

TEACHER ALLOCATION OF TURNS TO LIMITED

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS

The Rate at Which Teachers Allocate
Turns to Limited English Proficiency
Students in Comparison With Their
English Proficient Peers

by

Amanda Retzak

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Investigation Advisor

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**The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751**

ABSTRACT

	Retzak,	Amanda	D.
(Writer)	(Last Name)	(First)	(Initial)

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The research investigates bilingual education and language acquisition, addressing the history of immigrants, bilingual education law, and the many factors that influence language acquisition. Since there are a number of factors that influence language acquisition and limited English proficiency (LEP) students' success in American schools, the research examines the numerous variables of language acquisition to understand each factor individually. In the past, research has typically focused on bilingual education programs and their influence on language acquisition. As LEP students are being mainstreamed into the general education programs more frequently, the role of inclusion in language acquisition needs to be investigated more thoroughly. As such, the focus of the literature review is on the participation of LEP students in the mainstream classroom and how their participation affects language acquisition. Review of the literature of bilingual education presents a clear need for further research in participation of LEP students in the mainstream classroom.

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CHAPTER 1

Teacher Allocation of Turns to Limited English Proficiency Students

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to assess the needs of limited English proficiency (LEP) students to succeed in education. There are a large number of factors contributing to LEP students' education, and a review of current and past literature indicates which factors have been adequately researched, and which have not. The study asserts that language acquisition is extremely important for LEP students since it is vital for their future success. Language acquisition has been widely researched. Despite this, the research tends to set the foundation for understanding language acquisition, not what educators can do to facilitate language acquisition.

One important factor in language acquisition is classroom participation. Since LEP students are being placed in mainstream classrooms at high rates, their participation in classrooms is vital to their language acquisition. The research on participation of LEP students, however, is minimal. Further research needs to be conducted to determine if the needs of LEP students are currently being met in the mainstream classroom. The participation of LEP students in comparison to their English proficient (EP) peers is one area that needs to be researched further.

Definitions of Terms

Bilingual Education

An educational program, frequently designed for limited English proficient students, in which there is instruction in both English and another language (Freiberg, 1997).

Classroom Participation

Participation is how teachers exert control by regulating interaction. The students use language and discourse strategies to provide responses to teachers or react to others by speaking in the classroom (Hernandez, 1997).

English as a Second Language (ESL)

An educational program that teaches English to students who are not native English speakers (Freiberg, 1997).

Inclusion

In inclusion programs, each child is educated to the maximum extent appropriate in the school or classroom he or she would attend in the absence of their special needs (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 1996).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

An individual who comes from a home in which the language used for communication is not English. The individual also has sufficient difficulty in speaking, reading, understanding, or writing in English (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998).

Literacy

The National Institute for Literacy (2003) defines literacy as the ability to read, write, and speak in English. As our society changes rapidly, the definition of literacy is frequently extended to the individual's ability to function in society, including technological skills. In educational studies, literacy is typically studied in the more traditional sense.

Mainstreaming

The placement of students in one or more general education classes (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 1996).

Native Language

The first language learned by an individual and/or used by the parents in the home (Freiberg, 1997).

Special Education

Special education is a group of services that meet an individual student's needs beyond what is provided for students without such needs. The services provided vary greatly as well as the location of the service provision (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 1996).

Turn Allocation

How turns to speak are distributed in the classroom. For the purposes of this study it is defined identical to the Verplaeste (2000) study: (1) when the teacher selects a child who has not volunteered, (2) the student volunteers in response to teacher's bid, (3) the student requests to speak while others are speaking (i.e. raises their hand), or (4) the student interrupts another speaker and the teacher allows the student to continue speaking.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. To begin with, it would be impossible to fully address bilingual education research. Since the research investigates many different topics, only relevant research will be used in the current study. As such, it is possible that some important research has been excluded unintentionally.

The study observes the importance of participation for language acquisition. Although participation in class is vital for language acquisition, there are indefinite numbers of other factors that affect the student's language acquisition. Addressing the importance of classroom participation will allow for a closer examination of only one of the many factors.

The study also does not address the many reasons why teachers may allocate turns differently to LEP students, but merely addresses the need to determine if they do. In the event that teachers allocate turns differently, there would be many paths for future research to follow. Although teacher attitudes are assumed to be the root of any unintentional bias, it is possible that teachers may be allocating turns differently for intentional reasons, such as not wanting to embarrass the LEP student.

CHAPTER 2

History of Immigrant Children in American Schools

The role of immigrant children in American schools began being documented at the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1903, the New York School Districts began developing special curriculum for limited English proficiency (LEP) students. Despite these efforts to educate immigrant children, in 1911 the United States Immigration Commission found that 48.8% of New York City fifth-graders were reported as mentally retarded, with the pupils representing the majority of this percentage being children of recent immigrants to the United States. The LEP students' inability to effectively communicate in English was mistaken as mental retardation (Cordasco, 1976).

In addition to being misplaced in special education, LEP students also had higher dropout rates. In 1908, only 13% of New York City immigrant students in English-language classrooms at the age of twelve continued their education into high school, in comparison with 32% of their native-born peers (Crawford, 1989). New immigrants were generally seen as “illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative” (Cordasco, 1976, p. 30). There are many possible reasons beyond lack of motivation that immigrant children had significantly lower rates of continued education, one of the main ones being limited English proficiency.

