The data presented come from preliminary analysis of an ongoing, longitudinal study started 2013-14, when I began ethnographic observations with an entering Kindergarten cohort and that year’s 3rd grade. I continued to follow the Kindergarten cohort through their 1st and 3rd grade years (and await district approval for their 5th grade year). My study involves ethnographic participant-observation as a volunteer/observer in classroom, lunch, and recess, as well as interviews and less formal conversations with students and staff. I apply discourse analysis to recordings and written documents together with my fieldnotes.

Summary
This ethnographic study has followed a cohort of students from K 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 study, 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, balanced bilingualism (idealized as dual monolingualism) and to 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 and understand.
2. Diversity is an asset that can drive growth.
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, sociolects, registers, or styles) (Eckert 1989). There is a "functional compartmentalization" between a vernacular or L(ow) code learned as an L1 and a normative or secondarily acquired prestige or H(igh) code normatively used in formal or official contexts (Ferguson 1959, Fishman 1967, 2006).

- L1, vernacular
- L1+L2, prestige

“separate and unequal”

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 you don’t say something in Spanish.
- If you don’t know Spanish... and your friends don’t know any uhm English and they don’t understand you.
- If you’re in trouble and they only know how to speak Spanish...

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.

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 vaya a México (¿por qué?) Cuando hablo mis tios y mi 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
- Puesque, porque yo gustar español porque puedes hacer, puedes vivir, no en, va a Mexico o Spain y ustedes estan con otras personas

Reasons for being bilingual #4: Know “home language”
- Why are you learning in English?
- So that we don’t. So that we can still get some of our home language.

Recent finding for the 2015-17, as well as for summer RA support from the College of Arts & Sciences through the Departments of Anthropology and Spanish. Thank you as well to the amazing students, families, and staff of “La Paz,” and to the school district for permission to conduct my research.

Photo: Third-graders with recorder in class reading corner.

“La Paz Elementary” (a pseudonym) is an urban K-5 public school with a 30/50 dual immersion model. The school serves a socioeconomically, racially, and linguistically diverse student population including the local Hispanic community of primarily Mexican and Central American immigrants.

Study Site: “La Paz Elementary”