This ethnographic study has followed a cohort of students from Kindergarten through 3rd grade to examine the practices and attitudes of bilingual and "emergent" bilingual learners in a Michigan dual-language immersion elementary school. In our society, American-accented English predominates and has greater prestige over Spanish or Spanish-English bilingualism—a situation that sociolinguists describe as "diglossia." The school's mission is to develop balanced bilingualism (idealized as dual monolingualism) and to instill pride in Spanish language and Hispanic culture. And yet, bilingual speakers in the school often share a "code-switching" or "interlanguaging" norm rather than two monolingual norms. It is these differences and the tensions between beliefs (language ideologies) and speaking and listening practices that my study explores.

Here, the school's mission statement is compared to student (and parent) interview results about reasons to be bilingual. In the full paper, I argue that these show that linguistic inequality is salient, even to young students. As Joshua Fishman (2006: p.71) puts it, diglossia "can itself become an object of organized social consciousness." What interests me is what happens when it does. For example, teachers emphasize Spanish use as resistant to English monolingualism, which underscores the already-salient role distinction between adults and kids and de-emphasizes kids' playful "interlanguaging" practices (for which see examples).

**School Mission, Vision, and Beliefs Statement**

**Vision statement:** La Paz Elementary will equip students with bilingual skills and multicultural understanding that will enable them to benefit from existing and future opportunities in a global society.

**Mission statement:** La Paz students will attain high levels of proficiency in their native language, in a second language, and meet or exceed targets for achievement in all academic areas. All students will demonstrate positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors.

**Beliefs Statement**

1. All students can learn and succeed academically
2. Diversity is an asset that can drive growth and understanding
3. Bilingual citizens will have increased opportunities in a global society
4. Parents are an integral part of the school learning community
5. La Paz Elementary School is part of a larger community and utilizes local, regional, national, and international resources.

**Diglossia Theory**

Diglossia describes a situation of two "separate and unequal" codes (where "code" refers to languages, dialects, sociolinguistic contexts (Ferguson 1959, Fishman 1967, 2006).

**L(ow) "Code" vs. H(igh) "Code"**

**L1, vernacular**

"separate and unequal"

**Functional compartmentalization:**

- Informal contexts
- Formal contexts
- Indexes "home,"
- Indexes official, social
- institutional power

**Reasons for being bilingual #1: "communicate with more people" (accommodate monolinguals)**

- "would be good to speak Spanish with some of your friends that can speak Spanish"
- "If your friends say something in Spanish"
- "If you don't know any Spanish...and your friends don't know any other language and they won't understand you"
- "If you're in trouble and they only know how to speak Spanish..."

I can communicate with more people and it's just really fun to know what other people are saying. So we can communicate with more people, and have more friends, and be able to be bilingual.

**Reasons for being bilingual #2: "get a good job" (opportunities through skills)**

- "Because you get better jobs and you be able to communicate more with the world..."
- "So we can communicate with more people, and have more friends, and be able to get better jobs."
- "Because in English, you know Spanish you have to know English to have a job too."
- "So that we can learn a different language and there'll be more opportunities for jobs if you learn two languages"

**Reasons for being bilingual #3: Speak to people/family in other countries**

- Cause we could connect with other countries that speak English--English and Spanish...if I speak only English and when I go to my where I was born, In Oaxaca, that would have been kind of hard
- Para cuando voy a México (¿por qué?) Cuando hablo mis tios y me abuelo puedo hablar español más
- Because then you can communicate with other people from different from like Spanish is spoken a lot in different countries so now you can go to the countries and understand it
- Pues jeje, porque yo gusta español porque puedes hacer, puedes vivir, no vir, ve a Mexico o España puedes espesar con otras personas

**Reasons for being bilingual #4: Know "home language"**

- "Because you get better jobs and you be able to communicate more with the world..."
- "So we can communicate with more people, and have more friends, and be able to get better jobs."
- "Because in English, you know Spanish you have to know English to have a job too."
- "So that we can learn a different language and there'll be more opportunities for jobs if you learn two languages"

**English for negotiation among bilingual 3rd grade boys**

B1: No quiero... (B1 and B2 laugh)

B1: No quiero

B2: He still answering

- B3: No please don't please don't

B1: He still hasn't answered that's why

A group of 3rd-grade Hispanic boys from Spanish-speaking families code-switch frequently, using Spanish in its own language, But switching to English for social negotiation. This, too, is a common pattern during "academic" Spanish time (although this excerpt was during lunch).

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**Study Site: “La Paz Elementary”**

in various contexts (Ferguson 1959, Fishman 2006).