Another such reason is that tolerance of immigrant children's culture in schools was low in comparison to that of today. In addition, immigrant children were expected to change pronunciation of names, or change their names completely, for the convenience of school personnel (Christian, in Simoes, 1976). For example, a student by the name of “Mateo” would be expected to change the pronunciation of his name to “Matt” to make it

more familiar to school personnel. Immigrant children and their culture were not readily accepted in schools at that time. Their language and culture were also not taken into account for assessment procedures. As a result, many students were classified as mentally retarded because assessment procedures were not modified to take into account the language discrepancy.

Many currently believe that we have become increasingly aware and accepting of other cultures (Glenn, 1996). It has been argued, however, that although the United States encourages tolerance, there are currently forms of segregation that are not present in other countries. An example of this segregation is the lack of interracial marriages (Glenn, 1996). While currently on the rise, only about seven percent of marriages are interracial, with about fifteen percent of the nation's unmarried couples being interracial (Associated Press, 2003). Although there are certainly many possible causes of the low rates of interracial marriages, Glenn (1996) asserts that lack of toleration in the United States for interracial couples and minorities is one major source of the problem.

Throughout the 20th Century, the United States educational system had difficulty determining how to best teach Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students (Cordasco, 1976). Traditionally, schools taught students in English; immigrant students were expected to learn English. The types of educational programs for LEP students have reflected many of the attitudes regarding them. The difficulties with educating LEP students have become a larger issue since there are currently more non-English speaking students than ever before. The rich history of ESL students in our schools will hopefully better prepare the educational demands that will need to be met as their numbers increase.

Limited English Proficiency Population

There is a great deal of information regarding the number of LEP students in American schools. For the 1997-1998 school year alone, there were over 3 million students learning English as a second language. In the past decade, the number of English as a second language (ESL) students increased annually at about 8% (Williams, 2001).

The number of limited English proficiency students is continuing to soar throughout the United States. There were 53 million children ages 5-17 accounted for in the 2000 United States Census. Out of these school-age children, 1 million reported speaking English “not well,” and 230,000 reported speaking English “not at all.” This indicates that about 2% of school-age children’s families report speaking English poorly (United States Census Bureau, 2003). The Census also reports that there are over 7.5 million non-English-speaking households in the United States that have children ages 5 to 17. The main language spoken in these homes is Spanish (United States Census Bureau, 2003). These numbers do not include the large population of illegal immigrants, many of who speak a language other than English. If these numbers were included, the number of LEP individuals reported in the Census would be even greater. There are clearly a large number of students who report speaking English well yet still need ESL services since their primary language is not English.

The Midwest has seen increased growth of LEP residents within the past two to three decades. In Wisconsin, there are over 46,000 non-English speaking households in the state with children ages 5-17. The majority of these households also speak Spanish, followed by Asian languages (United States Census Bureau, 2003). According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2003), the Menomonie School District, in

northwestern Wisconsin, with a population of approximately 15,000, had 181 LEP students in 2001, with the majority of these students in grades K-3. Neighboring Eau Claire School District had about 650 LEP students. The Milwaukee School District reported the largest number of LEP students in Wisconsin, 7,550 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2003). These numbers indicate that there are relatively large numbers of LEP students in area school districts.

The number of LEP students in other areas of the United States is even greater. Minneapolis, Minnesota, reports that 24% of its current students are English language learners (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2003). In comparison, New York City had approximately 13% of its 2001-2002 student body classified as English language learners. These students were from over 140 different language backgrounds (New York City Department of Education, 2003). In California, approximately 40% of students enrolled in the 2001-2002 school year came from homes where the primary language was not English (California Department of Education, 2003).

The number of limited English proficiency students is constantly increasing. From 1990 to 2000, there was a 105% increase of LEP students enrolled in United States public schools (California Department of Education, 2003). It is expected that in areas heavily influenced by other cultures, the number of language minorities in these school districts will soon surpass that of the majority (Williams, 2001). It is estimated that by 2026, the Hispanic and nonwhite student enrollment in US schools will reach 70 percent (Parker 1997). Currently, their success rate in the United States is dismal. It is becoming ever more important that we address the needs of LEP students in the schools.

Federal Laws Influencing Bilingual Education

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI determined that individuals in the United States could not be discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin in any programs that receive federal funds. This law determined that public schools could not deny the benefits of an education to students based on national origin, which was extended to English proficiency (Civil Rights Act, 1964). Title VI is still enforced today. The Office for Civil Rights enforces Title VI and discrimination suits based on the law (Office for Civil Rights, 2003).

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII made it unlawful for employers to discriminate against individuals based on their race, color, or national origin. Decisions made in the Supreme Court based on Title VII have influenced how laws are applied to schools (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

Bilingual Education Act of 1968

Perhaps one of the most important laws influencing bilingual education is the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. This federal act resulted in funding to establish bilingual education programs for English as a second language students who were economically disadvantaged. It determined that it would be United States' government policy to assist schools in developing and implementing bilingual education programs (Garcia, 1976).

Bilingual Education Amendment Act Reauthorizations

In 1974, both Title VII and the Bilingual Education Act were reauthorized to include funds for native language instruction. The goal of the reauthorization was to transition students into English-speaking classrooms. It asserted that children learn best

through using their language and cultural heritage. Financial assistance was provided to determine and publish bilingual curriculum (Garcia, 1976).

Title VII and the Bilingual Education Act were reauthorized again in 1979 to change funding criteria. The criteria for poverty were removed, and thus all English as a second language (ESL) students were able to receive bilingual education services. It was at this time that “Limited English Proficient,” or LEP, was introduced (Hernandez, 1997).

