang, P., Soergel, D., Klavans, J., & Oard, D. (2008). Extending sense-making models with ideas from cognition and learning theories. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *45*(1), 23–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.2008.1450450219

Zwiers, J. (2008). *Building academic language: Essential practices for content classrooms*. Josey-Bass.