

Pre-Service Bilingual Teachers and their Spanish Academic Language Proficiency as Measured by the BTLPT

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Spanish Proficiency for Bilingual Teachers

- In the state of Texas, pre-service bilingual teachers must demonstrate high levels of academic language proficiency in Spanish in order to obtain a bilingual certification by passing the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT).
- The development of academic Spanish among pre-service bilingual teachers is complicated by their own conflicting histories of language development (Ek & Sánchez, 2008).

Spanish in Bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs

- It is essential that bilingual teacher education programs provide access to academic Spanish for pre-service bilingual teachers (Sutterby, Ayala, & Murillo, 2005) so they can, in turn, help their future emergent bilingual students develop academic Spanish proficiency as they acquire English and content area knowledge.

Spanish in Bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs

- Bilingual teacher educators must monitor the performance of their bilingual teacher candidates in the BTLPT to identify strategies to better support pre-service bilingual teachers throughout their bilingual teacher education program in the development of Spanish academic language proficiency.

The Study

- A study was conducted with one cohort of bilingual pre-service teachers who completed their student teaching in the Spring 2015 semester in a Hispanic-serving institution in south Texas.
- Participants
 - 29 Latina student teachers
- Data
 - 31-item questionnaire on their perceptions of their own academic language proficiency in Spanish as well as on the factors and experiences that had shaped such proficiency.
 - Individual semi-structured interviews on pre-service teachers' perceptions of the BTLPT.
 - Focus group
 - Student teachers' performance on the BTLPT

Preliminary Findings Survey

- Language Skills

	Spanish	English	Both
First language	76%	10%	14%
Dominant language	28%	28%	41%
Stronger writing skills	28%	69%	3%
Reading for classes	69%	3%	48%

Preliminary Findings Survey

- Language Use

	Spanish	English	Both (mixing)	Both (alternating)
Family	48%	10%	21%	21%
Friends	3%	17%	24%	55%

Preliminary Findings Survey

- Schooling Experiences
 - 62% received instruction in Spanish at some point
 - 55% attended a bilingual school at some point of their schooling
 - 21% attended ESL classes at some point of their schooling:
 - 86% took Spanish classes in Middle or High School

Preliminary Findings Survey

- Family Data
 - Parents who speak English:
 - Both-24% / One -38% / None -38%
 - Level of Education

	Elementary	Middle School	High School	College
Mother	14%	21%	38%	28%
Father	14%	10%	38%	38%

Preliminary Findings Survey

- Perceptions of Academic Language Proficiency

4 = VERY PROFICIENT 2 = SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT
3 = PROFICIENT 1 = NOT PROFICIENT

	SOCIAL PROFICIENCY				ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY			
PROFICIENCY LEVEL	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Listening Comprehension	22 (76%)	7	0	0	19 (65%)	9	1	0
Reading Comprehension	18 (62%)	11	0	0	15 (52%)	12 (41%)	2	0
Oral Expression	16 (55%)	10	1	2	9 (31%)	10 (34%)	8 (27%)	2
Written Expression	9	14 (48%)	6	0	6	11 (38%)	12 (41%)	0
	SOCIAL PROFICIENCY				ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY			
PROFICIENCY LEVEL	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Listening Comprehension	22 (76%)	7	0	0	19 (65%)	9	1	0
Reading Comprehension	18 (62%)	11	0	0	15 (52%)	12 (41%)	2	0
Oral Expression	16 (55%)	10	1	2	9 (31%)	10 (34%)	8 (27%)	2

Preliminary Findings BTLPT Scores

- 75% Pass Rate

	Average score	Lowest/highest score
Listening comprehension Possible Points 32	27	22/31
Reading comprehension Possible Points 40	33.5	28/38
Oral expression Possible Points 45	36.7	27/42
Written expression Possible Points 36	27	18/36

Preliminary Findings BTLPT Scores

N=18 students who passed the test	75% of correct responses	Number of students with 75% or more correct	Percentage of students with 75% or more correct
Listening Comprehension	24/32 points	16/18	89%
Reading Comprehension	30/40 points	17/18	94%
Oral Expression	34/45 points	13/18	72%
Simulated Conversation	7/9 points	14/18	78%
Questions & Answers (1 of 2)	7/9	9/18	50%
Questions & Answers (2 of 2)	7/9	17/18	94%
Oral Presentation	7/9	10/18	56%
Support a situation or opinion	7/9	14/18	78%
Written expression	27/36	8/18	44%
Response to letter, memo, email	9/12	9/18	50%
Lesson Plan	9/12	9/18	50%
Opinion or Position Essay	9/12	10/18	56%

Preliminary Findings BTLPT Scores

N= 6 students who did not pass the test	75% of correct responses	Number of students with 75% or more correct	Percentage of students with 75% or more correct	Minimum and maximum score
Listening Comprehension	24/32 points	1/6	17%	17 - 25
Reading Comprehension	30/40 points	2/6	33%	22 - 32
Oral Expression	34/45 points	1/6	17%	21 - 36
Simulated Conversation	7/9 points	1/6	17%	3 - 7.5
Questions & Answers (1 of 2)	7/9	1/6	17%	1.5 - 7.5
Questions & Answers (2 of 2)	7/9	0/6	0%	1.5 - 6
Oral Presentation	7/9	2/6	33%	6 - 9
Support a situation or opinion	7/9	2/6	33%	4.5 - 6
Written expression	27/36	2/6	33%	14 - 28
Response to letter, memo, email	9/12	1/6	17%	4 - 12
Lesson Plan	9/12	2/6	33%	2 - 10
Opinion or Position Essay	9/12	4/6	67%	6 - 10

Preliminary Findings Patterns in Open-Ended Survey Responses

- Many participants felt confident they could do well in the BTLPT.
- Most participants felt nervous about the speaking portion because they had to improvise, they had to record themselves, and it was timed.
- Some participants felt less confident about the writing portion of the exam.
- Many participants complained about the testing environment, which contributed to their anxiety.

Preliminary Findings

Patterns in Open-Ended Survey Responses

- Four Patterns Regarding Usefulness of College Coursework in Spanish:
 - Some participants felt the BILS (bilingual) classes were of most help for the BTLPT by providing instruction on writing lesson plans
 - Some participants felt their Spanish coursework helped them the most with the grammar
 - Some participants mentioned it was of help to speak and present in Spanish in class
 - Some participants did not feel prepared and expressed the desire for more support and challenge in their coursework.

Effective Practices

- Bilingual education coursework in Spanish
 - Focus on developing Spanish academic language
- Translanguaging pedagogy
 - Capitalizing on students' linguistic repertoires
- Metalinguistic awareness
 - In depth understanding of how language works

Effective Practices

- Curriculum Alignment to Standards
 - Lesson planning in Spanish
 - Delivery of presentations in Spanish
- Faculty Reflection Collaboration and Mentoring
 - Sharing of instructional materials and techniques
 - Action research

Ideas for Improvement

- Increase rigor and expectations regarding academic Spanish
 - Speaking
 - Writing
- BTLPT Workshops
 - Introduce format of exam
 - Overview of different tasks
 - Practice with timing and recording
 - Practice with specific prompts

Exchange of Experiences and Ideas

- Have you encountered similar challenges in the preparation of bilingual teachers?
- What are some effective practices that have worked for you and your students?

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Thank You

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