Both Title VII and the Bilingual Education Act were reauthorized several times to require states to provide additional services such as special alternative instruction to LEP students. Funds were established through grants to aid states in providing educational opportunities for LEP students. In comparison with previous reauthorizations, more recent reauthorizations strived to maintain the culture of the LEP child as they improved their English proficiency (Weise & Garcia, 1998). The Bush Administration recently replaced Title VII and the Bilingual Education Act with the No Child Left Behind provision, which requires that federal funds are only used for the acquisition of English (Katz & Kohl, 2002).

Equal Educational Opportunities Act

This act asserts that states cannot deny an education to an individual based on their race, color, sex, or national origin, and that education agencies are responsible to take action to overcome language barriers that may make it difficult for LEP students to participate (Hernandez, 1997).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Title I

The No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2001, reiterated that all students are entitled to a fair opportunity to receive a public education. The NCLB added that the students are

entitled to a “high quality education,” which would be measured by academic assessments. Section 1001 included that the educational needs of LEP students need to met under this act (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

No Child Left Behind Act, Title III

The purpose of the Title III, Part A is to help ensure that children and youth who are limited English proficient, Native American, and/or immigrants, attain English language proficiency, develop high levels of academic achievement in English, and meet the same state academic standards that all children are expected to meet (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Leave No Child Behind Act of 2003

The “Leave No Child Behind Act of 2003,” is currently introduced in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is designed to allocate funds according to the changing needs of children. The Act takes into account the recent budget crunches that have affected education. In the Leave No Child Behind Act of 2003, the needs of LEP students are not addressed. It appears that schools will not receive additional funds to help LEP students if the bill passes (Leave No Child Behind Act of 2003, 2003). As a result, mainstreamed education for LEP students would be increasingly important, but regular classroom teachers are most often not prepared to help these students.

Federal Case Law Influencing Bilingual Education

Brown v. Board of Education

Case law has also influenced bilingual education. In 1954, Brown v. Board of Education overturned Plessy v. Ferguson to make segregated education based on race

unconstitutional. It was no longer legal for students of a racial minority to be segregated from their Anglo-Saxon peers (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954).

Lau v. Nichols

This 1974 case set up guidelines for “equal educational opportunity.” The courts ruled that LEP students should not merely be given the same resources as their English-speaking peers since they would not benefit meaningfully from the education. Furthermore, the Office for Civil Rights established regulations for compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act to be enforced by law (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974).

Plyler v. Doe

In this 1982 case, the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits states from denying a free public education to undocumented immigrant children. This ensured that students would receive an education despite their immigrant status. School systems were not responsible for enforcing immigration law. It made it illegal for schools to require any documentation or inquiry that would indicate their citizenship or immigration status (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982).

English Only State Amendments

The California State Board of Education has determined that instruction in a LEP students’ native language is against the law. Limited English proficiency students are tested in English and therefore often fail in the general education classroom (Katz & Kohl, 2002). Instead, students have one year of an English immersion program and then learn all subjects in English (Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research, 2002). Arizona currently has a similar program in place of a bilingual education program. Both states have seen increased failure and dropout of LEP students after implementing the

immersion program (Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research, 2002). There is currently concern that the Bush Administration will adopt similar programs federally (Katz & Kohl, 2002).

Common Forms of Bilingual Education

The forms presented are those commonly discussed in bilingual education texts and currently implemented in United States classrooms. Some of the forms of bilingual education are considered “weak,” and some are considered “strong.” Many of these forms are not the only form of bilingual education in the school, but rather the LEP student progresses through these types with assimilation as the educational goal. In addition, only those forms of bilingual education that focus on the LEP student will be discussed.

There are many forms of weak bilingual education programs that have been commonly used in the past and despite research showing their limited efficacy, are still commonly implemented in schools (Baker, 1996). *Submersion* is a common type of bilingual education in which the LEP student is expected to assimilate into the monolingual classroom. The student is taught all day in the majority language (English) and placed in mainstream education. In *submersion withdraw* classes, the expectations of the LEP student are the same, however, the student is pulled out of the regular education classroom for second language lessons. For *transitional bilingual education*, the student is expected to achieve relative monolingualism, as the student moves from the minority to the majority language (Baker, 1996).

There are also types of bilingual education that isolate the LEP child from their English-speaking peers. One such type is the *segregationist program*. In this form of education, the student is taught only in their native language, however it is forced, not by

choice. The student is then monolingual in their native language. In the *separatist program*, the child is taught only in their native language, however it is by choice. The goal in these programs is to maintain the cultural autonomy and to promote limited bilingualism (Baker, 1996).

The strong forms of education strive for both bilingualism and biliteracy. These programs are still relatively rare in the public education system (Baker, 1996).

Maintenance, or heritage language programs, takes place in the bilingual classroom, however, the emphasis is on the first language. In this program, maintenance, pluralism, and enrichment are the goals. These goals are also the aim of two-way, or *dual language programs*. In these classrooms, both minority and majority language students learn in the minority and majority languages. This program differs from other forms of bilingual education in that in the dual language program, two languages are viewed as majority languages (Baker, 1996).

The Importance of Language Acquisition

Self-Concept

There has been a great deal of research demonstrating the importance of language acquisition for Limited English Proficiency students. Language acquisition is an important goal for LEP students since language ability brings increased opportunities, economic enhancement, and feelings of being able to function in society (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). As a result, many students place their self-concept on their ability to speak English.

Language has been determined to be one of the most important factors in developing self-concept (Christian, 1976). Many LEP students make a great effort to

speaking English. Since English is associated with success and high status, many students feel unsuccessful if they are unable to acquire the language (Byrnes & Cortez, 1992).

Peer Interaction

The ESL student's level of language acquisition also affects their interaction with peers. English as a second language students who have relatively high levels of English proficiency are better able to understand the culture in which they are embedded (Duff, 2002). Limited English proficiency students often have great difficulty following their peers' conversations regarding pop culture (Duff, 2002). As a result, they feel excluded from the classroom and from English proficient students. When students are better able to understand English, they have the foundation for understanding the American culture. As a result, they are able to interact with their English-speaking peers more frequently and feel more included in the school (Duff, 2002).

Acculturation

Language acquisition is an important factor in acculturation, as individuals who are proficient in the majority language are able to acculturate more easily. Acculturation has been suggested as a variable that can help to predict achievement and intelligence (Masten, Plata, Wenglar, & Thedford, 1999). Although the measurements of achievement and intelligence generally are not sensitive to LEP individuals' needs, the fact that acculturation is linked to achievement and intelligence in society implies that it is viewed as important.

The level of acculturation will again affect the student's future socioeconomic status (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Students who are able to acculturate will be better equipped to enter society successfully. In addition, second

language speakers frequently have had their entry into nationhood contingent upon their ability to speak English (Tomlinson, 1990). Those who are unable to speak English well are excluded from nationhood and subsequently have more difficulties with acculturation.

Literacy

Language acquisition has been closely related to literacy. It has been generally accepted that those students who do not speak English at home will remain behind in English literacy (Christian, 1976). Since they do not have the same language proficiency as students from English-speaking homes, many educators assume that they will not have the same opportunities to become literate in English.

The English literacy of LEP students is closely related to literacy in their native language. Students who are not literate in their first language experience greater obstacles in learning a second language and developing literacy in that language (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Students who are literate in their first language are able to acquire English more easily than those students who are illiterate. However, it has been found that many LEP students are not literate in their native language (Christian, in Simoes, 1976). In addition, LEP students who come from homes where the home language is not a written language face even greater obstacles to become literate in English (Simich-Dudgeon, 2003). For those students who do speak language that is written, the promotion of biliteracy will be more effective in teaching LEP students. Those students who come from homes with only an oral language may require even more help becoming literate in English (Simich-Dudgeon, 2003).

Difficulties facing LEP students

All students face a number of difficulties as they progress through school.

Students who have limited English proficiency must face these difficulties and a number of other issues associated with their specific culture. Only difficulties that are related to their limited English proficiency, not culture nor age will be discussed.

Pressure to Acculturate

To begin with, students have a great deal of pressure to become acculturated to the American culture. Some individuals view acculturation as one-directional, indicating that the student gains the American culture but loses their own. Others view the process as bi-directional, as the student has each culture affecting the other and a new culture is created for the individual. It is possible that the “direction” of acculturation depends on the individual (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). For example, some families may put more pressure on the child to maintain their “native” culture, while other families may pressure the child to become an “American.” This pressure will undoubtedly make the acculturation process more stressful for the child and also influence the end result of acculturation. The child often wants to be accepted into the American culture but not lose its own cultural identity.

The process of acculturation is rather complex. Gopaul-McNicol and Thomas-Presswood (1998) have identified five separate phases to describe the acculturation process. In the first phase, or the “precontact phase,” the two cultures are completely separate in their influence on the child’s view of the world. The second phase, the “contact phase,” is the phase in which the two groups begin to interact with one another. In the “conflict phase,” the third phase of the process, pressure is exerted on the minor

culture from the dominant culture, or the American culture. The fourth phase, the “crisis phase,” occurs when the conflict between the two cultures is at its highest level. The last phase is the “adaptation phase,” and during this phase the relations between the cultures stabilize and a mode of acculturation has been developed (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). This entire process is very stressful for the child and needs to be taken into consideration when educating individuals from another culture.

Another difficulty LEP students face applies solely to those students that are immigrants of the United States, not students who are citizens. However, its implications may apply to students who were born into the United States to immigrant parents. It is often expected that current immigrants will integrate into society immediately instead of over the course of several generations as other immigrants did in the past (Glenn, 1996). Previously, immigrants usually integrated over three to four generations. The expectation that they will not integrate gradually, but rather more readily, can cause a great deal of stress and pressure on children as well as the parents, as they do not have the experience of building on the integration their parents achieved before their birth. Those LEP students who are citizens of the United States are often expected to be completely integrated into American society. Since many people do not understand that the process of integration spans over several generations, the native born students are expected to be fully integrated (Glenn, 1996).

Pressure to Learn English

In addition to having pressure to change their culture, LEP students also have pressure to change their language. In the United States, there is a great deal of pressure to learn English and one’s acceptance into the American society is determined by the ability

of the minority to speak English (Christian, 1976). Students face this societal pressure in addition to the pressure to learn English to succeed in school. Often students who do not speak English well feel excluded from the American society, regardless of their acculturation (Christian, 1976).

The pressure to learn English is further complicated because many students give up their primary language as they become more fluent in English (Byrnes & Cortez, 1992). For many it is not just a matter of giving up the language: as they learn English, many students lose the ability to communicate in their primary language (Wong-Fillmore, 1990). The parents of these students lose the ability to communicate with their children and the children subsequently lose a great deal of the culture that is passed from the parent to the child (Byrnes & Cortez, 1992). The language barrier makes it difficult for parents to take an active role in their child's academic life.

Teacher Expectations

Another difficulty of LEP students is shared with other ethnic minorities. Many LEP students have had to face racism from both students and administration (Stewart, 1993). While some believe that teachers are able to separate their own beliefs from their actions, research has shown that this is not always the case. Students might receive differential treatment from teachers on the basis of race and culture (Masten, Plata, Wenglar, & Thedford, 1999). It is unfortunate that while many LEP students want to fit in, their teachers may be treating them differently than other students. In addition, teacher perceptions of student ability, engagement, and academic performance influence their relationships with students. If teachers believe that a child will not achieve in the class, regardless of the reason for the belief, their relationship with the child can be negatively

affected. As a result, if teachers believe that the child is not engaged in the class, they are more likely to not engage the child in the classroom activities (Osterman & Freese, 1999).

Masten, Plata, Wenglar, and Thedford (1999) found that teachers could have different expectations of students based on acculturation. In the study, teachers rated Anglo American and Hispanic American students on learning, motivational, creativity, and leadership characteristics. Teacher ratings differed based on the Hispanic-American students' level of acculturation, with higher ratings given to the students who were more acculturated (Masten, et al., 1999). It is possible that these results are not limited to Hispanic-American students but are also visible among all limited English proficiency students.

Differences in teacher ratings and student treatment may be due to a lack of knowledge about LEP students. Menken and Look's (2000) study reported that in 1997, only 2.5% of teachers who instruct LEP students had obtained a degree in ESL or bilingual education. Many of these teachers were expected to meet the many educational demands of limited English proficiency students. In addition, only 30% of teachers with LEP students had received any professional development in teaching these students (Menken & Look, 2000). Clearly, many teachers have not received the training necessary to provide the best education possible for these children.

It seems that many teachers also have not had much real-life experience with LEP students. Current and future teachers are typically white, monolingual, and female, while students are increasingly immigrant and children of second-language learners. Terrill and Mark (2000) reported that many future teachers show a preference for teaching children

whose backgrounds are similar to their own. Teachers indicated feeling less comfortable with immigrant students and LEP students and also generally had more negative attitudes towards LEP students (Terrill & Mark, 2000). It is likely that teachers who feel this way are inadvertently treating students in their classroom differently.

Academic Achievement of Limited English Proficiency Students

A large amount of research has been done on the academic achievement of LEP students. Since academic achievement is a multifaceted concept, there are a number of studies that have examined different facets of LEP students' achievement. By examining each facet, it is possible to understand the complexities of education that LEP students must tackle.

Grade Level

One dimension of academic achievement that is greatly emphasized is the concept of grade level. Limited English proficiency students often have 2-3 years of language instruction and are then placed in a monolingual academic setting. Although the students are able to understand and speak English fairly well, they are often left to "sink or swim" in the classroom. These students often fall below grade level (Baker, 1996). While this statistic may seem disheartening, LEP students require about five to seven years to approach grade-level norms in academic skills. This indicates that although LEP students may fall behind after their placement into an English-speaking classroom, many but certainly not all are able to meet the norms of their grade level after a few more years.

Special Education

Although students are able to meet the norms of their grade level after longer periods of inclusion, teachers often inappropriately refer these students for special education

services. If LEP students are inappropriately placed into special education programs such as programs for individuals with cognitive or learning disabilities, they will never have the opportunity to achieve at their grade level (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). The design of the bilingual program is essential to the academic achievement of the LEP student. When LEP students are engaged in well-designed bilingual programs they perform at the grade level (Crawford, 1989). By misplacing them in special education programs or poorly designed bilingual programs, LEP students are frequently not able to perform to their full potential.

Similarly, many LEP students are placed on low academic tracks due to their difficulties with the language (Stewart, 1993). As a result, they do not participate in the classroom but are pulled out of the classroom to receive additional services. Limited English proficiency students are facing difficulty in having their educational needs met in the mainstream classroom. When they are incorrectly placed in special education or placed on low academic tracks, they are not able to acquire the language as quickly or learn other subjects beyond English that influence their education.

Influence of the Classroom

While it may seem that LEP students are challenged sufficiently by language alone, they must be challenged in other ways for bilingual education to improve their academic achievement. In order to challenge LEP students, there must be an integration of both language and culture (Glenn, 1996). It is not sufficient to teach a child only the English language but not the American culture. Similarly, the education should strive to integrate both the dominant and secondary culture into the child's education.

While LEP students do frequently perform below the grade level when included in the English-speaking classroom, the expectations for these students are often lowered in these classrooms (Glenn, 1996). These expectations influence not only LEP students' academic achievement, but also their segregation from English-speaking students (Glenn, 1996). Many teachers may be unaware of the extent to which their expectations for LEP students can affect their education. However, teacher expectations are an important aspect of the academic and social experiences for LEP students.

In addition to teacher expectations, the type of bilingual education program offered in the school plays an important role in academic achievement for LEP students. As discussed previously, several forms of bilingual education segregate LEP students from their English-speaking peers. Glenn reports that when students are separated from their English-speaking peers, they tend to remain segregated, which can negatively affect their academic achievement (1996). By developing bilingual education programs that benefit both LEP and English proficient (EP) students, we can include LEP students in the mainstream classroom successfully and allow EP students to learn about another culture.

Language Proficiency

Achievement is closely related to proficiency. Although it seems obvious that students who are more proficient in English will perform better in an English-speaking environment, it has been reported that academic performance is facilitated by language proficiency in either language. The reason proficiency is vital to achievement is that expressive and receptive languages are essential for successful performance of almost every aspect of academic tasks. (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Even if

the child lacks the ability to apply English to their academic tasks, if they have a strong foundation in another language they will generally fare better on these tasks.

The relationship between language and academic achievement is rather complex. Although students do perform better if they have a strong foundation in any language, it has been reported that inadequate proficiency in the language of the school is often the primary reason for poor academic performance (Glenn, 1996). It would appear, then, that students who are integrated too quickly into English-speaking classrooms tend to fall behind. However, if they are proficient in their native language, they tend to perform better on academic tasks and are more likely to catch up to grade level as they continue in school. If they are segregated for too long, though, their relationships with their English-speaking peers will suffer, which may cause their academic achievement to suffer as well.

Inclusion of Limited English Proficiency Students

The decision to integrate LEP students into the classroom is rather difficult since the integration has the ability to affect their achievement in a number of ways. The age at which students should be integrated is generally dependent upon the age at which the students acquire the language of instruction. There has been a great deal of controversy regarding the age at which students learn a second language most effectively. Some assert that students between 8 and 12 tend to acquire second language for academic purposes most quickly, while others suggest adolescence is the best time (Glenn, 1996). The age at which the students acquire the second language will undoubtedly influence the timing of their placement into English-speaking classrooms.

Students are able to benefit from placement in English-speaking classrooms in a number of ways. Perhaps one of the most obvious ways in which students benefit from inclusion is acquisition of a second language. More specifically, students benefit from instruction in English as they are able to acquire new words and syntax (Crawford, 1989). However, there are a number of factors that must be considered before placing a student in an English-speaking classroom.

One such factor is that the LEP pupil must have the language skills sufficient to participate in the regular classroom for their placement there to be effective (Glenn, 1996). Although the placement may help them to succeed with English, students must also learn a number of other subjects while placed in the classroom. If the student lacks the vocabulary and ability to understand and express themselves in English, their performance in these other subjects will undoubtedly suffer as a result of their placement (Baker, 1996). Baker suggests that it is essential that LEP students are not placed in mainstream classrooms before they have successfully learned the primary language.

It can be difficult to assess when the LEP student has the language necessary to succeed in the mainstream classroom. It is highly unlikely that LEP students will have the same language abilities as their English-speaking peers. To ensure that LEP students still benefit from the placement, LEP students can be given the background in the subject being taught (Crawford, 1989). For example, if LEP students are given a reading assignment to accompany a lecture before the class period, they will benefit more from the instruction because they will be familiar with the vocabulary and have a background in the subject being taught. Teachers may find that they have to once again adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of LEP students.

Teachers should not have to meet the needs of LEP students without the support of other professionals. When this occurs, the student is all too frequently left to “sink or swim” in the English-speaking classroom. Coordination between the ESL program and regular classroom is required, otherwise the education of the students can be negatively impacted (Glenn, 1996). If the ESL and regular program have good coordination, the ESL program can help students to have the background discussed above to achieve in the English-speaking classroom. In addition, ESL teachers can supplement the information taught in the class period to ensure students are well educated in the matter.

With the assistance of other professionals, it becomes more likely that the general education teacher can meet the needs of the LEP student in their classroom. As such, many factors influencing integration are based on the behavior of the regular classroom teacher. Ideal classrooms including LEP students would be modified to encourage teacher support and student interaction (Osterman & Freese, 1999). Teacher support and student interaction would benefit not only LEP students but also their English-speaking peers. The modifications can be based on teacher training, classroom arrangement, classroom assignments, and many other factors that can be easily modified in the classroom.

Other modifications may not need to be made if the teacher is already doing an exceptional job in the classroom. Effective teachers engage all students in the learning process. To engage LEP students, teachers should use and accept LEP students’ culture in teaching (Baecher, in Simoes, 1976). As a result, their English-speaking peers will also learn more about other cultures and also understand their LEP peers better. Limited English proficiency students will feel they are accepted in the classroom and will have a stronger background to influence their achievement. General education teachers have an

extremely important role in the education of LEP students, as well as influencing their mainstream students for life in a highly diverse country.

The attitudes and focus of the schools also factor into the education of the LEP student. Studies of successful bilingual education programs have shown that schools that are effective with language minorities have a commitment to biliteracy and multiculturalism. By promoting diversity among students, the students have been accepted into the school (Glenn, 1996). They are then given a stronger foundation that will allow them to interact with their English proficient peers. Additionally, English proficient students are given the opportunity to learn about other cultures and their history from their peers. The experience is invaluable for both EP and LEP students.

These types of programs also make it easier for LEP students to learn English since language minority pupils must be given many opportunities to use the majority language. There are a number of ways in which students are given the opportunity to use English, including classroom participation, discussion, interaction with peers, and classroom activities. When the students are able to use English with their peers, they are more likely to form new friendships with these peers. In addition, it is important for these students to be exposed to the colloquial use of English (Glenn, 1996). Since instruction is typically not in the form of colloquial usage, the interaction of LEP and EP students is vital.

Classroom Participation and Language Acquisition

Classroom participation is an important aspect of language acquisition. Traditionally, teachers have been responsible for the distribution of opportunities to participate and the manner in which students participate. Teachers dominate classroom

interaction and therefore restrict the use of language from students (Hernandez, 1997). As a result, teachers have the ability to control the participation of LEP students in the classroom.

Researchers have focused on the importance of participation for language acquisition. Vygotsky, an educational theorist, stressed the importance of interaction between teachers and students. He stated that cooperation between the child and the adult is the central element of the educational process. As teachers are faced with the task of teaching larger classrooms, an important manner in which students and teachers interact is through classroom participation. Similarly, Enright and McCloskey encourage dialogue between ESL students and teachers (Hernandez, 1997). Such dialogue is vital for ESL students.

According to Baker, “the opportunity to engage in meaningful oral exchanges (in the classroom or in the community) is a necessary component in second language acquisition. In conveying meaning, a person learns about the structure and form of a language” (Glenn, 1996, p. 518). More specifically, when acquiring a language, the individual must acquire the phonetic system, the morphologic system, the syntactic system, and the semantic characteristics of the language (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). These acquisitions are facilitated by classroom participation. Although the student benefits in hearing native English speakers use the language, it is when the student is able to express him or herself in the language that these components are strengthened.

Wong Fillmore, a leading expert on bilingual education, stresses that interaction is not just important, but extremely necessary for language learning (Glenn, 1996).

Therefore, interaction between teachers and students is essential if students are expected to learn the language. Wong Fillmore has identified three factors she considers necessary for successful second language learning. She proposes that the learner, the speaker of the target language who provides the learner with the input needed, and the social setting in which learning takes place are the vital factors in language acquisition (Glenn, 1996). In schools, the teacher is the speaker of the target language who should be providing LEP students with input. If the students are not participating in the classroom, teachers do not have a means to provide students with input on their oral language expression.

Participation of Limited English Proficiency Students

While participation of LEP students has been discussed as vital to language acquisition, it is important to note that classroom participation alone is not sufficient to learn language. Although it is a means in which oral expression is improved, “normal” conversation is also necessary (Hernandez, 1997). Participation alone does not provide the same structure as oral expression outside of the classroom. Limited English proficiency students need to practice the language in less structured settings to learn the norms of conversation and the colloquial uses of the language.

With that being stated, participation is necessary for language acquisition, as shown above. Limited English proficiency students are often included in the regular classroom to encourage participation in the second language. However, the mere inclusion of LEP students in the regular classroom is not sufficient—no relationship has been found between the amount of time spent in the second language classroom and language proficiency (Glenn, 1996). Students cannot be merely placed in the classroom and expected to acquire English.

As a result, the quality of the education in the classroom and the ability to interact with others in the classroom are essential to language proficiency. However, Williams (2001) reports that English as a second language students have few opportunities to use English in the mainstreamed classroom. They frequently have difficulty navigating the discourse of the classroom (O'Byrne, 2001). English as a second language students have difficulty participating in the mainstreamed classroom.

Classroom participation is important for LEP students since it allows them to receive input from others. Crawford (1989) reports that LEP students placed in English-speaking classrooms often do not get the input needed to benefit from education. In addition to determining the beneficence of education, the quantity of input is significantly related to the speed of second language acquisition (Glenn, 1996). Students who are not given sufficient input in the regular education classroom would acquire English more quickly if they were in a different setting where they were given ample opportunity to receive input.

Similar to input, one important aspect of language acquisition is negotiation, or the process by which language learners request clarification and indicate misunderstanding. Negotiation is the result of engaging in communication with native speakers (Glenn, 1996). When students participate in the classroom, they are given the opportunity to negotiate with native speakers. Teachers who encourage participation of LEP students give these students the opportunity to negotiate and also help students to feel more comfortable participating in the future.

Participation is vital to not only language acquisition but also the students' feeling of belonging in the classroom. "For English language learners, interaction is essential to

survival in the new language and culture” (Hernandez, 1997, 112). Students who are given the opportunity to interact with others in the classroom are given the tools to interact more in society. In addition, participation allows for peer-group interaction in the classroom, which is essential for ESL students (Arora, 1986). Limited English proficiency students who participate in the classroom are better equipped to participate in society and participate with their peers.

The current level of participation of LEP students in the regular education classroom is therefore important. One study, albeit outdated, demonstrated the differences in treatment of LEP and English-speaking students in the classroom. This 1973 study found that Anglo students received more praising/encouraging, acceptance of ideas, questioning, positive response, and speaking. Mexican-American students received less praise and encouragement and their contributions were used less/developed on less by teachers. Teachers spent less time asking questions of these pupils (Townsend, in Simoes, 1976). As a result, Mexican students spoke less during classroom time. The teachers were unknowingly affecting the rate at which Mexican students participated in the classroom and acquired second language skills.

Attitudes towards LEP students have changed greatly over time. General education teachers have had to accommodate LEP students in their classrooms more than ever before, and they strive to provide positive learning environments for these children (Vaughn, Bos, & Shay Schumm, 1997). Nonetheless, many teachers become frustrated with these students because they do not understand the child’s culture; difficulties also arise since they do not share a common language (Byrnes & Cortez, 1992). Although teachers generally do not intentionally favor students in their classroom, it is possible that

some do so unknowingly. Speck (1996) found that teachers may inadvertently introduce bias into the classroom, although the instructors describe themselves as open-minded. The bias was due to instructors' beliefs, however, not their behavior.

Indications of how teacher behavior does not always concur with their personal beliefs can be seen in gender studies. Several gender studies have shown that teachers do treat students differently although they may not intend on doing so. These studies have found that teachers call on male students more frequently than female students in the classroom. They allow the males to respond to more questions and engage in more spontaneous participation. However, instructors are generally unaware of biases in their behavior (Sadker & Sadker, 1992; Yenez, 1994). It appears that teachers may inadvertently express biases in their classrooms through their expressed beliefs or behavior.

The studies of the relationship between teacher attitudes and differential treatment make it probable that some teachers are treating LEP students differently, albeit unintentional. In 1991, Soto estimated that over two-thirds of LEP students were not receiving appropriate instruction. Many of these students were included in mainstreamed classrooms and were not succeeding in their school experience. In addition, LEP students have a dropout rate of about 30%, more than double that of African Americans and four times that of Caucasian students (Ravitch, 1997). It is clear that the needs of LEP students are not being met. The allocation of turns to LEP students needs to be investigated more thoroughly since interaction provides LEP students with the practice they need to succeed in school (Clemente & Collison, 2000). If LEP students are not

given adequate opportunities to engage in classroom participation, their education and rate of language acquisition may suffer as a result.

Verplaeste Study

Verplaeste (2000) has published several studies addressing the needs of LEP students. One such study sought to determine how teachers allocate turns to LEP students. Her study consisted of three teachers who were recommended for their caring and interactive approaches with LEP students; all three teachers taught science courses. Verplaeste (2000) found that two of the three teachers allocated turns to LEP students at a higher proportion than to English Proficient (EP) students, with one teacher designating four times as many turns to LEP students as a proportion of the classroom. These findings are quite the opposite of what would be expected of teachers' behavior as influenced by attitudes as observed in gender studies.

There are several problems with the Verplaeste study, however. To begin with, the study used only teachers who were known for their positive treatment of LEP students. They may not accurately represent the teaching population. In addition, the teachers knew before the observation that Verplaeste was watching their interaction with LEP students. This undoubtedly accounted for a portion of the possibly skewed results. The Verplaeste study did not clearly and reliably predict the interactions between students and teachers in turn allocation outside of the classrooms observed.

CHAPTER 3

Summary

Limited English proficiency (LEP) students have a rich history in American schools. The educational system has struggled with how to best educate LEP students (Cordasco, 1976). A number of federal laws and case laws have changed bilingual education in the United States. As a result, many English as a second language students are now educated to more closely meet their educational needs. Some students are completely excluded from their English-speaking peers, while others are in completely bilingual classrooms (Baker, 1996). As the budget for education crunches, it appears that LEP students will be further included in the mainstreamed classroom (Leave No Child Behind Act, 2003).

Language acquisition is an important goal for LEP students. Their level of acquisition affects their socioeconomic status (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). As they have increased language abilities, LEP students are able to interact with their peers and develop a more positive self-concept. In addition, students who acquire English are much more likely to develop the ability to read in both English and their native language (Christian, 1976).

Limited English proficiency students face a number of difficulties beyond language acquisition. They feel pressure to acculturate while maintaining their native culture (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Students frequently feel pressured to learn English to be accepted into the American culture (Christian, 1976). Some teachers may have lower expectations for LEP students and treat the child

differently (Osterman & Freese, 1999). Students who are limited in English abilities face a number of difficulties in the United States.

The students also have difficulties achieving academically. Limited English proficiency students are often placed into mainstream classrooms before they can sufficiently benefit from instruction in English (Baker, 1996). As they fall behind, LEP students may be erroneously referred for special education services (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). They are clearly struggling in the mainstream classroom.

There are many factors that affect the success of LEP students in mainstream classrooms. To begin with, ESL students must have the English proficiency to learn in all subjects, not just English (Glenn, 1996). Teachers should engage LEP students as much as possible in the classroom (Baecher, in Simoes, 1976). Ideally, schools would be committed to biliteracy and multiculturalism, but the reality is that many are not (Glenn, 1996).

It is vital that LEP students participate in mainstream classrooms if they are to acquire English (Hernandez, 1997). Participation allows students to gain valuable input from others and negotiate meaning (Crawford, 1989). Although teachers do their best to integrate LEP students into the classroom, it is possible that LEP students are not given the same opportunities as other students to participate.

Critical Analysis

As the number of LEP students increases, so does the urgency to provide the best possible education to ensure their needs are being met. During hard economic times, however, LEP students' needs are not being addressed by the nation. As a result, their needs must be addressed in the regular education classroom. The explosion of LEP

students in American schools has created a demand for research regarding how LEP students can learn to succeed in the schools.

Research has shown how to best meet the needs of LEP students in the mainstream classroom; one of the means is through classroom participation. The possibility for interaction and feedback is invaluable for LEP students, since they are unable to receive such interaction at home. However, some teachers may have unfavorable attitudes regarding LEP students. While these teachers do their best to include LEP students, it is possible that they are inadvertently excluding them from classroom participation.

Verplaeste (2000) addressed the interactions between teachers and LEP students in her study investigating turn allocation. However, the study has too many flaws to provide an accurate description of turn allocation to LEP students. As a result, the participation of LEP students needs to be investigated more thoroughly since it has been shown to influence numerous facets of LEP students' lives.

In the event that teachers are allocating turns differently in their classrooms, it would seem to benefit them to know. Most teachers undoubtedly do not intend to treat students differently and many may not have the education necessary to teach LEP students. If teachers were made more aware of their own actions, many would adjust their behavior to include all students in the classroom.

If teachers are allocating turns evenly in the classroom, yet another variable affecting LEP students' education could be eliminated. Future research could delve into more complex matters of inclusive education to determine why LEP students are falling behind in the mainstream classroom.

Recommendations

The rate at which LEP students participate in the mainstream classroom needs to be investigated without the flaws of the Verplaeste study. In the event that teachers are allocating turns differently, teachers need to be provided with the means to better serve LEP students in their classrooms. If informed of their behavior, teachers would most likely try to correct the error and include LEP students more in their classroom.

Some teachers may also intentionally not force LEP students to participate, not wanting to embarrass them in front of their peers. If teachers are allocating turns differently, they may need to be made aware of the importance of participation for language acquisition. Teachers could benefit from encouragement to make LEP students participate.

Future studies will address only one factor in language acquisition. Since there is relatively little research on participation of LEP students in mainstream classrooms, the research will attempt to set a foundation for future research. As the numbers of LEP students increase and the budgets to educate them decrease, LEP students will most likely be mainstreamed at even higher rates and lower levels of English proficiency. Turn allocation is a simple strategy that can enable general education teachers to help LEP students acquire English. Further research will result in providing teachers with valuable information about how to meet one of the many demands they face in their classroom.

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